

## **Harikeshi Bal**

Based on the famous poetry 'Badi Sadhu Vandana' composed by Acharya Samrat Pujya Shri Jaymalji m.s; this comic book presents the character of Harikeshi Bal, who had to take birth in a lower caste because he took pride of his community in previous birth. The discarding by the fellow children and witnessing the scene of two situations killing of a piousness snake and harmless walk of a non-piousness snake inspires him to renounce the world.

After accepting monkhood, Harikeshi Muni lives a penanceful life and undertakes month-long fasting. Impressed by the many austerities of the saint, a Yaksha always remains with him in attention. When Harikeshi Muni was insulted by the princess, who spitted on the ascetic seeing his ill-shaped body and black colour, the Yaksha, who was at his service, became angry. He entered her body and started playing mischief. The king prayed for forgiveness for his daughter's misdeed and the solution given by Yaksha to king for marrying the princess to the ascetic results in her marriage to the Brahman chief by default.

The interesting part of the story comes when Harikeshi Muni, goes for seeking alms to a place where a yagya was being performed. The acharya, who happened to be the husband of the princess, refuses to part with the food telling that it has been exclusively and especially prepared for them only. When he goes a step further and insults the ascetic ordering his disciples to demonstrate violently, the Yaksha retaliates. Ultimately the princess, who comes to the venue, resolves the tangle by showering praise on the ascetic.. The Acharya too becomes cool and bows down and offers food to Harikeshi Muni and also interacts with him. Harikeshi Muni ultimately purifies his soul and attains liberation.

This is a story which glorifies the uniqueness of Jainism that irrespective of caste and creed, one can become great. The colourful pictures are an added attraction.