

## LESSON 12

## KING HANSA

In the city of Rajpur, there was a king named Hansa. He was a fair and just king. He was known for his devotion to truth and nonviolence. On the top of Mount Ratnasringa, there stood a beautiful temple that was dedicated to the first Tirthankara, Rushabhdev. During the month of Chaitra, when the full moon appeared, people came from far away places to visit and worship in the temple. Once, the king also decided to visit the temple. He gave control of his kingdom temporarily to his council of ministers and left with the members of the royal household on this spiritual mission.

A few days after king Hansa departed, another king named Arjuna attacked king Hansa's city. In spite of strong fight, king Hansa's army was defeated and many of the generals lost their lives on the battlefield. King Arjuna gained the control of the palace and the treasury. Arjun sat on the throne and enforced his authority over the entire kingdom.

King Hansa heard the story of this defeat on the way to the temple. The king's courtiers were very upset and advised him that he should return to the city. The king said, "I have given up the control of kingdom and we are on spiritual mission and that is what we should be thinking about. So let us keep going to the temple." The king's courtiers were unhappy about the king's decision and worried about the safety of their families at home. One by one they all dropped out and now only one umbrella-bearer servant was left with the king.

On the way to the temple the king got lost in the forest. Now he was concerned about their own safety so he took off his royal dress and jewelry and gave them to his servant. While walking through the forest, this servant also got separated from the king.

As the king walked further, all of a sudden a deer ran in front of him and disappeared. Right after that a hunter came running with a bow in his hand and asked the king if he had seen the deer. The king knew that if he told the truth, the deer would get killed. So he decided not to answer the question and kept on telling other irrelevant things. So he said that he came from Rajpur. The hunter asked him again about the deer and he answered that he was the king. The hunter was very upset with his answers and left with anger.

By now the king was tired, and rested under a tree. He over heard the discussion going on in the bush about robbing the monks who would pass through this way in next two days. The king got concerned about the safety of the monks. While he was thinking what he can do, some policemen approached him and asked if he saw any suspicious people looking like robbers. They said, "These people are very dangerous and we have heard that they harm the holy people. We are sent to capture or even shoot them if necessary to protect the holy people."

The king was once again in dilemma whether to tell the truth. He was concerned that if he told about those people then they would be harmed and if not, monks would be harmed. He thought, "By telling the truth if someone is going to get harmed or killed then telling that truth is not the truth. Truth is supposed to protect and not harm anyone." He said,

"My friends, you are asked to guard the monks. Why not go and look after those monks and worry about robbers if they confront the monks." The policemen felt better and left to join the monks.

The robbers who were hiding in the bush heard all this. They were amazed by the mercy shown by this stranger. They came out and thanked him for saving their lives, and told him that they were at his service. The king advised them, "My dear friends, give up harassing people and fugitive life and be good citizens." The robbers promised that they would not harm the monks anymore and would try to give up robbery and left.

As if this was not enough, a group of horsemen came and asked him if he had seen king Hansa. The king asked, "What do you want from king Hansa?" They explained that they were the trusted men of king Arjuna and they had been told to catch king Hansa and kill him. King Hansa thought for a while and said, "I am king Hansa. Carry out your duty as told by your king." After saying that, he closed his eyes and stood in meditation, and started reciting the Navkar Mantra.

All at once, a dev (angel) made his appearance and said, "Oh, king! I am overwhelmed by your truthfulness and compassion. I have captured king Arjun as prisoner and gave control of your kingdom to your ministers. Today is a great day for worship, and the temple is too far from here. There is no way you would reach there in time. My chariot is at your service. Please let me take you there."

The king Hansa was surprised by the miraculous turn of the events. In the company of an angel god, he reached the summit of Ratnasringa in time to worship. The angel god then escorted him to his kingdom. King Hansa pardoned King Arjun and released his soldiers immediately. The angel appointed four lieutenants to look after the safety of the king and his kingdom and departed. Then king Hansa, once again, ruled the city of Rajpur, and the people were happy.