

## DAMANAK

KARMA



do good things  
and good things  
will come your way

Long ago in the city of Rajpur, lived a man named Kulaputra. He had a close friend Jaindas who followed Jain religion. One day Kulaputra went with his friend to listen to the sermon of his spiritual teacher. He was impressed by the principle of Ahimsa (non-violence) illustrated by the monk and he decided to take a vow not to eat fish no matter what.

Soon there was a severe drought in the city. Grain became scarce, so most people of the town lived on fish as a food. Before long, even the strictest vegetarians changed their diet. Fish became the main source of food. This situation challenged Kulaputra's commitment of his vow. Many days passed by when there was hardly any food in the house, but he did not break his vow. One day his wife got frustrated and said, "Can't you see that our children are starving? Don't you feel for them? Please buy some fish, so I can feed them."

Kulaputra told her, "My dear, I cannot take away other living being's life to save ours. We are vegetarians. I love our children, but in same manner I love all living beings too."

At last, Kulaputra's brother-in-law took him to the riverbank to catch fish for the family. Kulaputra was very unhappy and with deep regret threw his net into water. To his surprise, he caught the most fish. But as he was pulling them out of water he saw that the fish were uneasy and restless. He could not bear their suffering, so he released them. He tried three times and did the same each time. He could not tolerate anymore. So he left and went on a fast until death. After his death, he was born as merchant Manihar's son, in the city of Rajagruhi, and was named Damanak.

Manihar was a rich man with great wealth and fortune. When Damanak was eight years old, an epidemic broke out in the city, and his whole family died except for

Damanak. There was no one left to look after Damanak. Within a short period of time, his wealth vanished, and he became a poor orphan boy. One day, a merchant named Sagarpot gave him shelter in his house.

One day, a monk came to Sagarpot's house for alms. The monk noticed Damanak, and said that his good karmas were going to mature shortly, and he soon would be the head of the household.

Sagarpot did not say anything since he disliked the idea of his fortune to be inherited by the poor boy, Damanak. He wanted his real son to be the next head of the household. Therefore, he decided to kill Damanak. One day he sent for the butcher, and ordered him to take Damanak into the forest and kill him. The butcher took the boy to the forest, and as he was about to kill him, the look of innocence on the face of the boy made him change his mind. He did not kill Damanak, but to show the Sagarpot that he had killed him, he cut Damanak's little finger off and turned him loose in the forest. He told the boy to leave, and never return to that area again.

Damanak started wandering in the forest, and soon he saw a cow herder. He told his story to the cow herder. The cow herder felt sympathy towards him and invited Damanak to live with him. This started a new chapter in Damanak's life.

Several years passed and Damanak became a young man. One day, when traveling on business, Sagarpot stopped at the place where Damanak was living. He saw the young man and liked him right away. When Sagarpot inquired more about him, he realized that this young man was the same boy whom he had wanted to kill. His anger grew again, and he immediately planned to kill Damanak. He asked the cow herder if he could spare the young man to take his message back to his home. Sagarpot gave Damanak a letter to be delivered to his son. Damanak left to carry out his work.

As Damanak reached the outskirts of the Rajagruhi city, he became tired. He saw a temple, and decided to rest. He left the letter by his side and fell sleep. It just so happened, that after he fell sleep, Bisa, Sagarpot's daughter came to the temple. She noticed the letter next to Damanak. She became curious, and looked at it. To her surprise it was addressed to his brother. Her curiosity grew even more, so she read the letter. She was puzzled to find that his father had written, "Yah ladaka

jaise hi vahan aye, usko bis de dena" meaning, "As soon as this boy arrives there, give him poison (Bis)." She could not understand this. She looked at the young man, he was very handsome and looked innocent. She fell in love with him and wanted to marry him. So, she changed the message, "Yah ladaka jaise hi vahan aye, usko bisa de dena," meaning, "As soon as this boy arrives there, give him Bisa (his daughter)." She then put the letter back where it was and left.

The young man delivered the letter to Sagarpot's son. His son read the message and was puzzled why his father would ask him to get his sister married to Damanak. But since that was his father's wish, he obeyed it. Damanak was also confused, but he liked Bisa, so he went along. Bisa's brother arranged her marriage with great celebration.

When Sagarpot came back home and found out what happened, he was fuming in his mind. But he did not express this anger to anybody. He once again started a plot to kill Damanak, now his son-in-law.

Sagarpot hired someone to kill him. One day, everybody went to a party. After some time, Damanak felt tired, so he decided to go home early. When he reached home, he found the house locked. So he rested on the sofa on the porch. The hit man followed him, but he felt that Damanak was a strong man and it would not be easy to kill him without anything. So he went home to get a sword.

Meanwhile, Damanak got up and went for a walk. While Damanak was on his walk, his brother-in-law (Sagarpot's son) came to the house. He also found the house locked and he decided to rest on the sofa on the porch. He soon fell sleep. The hit man came back, and without thinking anything, hit his sword on the man's neck and cut off his head.

After some time when the rest of the family came home, they found the body in blood. They were shocked to learn that it was Bisa's brother who had been killed.

Sagarpot now realized that he was trying to change the destiny of the young man (fate of karmas), and that is why he did not succeed in killing Damanak. He soon mellowed down and decided to accept Damanak's fate. His wife and he decided to pass over all the home and business affairs to Damanak.

Damanak carried out his duty for many years and lived happily ever after.