

King Shrenik's Destiny

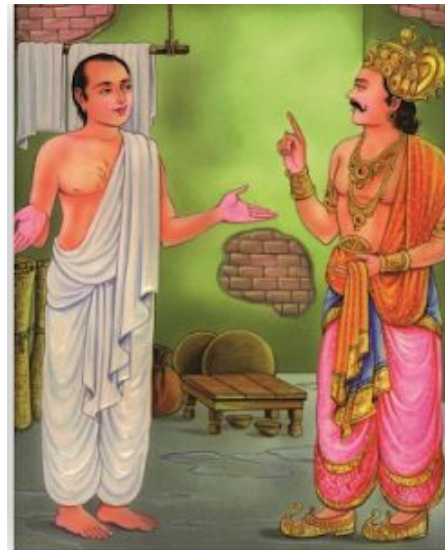
Once, in response to King Shrenik's question about his next birth, Bhagawan Mahavir stated that he will go to hell. On further inquiry as to the reason, Bhagawan Mahavir pointed out the following incident by which King Shrenik had acquired that type of Ayushya karma.

Once the King had gone hunting. He spotted a fleeing deer. The King spurred his horse and pursued it. Ultimately he located it taking a rest under a tree. He wielded his arrow with all his might. The arrow pierced the body of the deer thereby killing the deer as well as the unborn child in its body, but after coming out, the arrow pierced the trunk of the tree and came out on its other side. Instead of feeling regret for the violence, the King felt proud and highly elated at his powers. The feeling of too much arrogance for the gross violence caused him to acquire karma leading to an infernal life.

The King remembered the incident. He felt very sorry for what had happened at that time. He was anxious to wipe out that karma and asked Bhagawan Mahavir what he could do about the matter.

Bhagawan Mahavir pointed out that his karma was indelible and was bound to become operative at the right time. Such intense karmas cannot be erased without bearing the fruits. The rule of karma is supreme and no one has any authority over its operation.

King Shrenik could not reconcile himself to this fate. He repeatedly asked Bhagawan Mahavir for some way to avert going to hell. Bhagawan Mahavir said that there are ways to avert, but the King would not be able to successfully exercise any of them because of the indelible nature of his karma. The King insisted to know about the ways,



Bhagawan Mahavir suggested the following four alternatives to him:

1. There was a highly religious householder, known as Punia Shravak, in Rajgrihi. He had given up all his desires and was leading a purely spiritual life. For his livelihood, he depended upon the innocent occupation of making slivers out of cotton. The Indian word for sliver is Puni. He was therefore known as Punia Shravak. He earned very little out of that but felt contented with whatever he could get. He used to spend most of his time in samayik. Bhagawan Mahavir suggested the King obtain the merit of one samayik from Punia Shravak. The King thought that it was very simple. He approached the man and requested the merit of only one samayik. Punia

said that he had no objection, but how could he do that since the merits as well as demerits happen to be non-transferable? The King was disappointed.

2. The King had a maidservant named Kapila. She never gave alms to anyone. Bhagawan Mahavir suggested to the King that he make her give alms on at least one day. Accordingly, the King asked her to do so. She, however, replied that she would not even take anything in her hand for giving alms. The King, therefore, arranged to tie a scoop to her hand and asked her to give alms. While doing so, the maidservant murmured that the King's scoop is giving alms, not me. That plan also thus failed.

3. The King had a butcher named Kalsaurik who loved slaughtering animals. Bhagawan Mahavir suggested the King make sure that butcher Kalsaurik did not slaughter any animals for one day. This seemed very easy to the King. He ordered Kalsaurik to avoid killing the next day. The butcher replied that he was so conditioned to kill that he could not even spend even one day without killing. The King, therefore, ordered his men to hang him inverted in a well so that he could not undertake any actions of slaughtering. However, Kalsaurik was so conditioned that he imagined and drew the animals in the water of the well and slaughtered them. Thus the King could not stop him and that effort failed.

4. Bhagawan Mahavir then asked the King to observe the restraint of one Navkarshi in which one is not supposed to eat or drink anything until 48 minutes after sunrise. The King agreed to do so the next day. However, In the morning, he went to his favorite garden and saw the ripe berries. He forgot the Navkarshi and ate the berries. Therefore, he broke the restraint.