

## LESSON 11

## KULGURU

Long ago there lived a rich merchant. One day he took his son to listen to the sermons of a Jain Acharya. The boy was so amazed by what he heard that he became a Jain Sadhu. He was named Kulguru.

Kulguru studied well. He understood the real meaning of what ever he studied. Everybody thought he was good student, but even this learned man had one problem, he could not fast. It was impossible for him to go without food; he had to eat, at least once a day!

The rainy season had finally come and all the Jain monks stopped moving around and camped in one place. Many monks began their fast; some even fasted for a whole month. Kulguru tried to go without food, but it was impossible for him. So he went to the Acharya and begged that he be allowed to ask for alms. The Acharya was quite upset that Kulguru could not keep such a simple fast, when many of the other sadhus were fasting for one whole month. Seeing his teachers distress Kulguru was very sad. He told his teacher how he really wanted to fast, but somehow his body would not let him. Listening to this the Acharya finally let him go and ask for alms.

Kulguru sorrowfully took the alms from the townspeople and came back. Then he asked the Acharya's permission to eat. In all this he felt very sad about himself. What made him feel worse was that all the other monks kept looking at him as if they were shocked with his inability to keep a fast. The other monks were very proud that they could keep such long fasts, and in their meditation that's all they kept thinking about. While Kulguru who was a very learned monk understood that whatever he was doing was wrong must be because of the bad "karmas" of his past births. He kept thinking about his bad karmas and feeling sorry for all his actions now and in the past births. Suddenly as he thought he realized the true nature of the soul! He accepted everything including the fact that he could not keep a fast and was sorry for it. This understanding destroyed all his bad karmas. He gained omniscience as he was eating.

All the gods came to bow to him. The other monks thought that they were coming to them, because they had fasted for such a long time. Then they saw them go to Kulguru.

"How cans this happen?" they asked their Acharya.

The Acharya replied humbly "You were too proud of yourselves, so you could not see beyond your own self. While Kulguru felt sad for all the bad Karmas of his past births. He knew his need for food was because of that Karma."

The monks then gave up their pride, and bowed to Kulguru.