

The Honest Gundhar



Long ago, lived a very rich and good man called Gundhar who used to move things from one place to another on a caravan. One day while traveling, he met a Jain Sadhu. The Jain Sadhu told him about the principles of Jainism and explained what Adattadan is. It meant not taking anything unless the owner gave it to you. This is important because we must be happy with what we have and not want more.



Gundhar was amazed by what he heard and promised to follow the Adattadan Principles. This meant that from that day, he would be happy with what he had and would not take anything unless the owner gave it to him. In the group that was listening to the Sadhu, there was a heavenly being called Sur. He was amazed by Gundhar's vow and felt that he would not keep up his promise. He knew that Gundhar had to travel a lot, and these journeys were difficult.



It was difficult to know what was needed, and so many things were often left behind. Sur decided that he would put him to the test. Gundhar was ready to leave. He loaded all his 500 carts with many costly things, and along with his people, he went off on his journey to a distant land. He was riding his favorite horse. Slowly they moved ahead. It was very hot. On the way, they entered a forest.



It was cool there. Gundhar got down for a sip of water. Everyone went ahead, and Gundhar was left alone with his horse. He thought he would catch up with them. Suddenly, he saw something shining. It was a diamond ring. He did not pick it up as he had taken the vow of Adattadan, which meant he could not take anything unless the owner gave it to him. So, he left it behind and went off fast on his horse.



Then something terrible happened. The front leg of the horse got stuck in a hole. In pain, the horse dropped Gundhar off, and he began to pull out the horse's leg.



As he dug the hole to free his horse, he saw a lot of gold and treasures buried deep inside. Gundhar did not bother about them and continued to free the horse. Finally, he managed to free his horse and went ahead. Sadly his horse got very tired, so it fell and died.



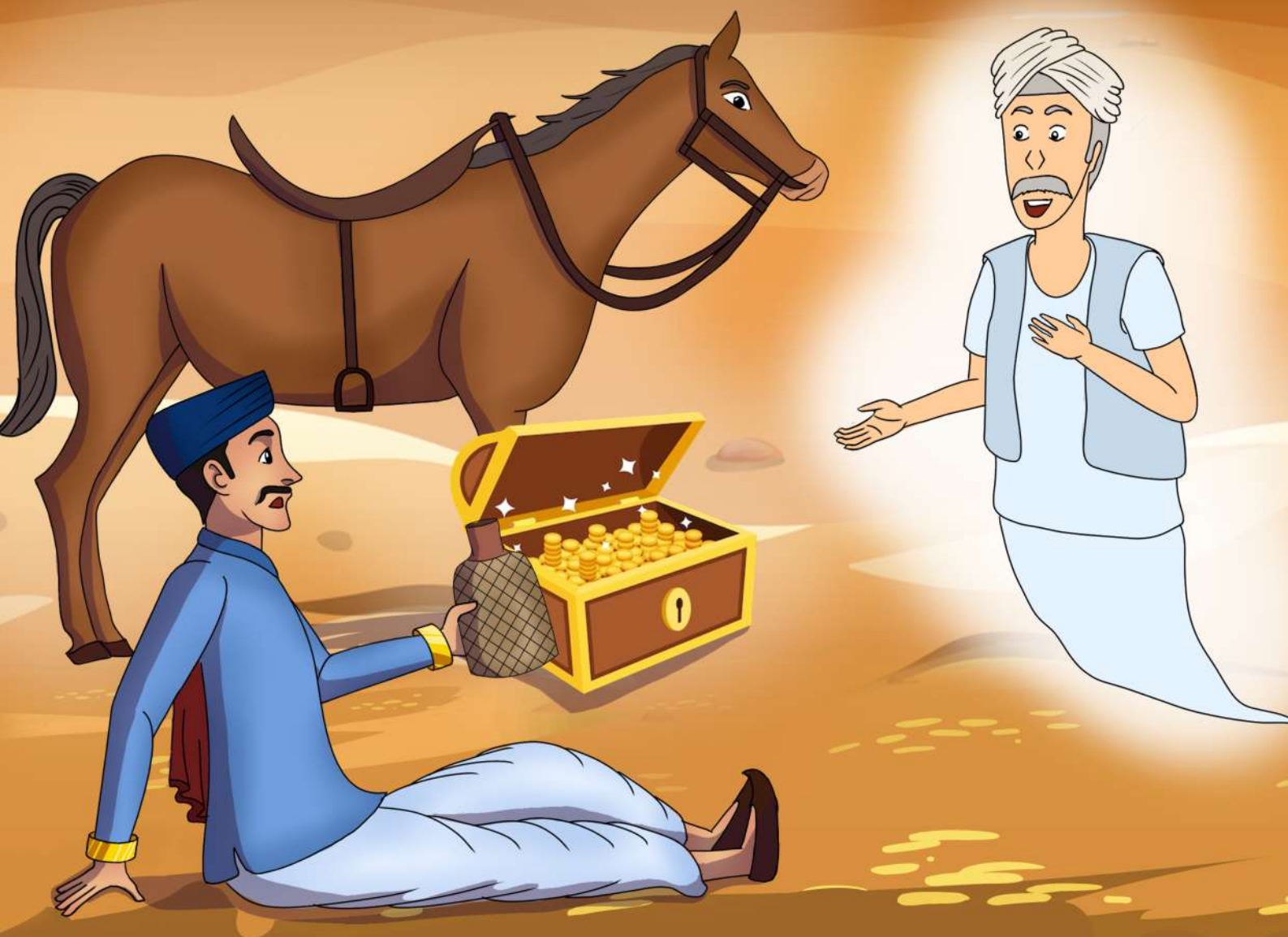
Gundhar felt very sad and thought that he had killed his horse by making it ride too fast. He had to leave his horse behind and continue his journey. Now he arrived at a desert. There was dry sand everywhere, and it was unbearably hot. Gundhar was very thirsty when he saw a bag of water slung on a tree. It looked so tempting. He was about to take it when he remembered his vow of Adattadan. He could not take anything unless the owner gave it to him.



A parrot on the tree spoke to him, saying that the owner would not mind if he took some water to drink. Yet Gundhar did not touch it. He was tired and thirsty, and he almost fainted. Even then he prayed that he could keep his vow of Adattadan.



Then there was a bright light, and Gundhar woke up. Sur, the heavenly being, was in front of him. After giving him water, he smiled and told him that this was a test, from the ring to the buried gold, his horse's death, and the water bag.



"I wanted to see if you could keep your vow of Adattadan."

Then he gave him everything, including his horse, and said,

"You are a good man Gundhar, please, accept the ring, the gold, and the jewels that you had found."

He refused,

"I have more than enough,"

he said,

"I do not need anything more."



Finally, he agreed to donate all these valuables to the poor. Gundhar spent the rest of his life in honest work. He built fountains, schools and gave a lot to the poor. He always followed the Adattadan and was a very happy man.



We must follow the
vow we take, even in
adverse conditions.

