

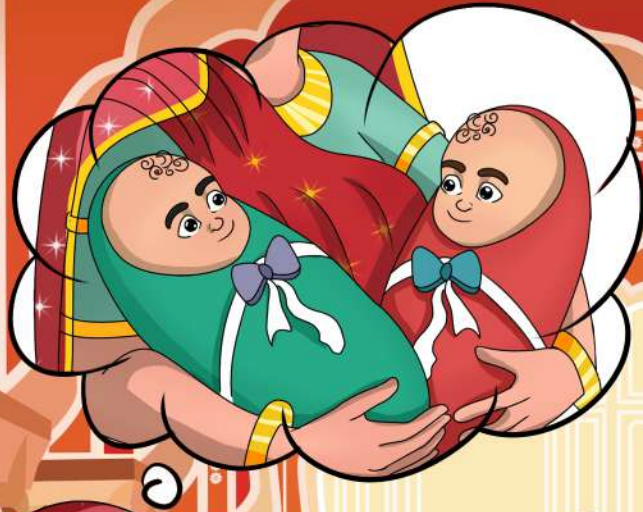
King Ikhukar



Six Jivas were living in heavenly abodes as angels. After completing the angelic life four of them were born in Ikhukar town. One of them became King Ikhukar, the second became his Queen Kamlavati, the third Bhrigu, the bishop and the fourth Yasha who was married to Bhrigu.



Bhrigu had no child. His wife Yasha was keen to have a child. She worshipped many deities but her wish was not fulfilled. Two angels in heaven found their garlands wither.



They realized that their remaining angelic life is for not more than six months. They recollected their past life. They found that they had been monks. They observed austerities. So they got angelic life. They decided that they should become monks after they are born as men. They also learned through intuition that they will be born in Bhrigu's house.



They transformed their bodies as monks and went to Yasha. Yasha bowed to them and requested,

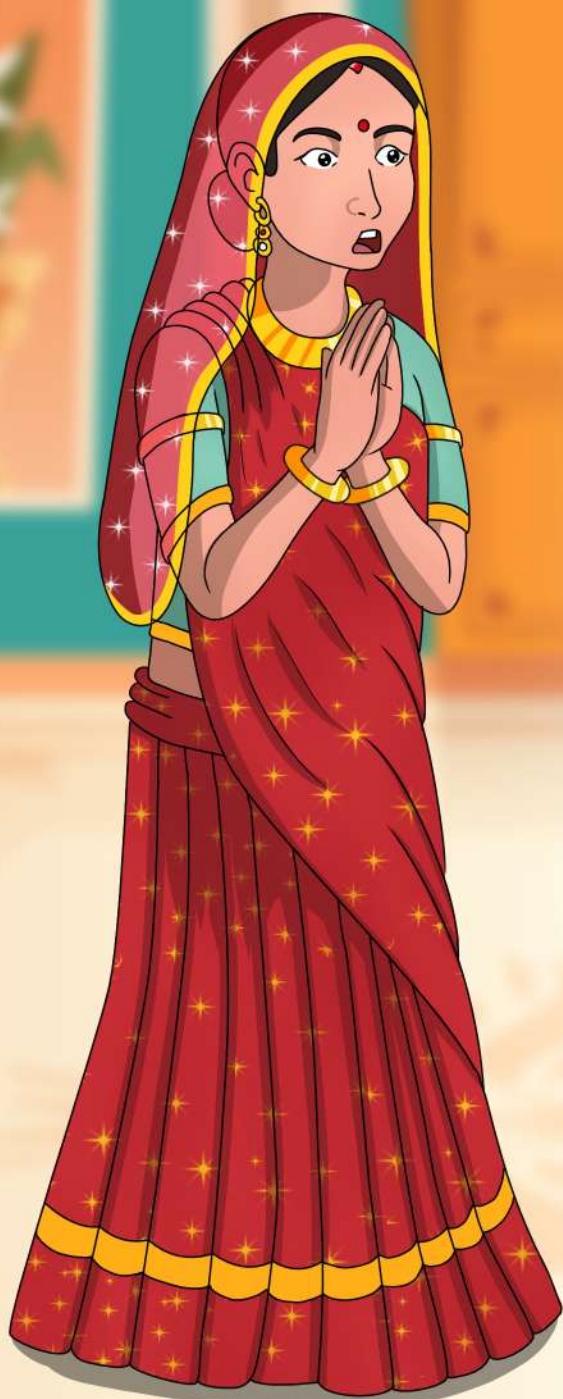
"O Reverend Monks, I have all the comforts of life. But I have no son. This drawback is causing me pain. My husband is also worried that he will die without any children. Please let me know if I shall have a child."

The monk said,

"Yasha, you will give birth to two sons. But they will become monks in their youth. You should not stop them."



Yasha promised that she would not stop them from becoming monks. The angels then disappeared.



At the proper time Yasha gave birth to two sons. They were very handsome. Yasha loved them very much. Now she reminded her husband Bhrigu, the prophecy of the angelmonks that they shall become monks in youth.



Bhrigu thought of a plan. He constructed a beautiful house far away from the town. He shifted with his family to that house. He told his sons to be careful of monks. He told them that monks carry away the children. They keep sharp weapons with them.



One day wandering for Bhiksha monks came there. Bhrigu and his wife gave them food in a hurry. Bhrigu told them that his sons are very naughty. They do not like the monks and beat them. They should therefore move away quickly. The monks then left.



Bhrigu 's sons saw the monks. They felt afraid. They climbed up a tree. The monks after taking alms sat under the same tree. They took out their food and started eating. Bhrigu 's sons were looking at them from the tree top. They realized that their parents wrongly guided them about monks.



They came down. They bowed to the monks and learned from them about the path of liberation.



The boys then went to their father, Bhrigu and told him:

BOYS: Father, we have seen that human life is transitory. We see no pleasure in it. We want to be monks.

FATHER: It is mentioned in Vedas that there will be no better world for men without sons. You study Vedas, enjoy married life. After you have sons and live with them, you appoint them as head of the family and become monks.



BOYS: Father, there is no truth in your words. Study of Vedas shall not save you. Birth of sons cannot save you from the fruit of your actions. Sensual pleasures bring temporary happiness. They are followed by misers. They are mine of evils. They are an obstacle to liberation.

FATHER: People practice austerities for wealth and women. I have plenty of wealth. You can be married in a good family. Why do you want to ignore available pleasures?



BOYS: Riches and family cannot lead to liberation. They have no value in the practice of religion. They cannot save us from death. We shall control our desire and become monks to get liberation from birth and death.

FATHER: Arni-wood produces fire. Milk produces butter. Corn produces corn oil. Similarly the body produces soul and soul dies with the body. Soul is never separate from the body.



BOYS: Soul has no material form. So it cannot be known by senses. It is permanent. It is bound in the body to bear the fruit of Karmas. We did not know true Dharma. So we did bad actions and accumulated bad Karmas. We shall not do such acts in future. We shall become monks. We have no interest in the life of a householder. Mankind is harassed by one and taken hold of by the other. But the unfailing ones go by.

FATHER: I want to know what harasses mankind. Who takes hold of it? Whom do you call unfailing?



BOYS: Death harasses mankind. It is taken hold of by old age. The days are called unfailing ones. The days that pass do not come again.

FATHER: Let us live together and acquire righteousness. Later I shall also become a monk with you.

BOYS: Who knows when death shall come? Can you escape death? Do you know that you shall not die? We cannot wait any longer. We shall become monks. If we die following the principles of monkhood we may not be born again.



BHRIGU became helpless. He found that his sons shall no longer remain in the household. He then went to his wife Yasha. Their talk was as under:
BHRIGU: There is no domestic life without sons. A tree without branches is no longer a tree. It is a trunk. I also therefore will become a monk.
YASHA: You have collected many things for pleasure. Do not bother about sons. We should first enjoy these things. In later life we shall renounce.



BHRIGU: We have finished enjoying pleasures. Our life is drawing to its close. I am not leaving pleasures for an unholy life. I am now disinterested in sensual happiness and suffering. I shall lead the life of a monk.

YASHA: The life of a monk is full of misery, my dear. Enjoy the pleasures with me.



BHRIGU: My dear, a snake casts off the slough of his body and goes free. My sons have also left behind pleasures. Why should I not follow them? Yasha then asked why she should stay behind. There is no pleasure in life without sons and husband. So she also decided to become a nun.



It was the practice that the property of the family goes to the treasury when there is no successor.



Queen Kamlavati saw the property being brought to the King's treasure. She then told the King,

"A person who takes the vomit (thrown up, hear properties) is not praised. Bhrigu has left his property and he and his family members are leaving worldly life. You are accepting their property. Your desire can never be fulfilled. This property shall not go with you at the time of your death. I feel this life is like a cage. I shall leave the world and become a nun. We are fools. We feel happy when others leave and their property comes to us. Do you not see that the world is burning with love and hatred? Those who have left worldly life move freely like the wind. O King, I have learned the truth. I shall become a nun."



King Ikhukar then realized the truth. He found that sensual pleasures cannot give real happiness. Real happiness is in completely controlling the desires. So King Ikhukar, Queen Kamlavati, Bhrigu, his wife Yasha and their two sons adopted monkhood. All of them truly practiced Dharma and attained liberation.

