

Jain Story: Dhandhan Muni



In the time of the 22nd Tirthankar, Lord Neminath and Shri Krishna there lived a great monk named Dhandhan Muni. He was actually the son of Shri Krishna but he left his kingdom after hearing Lord Neminath's magnetic sermons. Since the time of his renunciation, he faced a very difficult problem. Jain monks and nuns do not cook their food; do not get it prepared for them. They go to different householders and receive a little food from each house. For monk Dhandhan Muni, it was the rise of Benefit Obstructing Karma (Laabhantraya Karma). Such type of Karma obstructs benefit whatever he/she gains. For Dhandhan Muni, this Karma obstructed the gaining of food. Wherever he went he would not get food from the householders. The householders would close their door whenever they see Dhandhan Muni approaching their door.

One day one of his colleagues asked Lord Neminath, "Dear Lord, why such a great monk is having a problem for getting his food? Why he always returns without any food? Why the householders of this great town of Dwarka are not offering food to this monk who is the son of great King Vasudev (Lord Krishna)?"

The Omniscient Lord replied, "Oh monk, this is the emergence of the Benefit Obstructing Karma that blocks benefits of the food for Monk Dhandhan. Everything, either good or bad happens because of our good or bad deeds. There is a reason, nothing happens without any reason. In one of his previous births, the Monk Dhandhan was the minister of a King. His name was Parashar and he was ordered to keep an eye on farming. There were many farmers, bulls, and cows working under him.

Once, at the time of noon, all the farmers took a break for their lunch. They all had worked hard for farming and thus all were hungry. The farmers were taking their meal and the bulls and cows were eating grass. At that time, Parashar stopped them from eating and ordered them to plant seeds. The farmers were hungry so they asked Parashar to let them take their lunch first, but Parashar didn't even listen to them and ordered them to work for more hours. He said, "First you all plant more seeds in the farms, I will let you eat after the whole work is done."

All the farmers, bulls, and cows were hungry, they were not interested to pursue their work at that time but they had to accept the order, there was no other way. So they pursued their work without any interest. Thus by interrupting in their way of taking a meal, Parashar bounded Benefit Obstructing Karma and that karma has come into action in the present birth. So he is not getting food from any householders."

By listening to Neminath, Monk Dhandhan Muni realized the truth and vowed that he will accept food only gained by his own effort. He will not accept food brought by other monks. Thus, since that time he would daily go to at the doors of the householders of the town of Dwarka and would return without any food. This lasted for six months. Monk Dhandhan Muni had been observing fasts for 6 months with ultimate equanimity. He had realized his mistake and he was not showing any hatred toward the householders as he knew that he was responsible for all this.

One day while walking in the street he met his mundane father Shri Krishna. Krishna stepped down the elephant and bowed before Dhandhan Muni and inquired about his life as a monk. When Shri Krishna went back, the nearby householder called Dhandhan Muni for alms. The householder put some laddus (Indian sweet) in the monk's bowl. Dhandhan Muni thought this must be the end of his Benefit Obstructing karma. So before eating and breaking his fast he went to Lord Neminath to confirm whether his Benefit Obstructing Karma has ceased. The Lord said, Oh Dhandhan, your karma has not ceased yet, you received the food is not because of your karma but because of Shri Krishna's karma. The householder thought that how great that monk is, even the king like Shri Krishna bows before him! So he called you and offered you this food."

Upon listening to this fact from the Omniscient Lord, Dhandhan started to think, "how strong karma I bound by obstructing other's food in my previous lives!" Thus he decided to forsake the alms (laddus). At the time of forsaking he performed strong equanimity. He didn't show any hate to the householders but he found responsible himself behind this. Soon, at the time of forsaking laddus, he entered Shukla Dhyana (Pure Meditation) and climbed the ladder of annihilation. In the second step of this meditation (Ekatva Vitarka Savichara Shukla Dhyana) he destroyed not only Benefit Obstructing Karma but also destroyed all the four destructing Karma attached to his soul. As all four karma sheds away he became Omniscient, the all-knowing, all perceiving Arihanta.