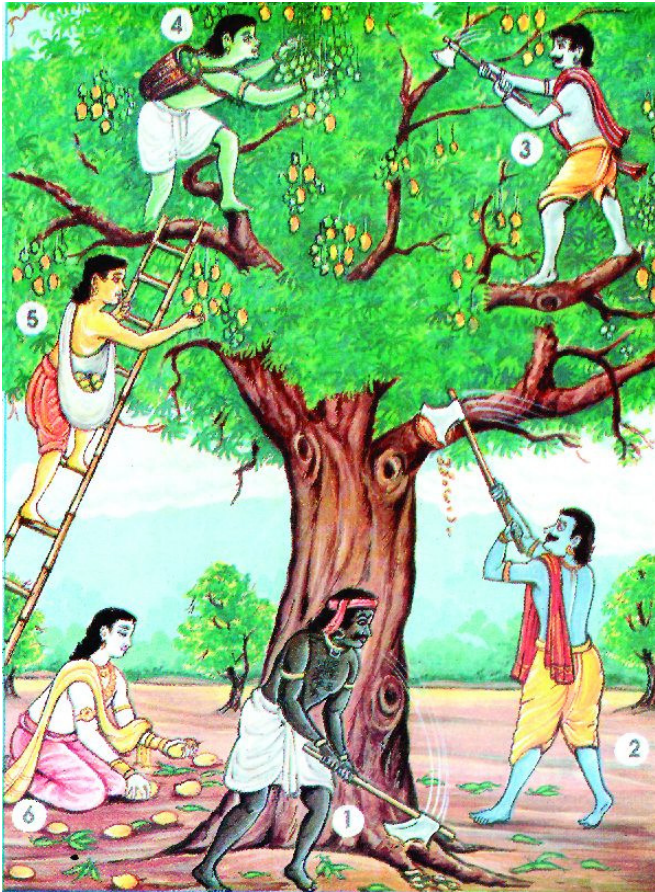


LESSON 09

MENTAL INCLINATION LESHYA

In the Jainism, there is a great deal of importance given to the leshya. A leshya refers to the state of mind. Our activities will reflect the state of our mind. If our mind is in destructive mood then our actions will reflect destruction but on the other side if our mind has pious thoughts then it will be very compassionate and carrying. All of our mental thoughts range between these two extremes. The following illustration reflects how our actions vary with our mental inclination.



Once there were six friends, who were going on a trip. Along the way, they got lost in a forest. After a while they were hungry and thirsty. They searched for the food for sometime, and finally found a fruit (jambu) tree.

As they ran to the tree, the first man said, “Let’s cut the tree down and get the fruit.” The second one said, “Don’t cut the whole tree down, cut off a big branch instead.” The third friend said, “Why do we need a big branch? A small branch has enough fruits.” The fourth one said, “We do not need to cut the branches, let us just climb up and get the bunches of the fruits.” The fifth man said, “Why pick those many fruits and waste them, instead just pick the fruits that we need to eat.” The sixth friend said quietly, “There are plenty of good fruits on the ground, so let’s just eat them first.”

You can see that the states of minds of these six friends caused a range of thoughts from the total destruction of the entire tree to the picking up of the fruits on the ground. These six friends’ minds represent six types of leshyas.

The first friend’s state of mind shows how destructive one can be. He did not care even if his action would lead to total destruction. So his mental inclination shows the darkest mental inclination and that is why his leshya is black (krishana) leshya. (Here Jains have taken the analogy that black being the darkest or impure and white being purest.)

The second friend's state of mind was also destructive but not as much as number 1. So his mental inclination was considered blue (neel) leshya.

The third friend's state of mind was even less destructive so his mental inclination is called brown (kapot) leshya.

The fourth friend's state of mind reflected even lesser destruction so it is called red (tejo) leshya.

The fifth friend's state of mind reflected least destruction and so it is called yellow (padma) leshya.

The sixth friend's state of mind reflected no destruction at all and so it is called white (shukla) leshya.

The first leshya is the worst and the sixth leshya is the best. The first three leshyas will lead the soul to accumulate the most karmas of which first will be the worst and third will be lesser and that will make them wander more in worldly life. The last three leads the soul to the spiritual prosperity and that way it will accumulate least to no karmas.

We must remember that our minds fluctuate between various states for the better or for the worst. Therefore, we should not fall pray to first three leshyas, but we should strive for the next three leshyas and preferably sixth one.

The story of King Prasenjit, who lived during Lord Mahavira's time as a sage, illustrates how fast the surrounding can affect our mind and in turn our leshyas as well as our spiritual progress.

One day, King Shrenik was on his way to pay homage to Lord Mahavira and he saw a sage who was meditating and had a bright glow around him. He bowed down to the sage and continued on his way. After reaching Lord Mahavira, King Shrenik asked the Lord Mahavir, "Oh Lord, I saw a pious sage who was engaged in the meditation. If he died, what would be his destiny?"

The Lord Mahavir replied, "He would be hurled down to the seventh hell."

The king was much astonished to hear this reply from the Lord. He thought, "Why would such a sage go to hell? Perhaps the Lord might have misunderstood me." So he asked the Lord again, "Oh Lord, if his soul leaves body, where will it go?"

The Lord replied, "He will be an angel in the Sarvarthasiddhi, a heavenly region."

The king got more confused at this reply. He thought, "The Lord first said he would attain the seventh hell, and now he says that the sage would be an angel." The king was perplexed. Right then drums began sounding in the sky and voices of 'victory' were proclaimed. The king asked the Lord, "What are these sounds about?"

The Lord Mahavir said, "Oh, king, the sage about whom you were inquiring has acquired omniscience and so the angels are coming to celebrate the victory over the passions."

The king was now totally confused by these answers and requested for the explanations.

So Lord Mahavir explained, "Oh King Shrenik, right when you asked the first question, two soldiers from your procession diverted his mind by their conversation that his son was betrayed by his entrusted ministers and they were planning to overthrow his son and even kill him. His meditation was disturbed due to rising of the affection for his son. He was inflamed with rage, and he lost his mental equanimity. Therefore, he started mentally to fight against his ministers. He very violently discharged his weapons one after the other against his ministers. Soon his weapons were exhausted and his foes were not destroyed. So, he thought of throwing his steel helmet against them in order to destroy them. If he had died at that moment, he would have gone to the seventh, the lowest hell. Now as he reached for the steel helmet, he realized that he was a sage and not the King Prasenjit. His anger calmed down immediately. He remembered that he has been initiated into the vow of equanimity and of non-violence to all living beings mentally, verbally, and physically. He deeply regretted and repented for the breach of his vow and indulgence in the acute anger. He further thought that he ought to have maintained love for all the creatures of the world, ought to have no malice for the ministers, and no attachment for his son. He severely condemned his mental act. He withdrew himself from such a feat of anger and malice. Oh King Shrenik, when he thought this way, you asked me the second question and I replied that he would be born in the highest heaven (Sarvarthasiddhi) as an angel. Even thereafter, he continued the purification of his mental reflections and gradually he reached the highest stage of spiritual purification, where he freed himself of all his destructive karmas, and attained omniscience.

King Shrenik's doubts were resolved and he learned how mental reflections can fluctuate. He also learned that not only can physical acts or verbal abuses have such devastating effects, but also so can be mental acts. We, too, must learn from this episode.

Let us understand how a person with the different leshyas behaves and what are the outcome of such leshyas.

1. Krishna (Black) Leshya:

The people in this state of mind do not show any compassion or mercy. Everyone is afraid of them as their anger turns into the violence. They always burn with jealousy and have ill-will for everyone. They are filled with animosity and malice, and do not believe in the religion. This state of mind is the worst and most dangerous. If anyone dies in this state of mind, he will to hell.

2. Neel (Blue) Leshya:

The people in this state of mind are proud, haughty, and lazy. They are unreliable and other people avoid their company. They are cheaters, cowards, and hypocrites.

Such people also avoid the religious discourses. If anyone dies in this state of mind, he gets reborn as a plant.

3. **Kapot (Brown) Leshya:**

The people in this state of mind always remain sad and gloomy. They find faults in others and are vindictive. They boast about themselves, become excited over small matters, and lack mental balance. If anyone dies in this state of mind, he gets reborn as a bird or an animal.

4. **Tejo (Red) Leshya:**

People in this state of mind are very careful about their actions and discriminate between good and evil. They know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. They are kind, benevolent, religious, and lead a harmonious life. If anyone dies in this state of mind, may get reborn as a human being.

5. **Padma (Yellow) Leshya:**

People in this state of mind are kind and benevolent and forgive everyone, even their enemies. They observe some austerities and are vigilant in keeping their vows till their last breath. They remain unaffected by joys and sorrows. If anyone dies in this leshya, he gets reborn in heaven as a celestial being.

6. **Shukla (White) Leshya:**

There are two levels of this leshyas. The People in this state of mind strictly observe the principles of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-attachment. They are trustworthy, treat every soul as if it was their own soul, and do not have any ill feelings even for their enemies. They remain calm even if someone abuses them. If anyone dies in this state of mind, he gets reborn as a human being or an angel. The people who have perfected this state of mind where there is no more attachment or hatred and treat everyone alike. They do not become happy or sad. Their state of mind is the purest. If anyone dies in this perfected state of mind, he or she will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

CONCLUSION

The states of the mind and accumulation of karmic matter have a relationship. Karmas can be auspicious or inauspicious depending upon what kinds of leshya prevails. In inauspicious karma are accumulated with black, blue or brown leshya and auspicious karma are accumulated with red, yellow and white leshyas.