

LESSON 04

MRIGAVATI RESULTS OF GREAT FAITH AND PENANCE

There once lived a king by the name of Shatanik in the city of Kaushambi. His queen was named Mrigavati. King Chandrapradhyot of Ujjain was his biggest enemy. King Chandrapradhyot was enchanted on seeing Queen Mrigavati and asked Shatanik to send her to his harem; if he did not do so, he would face a war. On getting the message from Chandrapradhyot, Shatanik got shocked and died. So Mrigavati got very disheartened and afraid, and she feared molestation at the hands of Chandrapradhyot. She was a courageous woman, though, and asked the ministers to shut the gates of Kaushambi.

King Chandrapradhyot tried to besiege the city and tried to capture Mrigavati. Then, Mrigavati sent a message to him, which read, "I have a small child. I want to protect the kingdom, but the fort is old, and enemies will invade it. Send me strong bricks that are produced in Ujjain. Make my fort strong with your bricks, store grain for six months time, and then I shall be with you." Mrigavati used this trick in her hour of most difficulty. Chandrapradhyot agreed to the demands of the Queen and deployed his soldiers to carry out the orders of Mrigavati. Bricks were bought to make the fort strong and grains were stored. Mrigavati was surprised at this, and 6 months later, she asked her ministers to close the city gates again. Soon after, Chandrapradhyot besieged the city again, angered with Mrigavati.

Mrigavati then composed herself and sat in a lonely corner of the palace facing the direction of the rambling of Lord Mahavira and started to meditate. She renounced her body and food and remained in meditation (in the posture of Kaushag or kayotsarga). Whenever there is difficulty, face it bravely. As is your sacrifice, so will be the response. The Lord Mahavira came to Kaushambi and camped outside the city in one of the gardens. Mrigavati came to know this and felt very happy. She finished her Kaushag and opened the gates to the city. The ministers all feared that Chandrapradhyot would invade the city, but Mrigavati was confident that there would be no harm.

She approached Mahavira with an assembly of citizens and ministers. Now, Chandrapradhyot was also a great devotee of Mahavira and he also went to hear the sermon of the Lord out of respect. After the sermon was over, Mrigavati stood up and said to Lord Mahavira, "I want to accept nun hood if Chandrapradhyot gives me permission. I entrust my child to him." Then she put her son in the lap of the silent King. All the evil aims of Chandrapradhyot were dashed to the ground. Thus, Mrigavati protected her chastity by accepting nun hood. What a grand faith, what a deep commitment!

This was the result of great faith and penance. There is no peace or happiness in this world. Every one has great misery and sadness. Hence in this life we should try to free ourselves from this karmic matter by practicing penance. In no other birth can there be such an availability to practice religious activities. Let us make a beginning in this human birth, to get disassociated from the Karmas that bind us to this miserable cycle of birth and death. It is only then can the soul experience what is God-hood and can be God

itself.