

## LESSON 14

## VAJRAKUMAR

In the city of Tumbivan, there lived a rich Brahmin called Dhangiri. He had a beautiful wife named Sunanda. Their life was full of joy. After a while, when Sunanda was pregnant she saw a beautiful dream one night. She told this to her husband who was also a scholar. He told his wife that she would give birth to a bright and beautiful child. She felt very happy and the time was slipping just fine.

One day, a Jain Acharya Sinhgiri came to the city. Both, Dhangiri and Sunanda went regularly to listen to his sermons. Dhangiri's soul was awakened by these sermons, and he lost interest in his wealth, family, and worldly affairs. He decided to give up his worldly life. He told about his decision to his wife. She was shocked. She tried to convince him to stay and enjoy their life. She also said that since they were going to have a child it would be better to stay together. But Dhangiri did not change his mind. Sunanda was the daughter of a religious merchant Dhanpal and she had the religious understanding. Therefore, she gave him the permission to go ahead. She was consoled that, at least, she was the wife of a virtuous man.

As the time went by, Sunanda gave birth to a very handsome boy. He was lovable because he had smile on his face all the time. Everybody who saw him liked him at the very first glance. Sunanda celebrated his first birthday. She felt better that at least she had some company but this happiness did not last too long. One day, some ladies from the neighborhood were visiting her, and started talking about her husband. One of them said, "If Dhangiri would not have taken diksha (process to be a monk) then he would have celebrated the birthday with more extravaganza than her." The child, although a baby, heard the word "Diksha" and started thinking. He felt as if he had heard the word diksha before. While thinking about it, he suddenly remembered his past life. He realized that he was on a right spiritual path. He decided that he should take advantage of being born as a human and should utilize this life to uplift his soul further. He should become a monk like his dad. He also realized that his mother would not let him go, because he was the only hope and joy for her. So he started thinking about what should be done to get her permission.

At last, he came to a decision that since his mother would not let him go willingly, he should create a situation whereby she might get tired of him and give him up. He was still a little boy in the crib when he thought, "If I keep crying all the time then she would get tired of me, and maybe she will try to get rid of me." He put his thought to work right away. He started crying. His mother came running to comfort him but he just kept crying. She tried everything but nothing helped to quiet him down. She took him to the doctors and took advice from others but nothing worked. The child's trick worked. Even their neighbors who liked this child so much also got tired of him. Finally, his mother was so much fed up with him that she started thinking about how to get rid of him. The child was now six months old, when Dhangiri muni (child's father) and Acharya Sinhgiri visited this city again. Sunanda came to know about this and thought of giving away this child to his father.

At the usual time for alms (going to collect the food), Dhangiri muni asked the permission of acharya to go for alms. Acharya Sinhgiri told him, "Dhangiriji, today you may accept even a live thing, if it is offered". Acharya was very knowledgeable and he knew what alms muni Dhangiri was going to get. So he gave his permission ahead of time. Although muni Dhangiri did not understand what his teacher meant, he left to go for alms. On the route different houses, he arrived at Sunanda's house. He said, "Dharma Labh" (You may attain religion). Sunanda recognized this voice. She welcomed muni Dhangiri and expressed happiness to see him again. She invited him to enter the house for food.

Meanwhile, the young boy also heard muni Dhangiri's words Dharma Labh. So he thought that this was the best opportunity for his trick. So he started crying. This irritated his mother and she told the monk, "You are lucky to be able to uplift your soul, but I am tired with the burden of your child. He does nothing but to cry. He does not even let me rest and I am very unhappy. Please, accept him so there will be a peace in the house." The child heard these words and he was very happy in his mind. He hoped that muni would accept her proposal. Muni Dhangiri remembered the words of his teacher spoken right before he left for the alms. Now he understood what his teacher meant. He told, "Sunanda, if you really want to give this child away then I will accept him but think twice. Once you give him away you would not be able to get him back. You will have no right on this child after that." On hearing this, the child started crying even louder. She said, "I do not want to hear this crying anymore. I am so sick and tired of him that I do not want him around at all. I wish I would not see him even in my future life. You can take him forever."

She picked up the child and put him in muni's pot holder bag. As soon as the boy was given to muni, he stopped crying and started smiling. Sunanda was surprised by this and kept looking at the boy. But she was determined to give him away. Muni left with the child to go to the upashraya (place where monks stay for a short time). Acharya Sinhgiri saw that muni Dhangiri was carrying something heavy. So he asked him, "what is so heavy in your beg?", as if he did not know what was going on. When the muni opened his beg his teacher saw the handsome smiling boy. Since he was so heavy, Acharya named him "Vajrakumar".

Acharya Sinhgiri gave Vajrakumar to one of a prominent Jain shrawaka (householder), and told him to expose the child to religious teachings as he was destined to be a great acharya in the future. The shrawaka gave the child to his wife and told her what Acharya Sinhgiri wanted them do. She was very religious and agreed to the wishes of acharya. She loved the boy so much that she would not let him go anywhere without her. She always took him to upashraya to see sadhvis (nuns). Even when he was little, he understood and remembered whatever the nuns were learning. By the time he was three years old, he learned up to eleven Angas (Jain scriptures). He was respectful to everybody and was talking very intelligently.

One day, one of Sunanda's friends came to her house and said, "Do you know that your crying son spends a lot of the time at our upashraya? I have never heard him crying. He is

a very charming and lovable child." Sunanda tried to take her words lightly but after all she was a mother. Her desire to see her son grew intense. She started thinking, "How could I do such a thing? How could I give away my precious child to a muni? After all, he is my child. I should get him back."

A few days later, Acharya Sinhgiri and muni Dhangiri came back to that town again. She went to the upashraya. She approached muni Dhangiri and asked him "Please, give me my son back. I can not live without him any more." Muni Dhangiri said, "I told you at that time, once you give him away you will not get him back. Remember, you said you did not want him then or in any other life. We cannot give back what we take."

Sunanda said, "I do not know why I did that. I can not live without my son. Please find a way to give me back my son."

Acharya Sinhgiri and muni Dhangiri tried to convince her to forget him, but she was determined to get him back.

At last, she decided to go to the king, and requested, "Please, get me my son back. My husband has become monk and I am lonely. He is the only child I have. Please, ask them to return him back to me."

The king heard the whole story from Sunanda. He said, "Let me find out what happened, and I will let you know shortly." He inquired about the situation, and found out that because Sunanda was tired of his crying, she had voluntarily given away her child.

The king called Sunanda and told her, "Sunanda, when muni Dhangiri came to your house for alms, you gave your child away voluntarily because you were fed up with his crying. Once you give away something, you cannot have it back."

Sunanda said, "Oh King, this is not a thing, this is my own flash and he is the only hope for me. Please, do something to get him back. I cannot live without him."

The king could feel the motherly affection and sincerity in her voice. He was also puzzled. Ultimately, he told Sunanda, "I will call you and muni Dhangiri in the courthouse, and let Vajrakumar decide who wants to go with. Is it okay with you?" Sunanda said, "Yes, Your Majesty."

The next day, the king's court house was jammed full with the people to see what would happen to the child. Sunanda came with toys, sweets, clothes and other novelty items to attract Vajrakumar. The king and all his ministers came. Muni Dhangiri came with other monks. Everybody including the king in the court house paid homage to the monks. Vajrakumar also came.

The king told Vajrakumar, "Vajrakumar, although you are very little, you are a very intelligent boy." Pointing towards his mother, he said, "She is your mother. She is very affectionate and loving. She has lots of toys, sweets and good clothes. She wants you

back." "On the other side," pointing towards monk Dhangiri he continued, "there is the monk who has given up the worldly life. He is full of restraint and lives the life of renunciation. He is very virtuous and a revered person. He also wants to keep you with him to teach you spiritual life. Now, you decide which way you want to go. Do you want to go with your mother or with the monk?"

There was a pin drop silence. Everybody was eagerly waiting to see what Vajrakumar decided. Vajrakumar was also serious today. He got up, and as he walked he looked sometime at his mother, and sometime towards muni Dhangiri. Sunanda started screaming, "Son, come here. See, I have brought for you toys, sweets and new clothes. Come, come to me."

On the other side muni Dhangiri did not have anything with him except ogho. He showed that to Vajrakumar.

Vajrakumar picked up the ogho and started dancing with it. He started smiling again. Then, he decided to sit down with muni Dhangiri, and was looking at everybody with a joyful face.

Everybody in the court house including the king and Sunanda were amazed that the young boy decided for the monkhood instead of luxurious worldly life. Sunanda accepted the decision of Vajrakumar. She wished him success. Sunanda celebrated Vajrakumar's diksha with joy and delight. Later on Vajrakumar became a great acharya.