

Queen Chelna and King Shrenik



This is a story from the time of Bhagwan Mahavir. At that time, king Chetak was the ruler of Vaishali and he had a beautiful daughter named Chelna. Once an artist called Bharata painted a picture of Chelna and showed it to king Shrenik of Magadh. Charmed by Chelna's beauty, Shrenik fell in love with her. One day Chelna came to the city of Magadh where she saw king Shrenik and she also fell in love with him. They soon got married.

Queen Chelna was a devoted follower of Jainism, while Shrenik was influenced by Buddhism. The king was very generous with a big heart but somehow was not happy with his queen's devotion to the Jain monks. He wanted to prove to Chelna that Jain monks were pretenders. He strongly believed that no man could follow the practice of self-restraint and non-violence to that extent, and that the equanimity shown by Jain monks is superficial. Chelna was greatly disturbed by this.

One day, King Shrenik went on a hunting trip where he saw a Jain monk, Yamadhar, engaged in deep meditation. Shrenik let his hunter dogs go after Yamadhar but the monk remained silent. On seeing the calmness and composure of the monk, the dogs became quiet. King Shrenik got angry and thought that the monk had played some trick on them. So he started shooting arrows at the monk but they kept on missing him. Becoming more upset, he finally put a dead snake around Yamadhar's neck and came back to his palace.

The king narrated the whole incident to Chelna. The queen felt very sorry and took the king back to Yamadhar's meditation place. Ants and other insects were crawling all over the monk's body because of the dead snake but the monk did not even stir. The couple witnessed the limits of human endurance. The queen gently removed the ants and snake from the monk's body, and cleaned his wounds. She applied sandalwood paste. After sometime, Yamadhar opened his eyes and blessed both of them.

The monk did not distinguish between the king who had caused him pain, and the queen who had alleviated his pain. King Shrenik was very impressed, and convinced that Jain monk was truly beyond attachment and aversion. Thus, king Shrenik along with queen Chelna became devoted to Jainism and believed in Bhagwan Mahavir.

Key Message:

One should not question the will power and devotion of someone who is more religious than oneself, especially, if one can't perform comparable level of penance and devotion. In fact, one should be respectful of such individuals. It is important to serve and support these people rather than cause them pain and suffering. This will help to avoid accumulating bad karmas. Learn to accept and appreciate virtues.