Jain Story: Queen Rukmani

Whatever happens with us is due to our own karma (good or bad deeds). It is like action-reaction and we have to pay for whatever we have done. They don’t give instant result but it takes time to give results.

There is an inspiring story of Rukmani. She was a queen and wife of Shri Krishna. According to Jain accounts, Shri Krishna was a cousin of Lord Neminath, the 22nd Jain Tirthankar (Ford-Builders). Lord Neminath was younger than Shri Krishna. By seeing the animals which were to be slaughtered for his marriage, Prince Nemikumar had developed great compassion and after releasing those innocent animals he announced his decision for renunciation. Meditating on mount Girnar for 54 days, he attained Omniscience and became the 22nd Tirthankar of the present era. He gave his first sermon in the magnetic voice by sitting on Samavasaran (A Divine Preaching Pavilion created by the Heavenly Beings). Thousands of people were present there including Vasudev Shri Krishna and his wife queen Rukmani. By seeing the great power of Omniscience, the absolute knowledge that allows one to see everything in the entire Universe, Queen Rukmani could not stop herself to ask her problem to Lord Neminath. Her son was kidnapped by the time of birth and returned to her after 16 years.

She asked Lord Neminath, “Oh Lord! What mistake I have done in my previous lives so I had to suffer 16 long years without my son?”

Lord Neminath said, “Oh queen! We are the only cause of our misery and happiness. In one of the previous lives, you were married to a rich family. Few days after your marriage you went into the jungles with your friends to enjoy the beauty of nature. You all were happy, someone was singing, someone was dancing.”

“After some while, you all waited to rest. Just beside the place where you were staying was a nest of a peahen and there were two eggs. By hearing your voice the peahen became threatened and immediately left the nest. You approached the nest and just in fun, you carried those eggs in your hands. Your palms were painted with Mehendi (Henna). And because of that, those eggs became colorful. You put them back but didn’t notice that the eggs are now colorful.”

“After a short while, the peahen returned back to her nest when you left that place. She could not identify her eggs as they were now looking ruddy. The peahen became sad and started to look around for her eggs. The peahen started crying and tears began to flow from her eyes.”

“After some time the sky became dense of dark clouds and the rain started. The color from the eggs was now removed by the rain and the peahen immediately identifies her eggs. She began
dancing in joy and started to hatch her eggs again but because of your mistake, oh queen, the peahen didn’t hatch her eggs for 16 ghadis (1 ghadi = 24 minutes). So that’s why in this birth you suffered without your son for 16 years.”

By hearing this, the queen became shocked and thought, the mistake was 16 ghadis and the punishment is 16 years?

By reading her mind, Lord Neminath said, “yes!”

All the people present there learned about the law of causation and took various vows to get rid of the endless cycle of birth and death.