

During Ayambil, the story of King Shripal and Mayanasundari is recited. The story describes Mayanasundari understanding and faith on the Jain philosophy of Karma and her total devotion to Navapad.



Most Jains will be familiar with the story. The story occurred at the time of Bhagwan Munisuvarat Swami (The 20th Tirthankara), about a million years ago.

Prince Shripal was the son of King Singhrath & Queen Kamal-prabha. The King died when the Prince was five years old. Ajitsen, brother of King Singhrath seized the throne and planned to get rid of Shripal to make his position as King secure. When Kamal-prabhä became aware of Ajitsen's vicious plan, she fled from Champä-nagar along with her son, pursued by Ajitsen's soldiers. As the soldiers got close, she did not know how to save her son. She saw a group of lepers. In desperation, she asked them to take her son into their custody. They warned her about the risk of her son contracting the disease of leprosy from them. However, she had no choice if she wanted to save her son, so she entrusted her son to them. In due course, Shripal contracted leprosy.

The leper colony, nearly 700 strong, were very fond of Shripal and made him their leader and named him Umar Rana. Under his leadership, the group traveled from place to place and one day arrived at Ujjayini city, ruled by King Prajapal, who had two daughters named Sursundari and Mayana-sundari.

Both daughters were beautiful and intelligent. Once the King decided to test their knowledge and both passed with flying colours. On asking both, by whose favour did they get their knowledge, amenities, and luxuries, Sursundari humbly replied that she gained all that by the King's favour.

Mayana, who had total faith in the religious philosophy she had studied at length, replied: "O father! The great king! With due respect to you, all the comfort that you provide me are only because of my meritorious (Punya) Karma. Every one gets whatever is written in his or her destiny due to his or her Karma. You yourself cannot give or take away anything."

The King was greatly displeased with her reply and his ego deeply dented. The king was enraged and wanted to teach Mayana a lesson. He got his chance when the lepers and Shripal arrived in the court. The Lepers demanded a bride for their king. The King married off Mayana-sundari to Shripal despite protests by Mayana's mother.

Mayana accepted Shripal in the guise of Umar as her husband and took care of him.





Mayana had great faith in Jain Dharma. She took her husband along with the lepers, to see Jain Acharya Munichandra - a well-known scholar of the time for the cure. He suggested them to perform the Siddhachakra Mahapuja which included a particular type of fasting known as Navpad Ayambil Oli for a period of nine days. They had to do this for four and half years which results in Nine Āyambil - Oli (one every six months). Eventually, all of them including Shripal got cured due to the power of Ayambil.

Shripal, looked like the handsome Prince that he had been. Mayana was very happy and blessed her Karma for that change too. Since the change was apparently brought about by devotion to Navapad and practicing the penance, both of them continued to observe it even after that.

Mayana-sundari story showed the world that the soul alone is responsible for its happiness and sorrows and must bear its own fruits. It teaches us that our actions and beliefs shape our destiny, and that true happiness and contentment can be attained regardless of our circumstances. Happiness or misery is a state of mind regardless of the situation one is in. If you think you are miserable, then you will be miserable. Full faith in the theory of Karma is essential to be content and happy.

The story reminds us to remain steadfast in our faith, strive for righteousness, and trust in the intricate workings of karma and clearly illuminates the importance of effort and determination to change one's fate.



Successful sportsman and artists, any successful person achieve their success by determination, continual effort and perseverance.

A hero of mine, the Late Bruce Lee's, martial art expertise, immortalised in many movies was simply the result of determination and perseverance. He knew that a focused mind, daily training and discipline would bring him results.

"Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves.

Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water.

If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup.

You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle.

You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot.

Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend."

Bruce Lee

