

TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND BETAAL THE VAMPIRE

The stories of TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND BETAAL THE VAMPIRE is an icon of Indian storey telling, a brain teaser. Although there are 32 stories 25 are covered in Betal Panchisi. I will be sharing with you shortly, some of the stories that are available with me. I am sure, after some time my colleague will definitely let me know the stories which I could not lay hand and help me in endeavoring my efforts.

Baital Pancsihi:

A very famous account of human and vetal interaction is chronicled in the Baital Pancsihi ('Twenty Five Tales Of The Vampire) which consist of twenty five tales chronicling the adventures of King Vikramaditya and how his wits were pitted against a vetal a sorcerer had asked him to capture for him. Vetals have great wisdom and insight into the human soul in addition to being able to see into the past and future and are thus very valuable acquisitions to wise men.

This particular vetal inhabited a tree in a crematorium/graveyard and the only way it could be captured was by standing still and completely silent in the middle of the graveyard/crematorium. However, every single time the king tried this vetal would tempt him with a story that ended in a question the answering of which King Vikramaditya could not resist. As a result the vetal would re-inhabit the tree and the king was left to try again.

Only after relating twenty five tales does the vetal allow the king to bear him back to the sorcerer, hence the name Baital Pancsihi.

The vetal informs the king of the treacherous sorcerers' true intentions. The sorcerer means to trick Vikramaditya, possessor of thirty two virtues, and sacrifice him to a Goddess which would give him control over the vetal and his kind.

The vetal advises the king to ask the sorcerer how to pay his respects to the Goddess (which the sorcerer would ask him to do and use this opportunity to sacrifice him) and behead him while he is distracted. On following the vetal's advice the king is blessed and granted a boon by Lord Indra. The king wishes

the sorcerer to come back to life and wishes that henceforth he would have the help and advice of the vetal whenever he needed it.

The Baital Panshi was originally written in Sanskrit and is said to be the inspiration for the Arabian Nights and subsequent collections of fantastic mythological tales.

King Vikramaditya

In days gone by, Vikramaditya, a great king ruled over a prosperous kingdom from his capital at Ujjain. Mighty as the sun - he was a king with immense love for learning as well as for adventure.

King Vikram sat in his court for hours every day, rewarding the virtuous, punishing the evil doers, and encouraging scholars, poets, musicians, and artists.

During such sessions, numerous people came to meet him. They brought for him gifts of jewels, gold or other precious things.



Among such visitors was a mendicant who, on every visit, presented the king with a fruit. The king accepted his humble gift with the same show of courtesy with which he would have accepted a diamond from a rich merchant.

He used to hand over the fruit to the royal storekeeper. One morning, the mendicant gave him his usual gift just when the king was going out to inspect his stables. The king accepted the fruit all right and went out while playing with it, tossing it up and then catching it as it came down.

It so happened that after a while the fruit fell down from his hand. Instantly a monkey who was on a nearby tree swooped down upon it and tried to crack it with his teeth.

The fruit broke and pop came out a handy ball of ruby. The king's surprise knew no bounds. He picked up the ruby and sent for an expert.

He examined it and said it was the finest ruby he had ever seen. "What did you do with all the fruits I have been giving you?" the anxious king asked of his store-keeper.

"My lord, I threw them all into our store through the window!" replied the store-keeper. The king ordered him to fetch them, and when they were produced before him, he was further astonished and delighted to see that each one of the fruits contained a precious ruby.

When the mendicant came the next day, the king gave all attention to him and asked him: "Why have you bestowed so much kindness on me?" "To be frank, I expect you to help me in a very important work of mine, O king, but of that I'll tell you in confidence," replied the mendicant.



The king led him into the private audience chamber. The mendicant then said: "I know how brave you are. Hence I will ask you to do something which requires courage.

But, for that, you must meet me under a Banyan tree in the center of the cremation ground beyond the city, at night, on the 14th day of the dark half of the month."

Vikram hesitated for a while. But the spirit of adventure got the better of him. He agreed to meet the mendicant at the appointed hour. It was a dark night with a terrible gale blowing. When Vikram approached the cremation ground, he was received by the howling foxes and jackals. As he made his way through the ground, he saw in the flashes from lightning fearful faces of ghouls and ghosts staring at him or dancing around him.

But undaunted, Vikram reached the banyan tree. The mendicant was delighted to see him. "Now, what's the work you want me to perform?" asked the king. "At the northern-most corner of this ground stands a very ancient tree. You will see a corpse hanging from one of its branches. Go and fetch it for me. I am seeking certain occult powers which I will get only if a king brings this particular corpse to me and if I practice certain rites sitting on it," disclosed the mendicant.

To fetch a corpse that hung on a distant tree in that stormy night was not at all a pleasing task. But King Vikram braved the weather and the darkness as well as the menacing yells and shrieks of ghosts and ghouls and soon reached

the old tree. Raising a burning torch he found the corpse hanging.

He climbed the tree and with a stroke of his sword cut the rope with which the corpse had been tied to the branch. The corpse fell to the ground, and gave out an eerie cry.



Vikram, not knowing that the corpse was possessed by a spirit, thought that the fellow was alive. He came down and lifted up the body lying sprawled on the ground. At that the corpse began to laugh.

Surprised, the king asked: "Why do you laugh?" No sooner had the king opened his mouth than the corpse slipped away from his hands and hung on to the tree by itself. Six times did King Vikram bring it down and six times the corpse gave him the slip. At last Vikram realized that the corpse did the mischief only when he talked.

On the seventh time Vikram put the corpse on his shoulder and began walking quietly. He had gone only a few steps when the corpse which, in fact, was a vampire, said: "O King, tiresome is the way. Let me tell you a tale to keep you amused!"

Reward of life

It was a dark night and was raining from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. There were strange noises and in between the thunderclaps the moaning of jackals could be heard. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces and there were strange and mysterious laughter of the spirits.



But in spite of such a weird atmosphere king Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree to bring the corpse down and soon he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder.

The Betaal that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, I pity you as you are making untiring efforts without relaxing as if you wish to achieve something. Instead of enjoying a comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You seem to be quite adamant. Such arrogance may not help you keep your promise if you had given one to anybody. You'll realize the futility of the whole thing if only you listen to my story." And the vampire began his narration.

Long long ago, Kanchannagar was being ruled by King Chandradeep . His daughter was Indumati. Being an only child, the princess was brought up like a boy, and given training in the use of arms and warfare. It was certain that whoever wed her would also become the ruler of Kanchannagar. The princes of many of the neighbouring kingdoms cherished a desire to marry Indumati, who was, besides everything else, extremely beautiful.



Whenever the king broached the subject of marriage, Princess Indumati, would hesitate to give him a definite answer, but one day Indumati said yes to his father, "Yes, father, but...". The king stared at her, waiting for her to complete the sentence.

"Whoever marries me must be strong and brave. And he must succeed in the tests that I give." Indumati then spelt out what kind of tests she was contemplating for her suitors.

The king was horrified. "Don't insist on any such test," he advised the princess. "They're all hazardous. No one will come forward to undergo the tests for fear their life. Just forget about them."

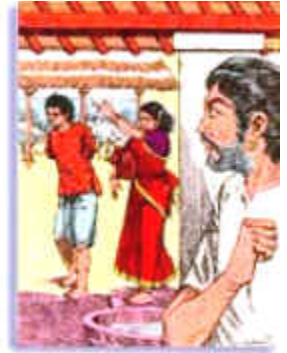
"Don't worry, father," Indumati, assured Chandradeep. "All those who profess that they love me than their life will certainly take these tests. You just watch!"

The king consulted his ministers. They came out with a suggestion. "If the princess is determined to impose the tests, let her wish be carried out," said the prime Minister. "But when we make the announcement, let us not spell out the details. They will be let known only at time of the test."

Chandradeep agreed to the suggestion. The royal announcement about the princess wedding merely stated that the suitors would have to take certain tests.. The announcement was made in all the neighbouring kingdoms, including Jayanagar, where a young man named Kurupshana heard it.

He had been born with both hands stunted. His mother died soon after he was born, and his father took a second wife. The boy was named Kurupshana, the ugly looking.

His stepmother was not at all kind- hearted, and she ill-treated him much. It was seldom that he even got a full meal. She knew that the boy, with his handicap, would not be much use to her.



Kurupshana did not utter a word in protest or by way of complaint. But he lamented within himself. 'Mother is always scolding & harassing me under one pretext or other. Won't there be an end to all this? They feel that I'm no good and I had better die! I must take this as a challenge and show them that I too, can face life.'

He decided to go to Kanchannagar. Quite a few princes had by then assembled at Kanchannagar. There were some young men, too, wishing to try their luck, if the princes were to fail. They all spent their time guessing what kind of tests the princess would put them through. Some of them thought it could be wrestling. Some others thought it could be their performance with the bow and arrow.

The time came to announce the details of the tests. The King & Princess Indumati came to the stage and sat next to the king, and on the other side of the king sat the Prime Minister. He got up from his seat and faced the princely suitors. "The contest is about to start! Several suitors are present here to win the hand of princess Indumati. It is her wish that they are put to certain tests. Whoever succeeds in the test will qualify to wed her. You all can see the wall in front of you. You have to climb the wall and jump down into the three- tiered cage of sharp knives. The test is, while doing so, you must be careful not to injure yourself. There should not be a single scratch on your body from the blades of the knives. Whoever is willing to participate in the test may step forward!"

Many princes rose from their seats, and went and took a good look at the high wall as well as the cage of knives. One by one they went back to their seats. The wall looked too high for them; the cage was placed deep down below; and the space between the knives was very small. They would not be able to jump down without injuring themselves. None dared even to make an attempt.

As they went back to their seats, some of them protested. "What kind of test is this? It could have been a sword- fight or wrestling or archery, or any other of that kind. But not this! It is almost trap from where one can't escape with one's life. Why should anyone sacrifice his life for the hand of a mad princess in the world?"



It looked as though no suitor was willing to take the test. The king was in a dilemma. He regretted that his daughter did not accept his advice and desite from insisting ontests.

Kurupshana was watching all this from his seat. suddenly a thought struck him. After all, people back home, like his stepmother, were only wishing for his death. If he were to succeed in the test by the grace of god, he stood to win the hand of none else than a princess!

So, why should he not try his luck? And if he were to die, nobody would grieve over his fate. He left his seat and walked up to King Chandradeep . "Your Majesty, can I have your permission to take the test?"

The king was shocked. Who was this ugly- looking handicapped youth? Suppose he were to succeed in the test? His daughter would have to marry him- according to the rules of the game. And if that happened, she would have to spend the rest of her life in the company of a handicapped husband!

Princess Indumati, too, was in a similar dilemma. She was expecting to be married off to a prince, brave, daring and handsome. But look at this ugly youth! Would it be her fate to become his wife? She regretted she ever thought of tests for her suitors.

Suddenly a doubt arose in her mind: would this young man be able to climb that high wall? How would he avoid a scratch while jumping into the cage when he had no hands to guide him through the sharp knives? She almost concluded

that he would only meet with his end if he were to be foolish enough to attempt jumping down from the wall. King Chandradeep waited for a moment to know his daughter's reaction, and then gave the permission to Kurupshana.

Kurupshana went up the wall and asked the soldiers to take him to the top of the wall.



He then took a good look at the cage and jumped down. He landed between the knives arrayed all around on all the three tiers. He was unscratched! A loud cheer arose from the audience.

The cage was slowly raised, to allow the young man to come out. He then walked towards the king and the princess. Their face had gone a milky white.



Kurupshana realised their predicament. "O King! Please don't worry. I didn't wish to marry the princess. I had only wanted to take a challenge and I know I've succeeded.

That itself is a big reward of my life and I can now face life." He bowed low before the king and retreated.

The vampire ended his narration there and turned to King Vikramaditya. " O King! Didn't Kurupshana behave like a foolish? If he had no intention of marrying the princess, why did he at all decide to undergo the test?

And after having succeeded in the test and qualified to wed the princess, why did not want to marry her? What was the reward he was referring to when he said he didn't want to aspire for anything more? If you know the answer and still decide not to satisfy me, beware, your head will be blown to pieces!

""True, Kurupshana was a handicapped young man," said the king. " He was fully aware of his handicap that bothered his stepmother. He really wished that she changed her opinion about him. She should not any longer feel that he was no good. Instead she should know that where people with no handicap had failed, he could, despite his handicap, come out a victor.



That, for him, was the biggest reward he could aspire for. He decided to undergo the hazardous test not with the hope of marrying a princess. If he married her, he would one day be called upon to rule the kingdom. But as a ruler, he wouldn't be able even to hold sword.

If that was the case, it wouldn't be proper for him to marry her. That was why he gave up his claim to her hand. It was not any act of a foolish person.

On the contrary, it was the decision of an intelligent, wise person."



Betaal knew that king will definitely speak out the answer so he flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse along with him.

Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the Betaal.

The exchanged heads

Once upon a time there lived a washerman named Dhavala. He once spotted a very beautiful lady at pond, who happened to be the daughter of another washerman. He instantly fell in love with her and pleaded with his parents to ask her parents for her hand in marriage. His parents did accordingly and the girl, Madanasundari, got married to him with her parents consent. She then went with Dhavala to live with him.

Once the brother of Madanasundari, came to Dhavala to invite his sister and brother-in-law to their place for festival season. Dhavala agreed and the three of them were returning to Madanasundari's home. On the way they happened to pass by the temple of Durga Devi, the all powerful goddess of power. Her brother wanted to pay a visit to the goddess, and went to the temple. But as soon as he came near the goddess, he wanted to make a massive sacrifice to the goddess. So saying he cut his head off for the goddess. Madanasundari was worried and she then sent her husband to see what the matter was. On seeing the state of his brother-in-law, the husband was also moved deeply and he decided to offer his own head too to the goddess and cut his own head with his

scitmar. Madanasundari, after a long wait came and saw both her brother and husband lying on the ground and then decided to take her own life but asked the goddess to get the same brother and husband in the next life. The goddess was pleased and stopped her from dying and asked her to join their heads and bodies and then she granted them life. In a hurry, Madanasundari, exchanged the heads of her brother and husband and was perplexed.

Betaal stops and asks King Vikram asks this question: Who among the two is the husband of Madanasundari?

Vikram replies with a lot of thought, "The body that carries her husband's head is her husband. The head is the most important part of the human body, and the rest of the body is identified by the head."

As soon as Vikram had finished his answer, Betaal disappeared back to the tree.

The Three suitors

Once upon a time there was born a beautiful daughter, Mandaravati, to a very famous priest. When the daughter grew of age, the father was worried about her marriage. Once, three eligible bachelors came to the father and each asked him for the hand of the daughter. Each of them threatened to kill himself lest the daughter be married off to any other of the three. The father decided not to marry her off to anyone.

One day, she caught a very high pitched fever and died suddenly. All three of them, grief-struck, cremated the body of Mandaravati. One of them decided to stay there and slept on the ashes of Mandaravati. The other took her bones and went to the Ganges. The third became an ascetic and wandered off.

On one of his wanderings, the third one reached a brahmin's house. The brahmin, by power of a spell, was able to bring the dead alive from the ashes. This was in a book which the brahmin guarded safely. But the third suitor, in the stealth of night, stole this book and went back to the cremation ground of Mandaravati. The second one had returned from the Ganges with the holy water, and the first one was still there sleeping on the ashes.

Then he with the help of the other two, recited the spell from the book and lo Behold!! Mandaravati was reborn! Then the three of them started fighting about

whose wife she should be. Each of them claiming the revival being due to his effort

Betaal stops and asks King Vikram asks this question: Who among the three suitors should be the husband of Mandaravati?

Vikram replies with a lot of thought, "The person who gave her the life by reciting the spell is her creator, it could be her father. The person who took her bones to Ganges shall be her son. But the person who committed himself to the ground and slept on her ashes out of love, can be her husband."

As soon as Vikram had finished his answer, Betaal disappeared back to the tree

A promise not kept

It was a dark night and was raining from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. There were strange noises and in between the thunderclaps the moaning of jackals could be heard. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces and there were strange and mysterious laughter of the spirits.



But inspite of such a weird atmosphere king Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree to bring the corpse down and soon he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder.

The Betaal that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King , I pity you as you are making untiring efforts without relaxing as if you wish to achieve something. Instead of enjoying a comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You seem to be quite adamant. Such arrogance may not help you keep your promise if you had given one to anybody. You'll realize the futility of the whole thing if only you listen to my story."

The Betaal then narrated this story. The ruler of Kishanagar, Rajendra, was extremely strong and courageous. He was a good ruler and cared about his people very much as he would not do anything unjust. His subjects were happy and contented. They had no problems. His queen, Prema, gave birth to a beautiful daughter, Sona.

Being an only child, Sona enjoyed a lot of freedom and was brought up like a boy. She grew up clever not only in studies but in the use of the bow and arrow and

sword. She learnt the art of self-defence. When she reached marriageable age, her parents began searching for a suitable husband for her.

But Sona disagreed to their proposal as she had some definite ideas and views.

She said to her parents that , "Dear Father, I want that my husband should be one who is highly skilled in fighting and who is able to overpower, me in fight.

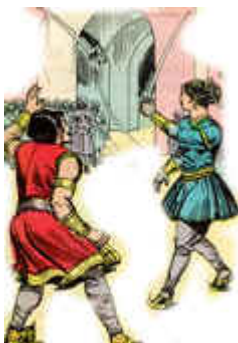


Suppose if our kingdom face an enemy in the future, he should be able to fight & defeat them in war. If you agree to this condition then, you may make an announcement".

The King & Queen were very proud to hear about their daughter's thoughts. The announcement was made in Kishanagar as well as in the neighbouring kingdoms. Thinking that Sona is only a girl, and it should not be a difficult to win a fight with her, many suitors came forward to accept her challenge as they also knew that Sona being the only heir they would have complete sway over the kingdom once they married her.

But when they (the suitors) met Sona face to face these princes realized it was not that easy to defeat her. Everyone of them was routed by Sona, and they had to go back disappointed. She was taking on the suitors one after another, among them was Udayavarma, the prince of Chandanghar.

He watched the fight every day , by joining the crowd. He carefully watched how Princess Sona fought and the different strategies she adopted to meet the method of fighting followed by each prince. One day, he could not control himself when he saw a particular way she used the sword.



He got up and shouted "Bravo!" in appreciation and encouragement. Sona turned to look at him, wondering who he might be who could understand the intricacies of each and every stance and step during the fight.

But among such a large crowd she could only get a glimpse of him.

By now Udayavarma had learnt all her strategies, and the next day

he was ready to fight with her. The two fought cleverly and fiercely. Neither of them was prepared to surrender to the other. During her fight Sona tried all her tricks, but Udayavarma was able to meet every one of them. She soon discovered that he was a good swordsman and that she would not be able to subdue him so easily. Soon Sona was defeated by Udayavarma. She stopped the fight and joined her parents.

Cheers rose from the audience who was watching the proceedings very eagerly. When Udayavarma came forward to present himself to the King and queen, Sona recognized him as the one who had cheered her in encouragement the other day. She asked Udayavarma and he confessed to it.

Now Sona knew how he had succeeded in overpowering her. She came forward and said to him that "My condition was that I would marry anyone who would defeat me in the contest. Though you've defeated me, I can't marry you. You can yourself find out the reason." Udayavarma thought for a while and said . "Yes what you say is right, O Princess. I should not marry you." He bowed to her and left the palace.

The king and queen were surprised over their daughter's decision as according to her contest Sona insisted that she would marry only that man who would defeat her in the fight and Udayavarma had achieved it , but now she was not ready to marry him and even Udayavarma, too, had meekly accepted her decision, saying he could not possibly claim her hand. How strange! They were unable to guess what really was the cause?

The Betaal concluded the story and asked King Vikramaditya,

- 1) "O king ! I've some doubts. I think Sona was proud of herself that she was an expert in warfare and that's why she announced that she would marry only whoever defeated her, didn't she?
- 2) As she scored a victory over one prince after another, she was becoming more and more arrogant.
- 3) Then came Udayavarma who succeeded in overpowering her. Again it was her from keeping her word.
- 4) Why did she say he did not deserve her hand in marriage in spite of his victory over her?

It was all because of her arrogance, wasn't it? If you know the answers to my questions that speak out if you don't then I warn you that "your head will be blown to pieces!"

King Vikramaditya did not take much time to answer the questions Betaal had asked. He said

1 & 2) " I don't think Sona was arrogant."

3) Though she had agreed that condition that Udayavarma had defeated her in sword-fight but she didn't keep her word. That's true, but this doesn't makes her arrogant. If we think deep, we can find out what had prompted her to take such a stand. She certainly was one who would keep her word.

4) Unlike other princes, Udayavarma did not go for a fight with her straight away, instead he sat in the crowd and watched her fighting and in between he had studied all the strategies that she adopted while fighting, just as a disciple would learn from his teacher.



And a teacher cannot marry his or her student. It's universally accepted that one's father, mother and teacher are all like a god. Sona realized that Udayavarma was first her student and then a suitor and she was not willing to accept that relationship for the purpose of marriage. Udayavarma too thought on the same lines and realized that he could not marry Sona, because she was like his teacher. So he respected the wishes of his teacher, that's why he decided not to press his claim to her hand.



The relationship between a teacher and his student is more sacred than that between others. That's why Sona went back on the condition she herself had stipulated. Betaal knew that king will definitely speak out the answer so he flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse along with him.

Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the Betaal.

The four boys who made a lion

Once upon a time there lived four sons of a poor brahmin who taught them all the Vedas and the holy scriptures. On their parents death, they decided to go and stay with their mother's father. But on reaching there they found that they were unwelcome there and that their cousins were unreceptive to the brothers. Then the brothers decided to each go out into the world and learn a special skill and come back and meet at a common place after a while. So they dispersed and came back to the same place at the appointed time. Each told what he had learnt. The first one said, " I can create flesh of a creature from a single one of the creature". The second one said, " I know how to grow the hair and skin of a creature if it has flesh and bones." The third one said, "I can create the limbs of a creature if its form is complete with skin hair and flesh and bones". The fourth one said, " I know how to give life to that creature once it is complete in form with limbs".

So they set off into the forest to find a piece of bone on which they could test their skills. The first one they found was a lion's. So each of them displayed his skill and created a live huge Lion, which as fate would have it, killed all four of them and sped away.

Betaal stops and asks King Vikram asks this question: Who among the four brothers is responsible for the death of all of them?

Vikram replies with a lot of thought, "The fourth one, as he was the one who gave life to the otherwise dead structure of bones flesh and limbs and hair"

As soon as Vikram had finished his answer, Betaal disappeared back to the tree.

The three sensitive queens

Once upon a time there lived a king of Ujjayani by name of Dharmadhvaja, who had three exquisitely sensitive queens. He loved all three of them very much, all of them were of unparalleled beauty.

On one occasion, while the king was playing with the first queen, he ruffled her hair. The lotus flower on her ear fell over her thigh, and made a wound and she cried out loud. The king was surprised at her sensitivity and immediately requested medical attention for her.

On another occasion, when he was with the second queen on a full moon night on the roof of his palace, the queen suddenly felt her skin burning of the moonlight. The king ordered medical attention for her too and was again surprised at her sensitivity.

On third occasion, when he was with the third queen, she collapsed on the floor on hearing of the sound of a mortar grinding rice, far far away. The king immediately ordered medical attention for her and was surprised too.

Since then he took utmost care of his three ultra sensitive queens.

Betaal stops and asks King Vikram asks this question: Who among the three queens is the most sensitive?

Vikram replies with a lot of thought, "The third one, as she had not even been touched by the light or flower. She had only heard a noise from distance."

As soon as Vikram had finished his answer, Betaal disappeared back to the tree.

The three special Brahmins

Once upon a time there lived a rich brahmin by name of Vishnuswamin, who was performing a huge sacrificial rite. He had three sons who were each very fastidious about three specific things. The eldest was fastidious about food, the second about women and the third about beds. Vishnuswamin wanted a tortoise for his sacrifice. So he sent his three sons to get one. They did find one but each of them refused to touch it and bring it back home, as each claimed to be as fastidious as the other.

Well then to decide, they approached the king with this matter of deciding who among them was the most fastidious. He decided to test them all. He invited the first one, to a very special feast prepared very exquisitely. But the first son, refused to touch the food claiming that he smelt burnt corpses in the rice. On investigation, the king found that the grains of which the rice was cooked was from a field near a cremation ground. The king was impressed. He then decided to test the second son by sending a very very pretty and beautiful concubine, to him. But the second son sent her away saying that she was smelling like a goat. On investigation, the king found that she had been fed goat milk when she was a child. The king was impressed. Then he decided to test the third son, by letting him sleep in a bed with seven huge mattresses. In the middle of the night, the third son awoke with a lot of pain and a red mark on his shoulder. On verifying, it was found that there was a piece of hair in the bed below the seven mattresses. The king was impressed with all three and could not decide who was best but instead decided to use the skill of all three in his court and hired them. So Vishnuswamin could not complete his sacrifice.

Betaal stops and asks King Vikram asks this question: Who among the three is the most fastidious?

Vikram replies with a lot of thought, "The third son, as he had definite evidence with that red mark. The other two could have obtained information from elsewhere too."

As soon as Vikram had finished his answer, Betaal disappeared back to the tree.

Of a High-Minded Family

In the venerable city of Bardwan, O warrior king! (quoth the Vampire) during the reign of the mighty Rupsen, flourished one Rajeshwar, a Rajput warrior of distinguished fame. By his valour and conduct he had risen from the lowest ranks of the army to command it as its captain. And arrived at that dignity, he did not put a stop to all improvements, like other chiefs, who rejoice to rest and return thanks. On the contrary, he became such a reformer that, to some extent, he remodelled the art of war.

Instead of attending to rules and regulations, drawn up in their studies by pandits and Brahmans, he consulted chiefly his own experience and judgment. He threw aside the systematic plans of campaigns laid down in the Shastras or books of the ancients, and he acted upon the spur of the moment. He displayed a skill in the choice of ground, in the use of light troops, and in securing his own supplies whilst he cut off those of the enemy, which Kartikaya himself, God of War, might have envied. Finding that the bows of his troops were clumsy and slow to use, he had them all changed before compelled so to do by defeat; he also gave his attention to the sword handles, which cramped the men's grasp but which having been used for eighteen hundred years were considered perfect weapons. And having organized a special corps of warriors using fire arrows, he soon brought it to such perfection that, by using it against the elephants of his enemies, he gained many a campaign.

One instance of his superior judgment I am about to quote to thee, O Vikram, after which I return to my tale; for thou art truly a warrior king, very likely to imitate the innovations of the great general Rajeshwar.

(A grunt from the monarch was the result of the Vampire's sneer.)

He found his master's armies recruited from Northern Hindustan, and officered by Kshatriya warriors, who grew great only because they grew old and - fat. Thus the energy and talent of the younger men were wasted in troubles and disorders; whilst the seniors were often so ancient that they could not mount their chargers unaided, nor, when they were mounted, could they see anything a dozen yards before them. But they had served in a certain obsolete campaign, and until Rajeshwar gave them pensions and dismissals, they claimed a right to take first part in all campaigns present and future. The commander-in-chief refused to use any captain who could not stand steady on his legs, or endure the sun for a whole day. When a soldier distinguished himself in action, he raised him to the powers and privileges of the warrior caste. And whereas it had been the habit to lavish circles and bars of silver and other metals upon all those who had joined in the war, whether they had

sat behind a heap of sand or had been foremost to attack the foe, he broke through the pernicious custom, and he rendered the honour valuable by conferring it only upon the deserving. I need hardly say that, in an inordinately short space of time, his army beat every king and general that opposed it.

One day the great commander-in-chief was seated in a certain room near the threshold of his gate, when the voices of a number of people outside were heard. Rajeshwar asked, "Who is at the door, and what is the meaning of the noise I hear?" The porter replied, "It is a fine thing your honour has asked. Many persons come sitting at the door of the rich for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood and wealth. When they meet together they talk of various things: it is these very people who are now making this noise."

Rajeshwar, on hearing this, remained silent.

In the meantime a traveller, a Rajput, Birbal by name, hoping to obtain employment, came from the southern quarter to the palace of the chief. The porter having listened to his story, made the circumstance known to his master, saying, "O chief! an armed man has arrived here, hoping to obtain employment, and is standing at the door. If I receive a command he shall be brought into your honour's presence."

"Bring him in," cried the commander-in-chief.

The porter brought him in, and Rajeshwar inquired, "O Rajput, who and what art thou?"

Birbal submitted that he was a person of distinguished fame for the use of weapons, and that his name for fidelity and valour had gone forth to the utmost ends of Bharat-Kandha *India*.

The chief was well accustomed to this style of self introduction, and its only effect upon his mind was a wish to shame the man by showing him that he had not the least knowledge of weapons. He therefore bade him bare his blade and perform some feat.

Birbal at once drew his good sword. Guessing the thoughts which were hovering about the chief's mind, he put forth his left hand, extending the forefinger upwards, waved his blade like the arm of a demon round his head, and, with a dexterous stroke, so shaved off a bit of nail that it fell to the ground, and not a drop of blood appeared upon the finger-tip.

"Live for ever!" exclaimed Rajeshwar in admiration. He then addressed to the recruit a few questions concerning the art of war, or rather concerning his peculiar views of it. To all of which Birbal answered with a spirit and a judgment which convinced the hearer that he was no common sworder.

Whereupon Rajeshwar bore off the new man at arms to the palace of the king Rupsen, and recommended that he should be engaged without delay.

The king, being a man of few words and many ideas, after hearing his commander-in-chief, asked, "O Rajput, what shall I give thee for thy daily expenditure?"

"Give me a thousand ounces of gold daily," said Birbal, "and then I shall have wherewithal to live on."

"Hast thou an army with thee?" exclaimed the king in the greatest astonishment.

"I have not," responded the Rajput somewhat stiffly. "I have first, a wife; second, a son; third, a daughter; fourth, myself; there is no fifth person with me."

All the people of the court on hearing this turned aside their heads to laugh, and even the women, who were peeping at the scene, covered their mouths with their veils. The Rajput was then dismissed the presence.

It is, however, noticeable amongst you humans, that the world often takes you at your own valuation. Set a high price upon yourselves, and each man shall say to his neighbour, "In this man there must be something." Tell everyone that you are brave, clever, generous, or even handsome, and after a time they will begin to believe you. And when thus you have attained success, it will be harder to unconvince them than it was to convince them. Thus - -

"Listen not to him, sirrah," cried Raja Vikram to Dharma Dhvaj, the young prince, who had fallen a little way behind, and was giving ear attentively to the Vampire's ethics. "Listen to him not. And tell me, villain, with these ignoble principles of shine, what will become of modesty, humility, self-sacrifice, and a host of other Guna or good qualities which - which are good qualities?"

"I know not," rejoined the Baital, "neither do I care. But my habitually inspiriting a succession of human bodies has taught me one fact. The wise man knows himself, and is, therefore, neither unduly humble nor elated, because he had no more to do with making himself than with the cut of his cloak, or with the fitness of his loin-cloth. But the fool either loses his head by comparing himself with still greater fools, or is prostrated when he finds himself inferior to other and lesser fools. This shyness he calls modesty, humility, and so forth. Now, whenever entering a corpse, whether it be of man, woman, or child, I feel peculiarly modest; I know that my tenement lately belonged to some conceited ass. And --"

"Wouldst thou have me bump thy back against the ground?" asked Raja Vikram angrily.

(The Baital muttered some reply scarcely intelligible about his having this time stumbled upon

a metaphysical thread of ideas, and then continued his story.)

Now Rupsen, the king, began by inquiring of himself why the Rajput had rated his services so highly. Then he reflected that if this recruit had asked so much money, it must have been for some reason which would afterwards become apparent. Next, he hoped that if he gave him so much, his generosity might some day turn out to his own advantage. Finally, with this idea in his mind, he summoned Birbal and the steward of his household, and said to the latter, "Give this Rajput a thousand ounces of gold daily from our treasury."

It is related that Birbal made the best possible use of his wealth. He used every morning to divide it into two portions, one of which was distributed to Brahmans and Parohitas.[FN#84] Of the remaining moiety, having made two parts, he gave one as alms to pilgrims, to Bairagis or Vishnu's mendicants, and to Sanyasis or worshippers of Shiva, whose bodies, smeared with ashes, were hardly covered with a narrow cotton cloth and a rope about their loins, and whose heads of artificial hair, clotted like a rope, besieged his gate. With the remaining fourth, having caused food to be prepared, he regaled the poor, while he himself and his family ate what was left. Every evening, arming himself with sword and buckler, he took up his position as guard at the royal bedside, and walked round it all night sword in hand. If the king chanced to wake and asked who was present, Birbal immediately gave reply that "Birbal is here; whatever command you give, that he will obey." And oftentimes Rupsen gave him unusual commands, for it is said, "To try thy servant, bid him do things in season and out of season: if he obey thee willingly, know him to be useful; if he reply, dismiss him at once. Thus is a servant tried, even as a wife by the poverty of her husband, and brethren and friends by asking their aid."

[The ancient name of a priest by profession, meaning "praepositus" or praeses. He was the friend and counsellor of a chief, the minister of a king, and his companion in peace and war. (M. Muller's Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 485).

In such manner, through desire of money, Birbal remained on guard all night; and whether eating, drinking, sleeping, sitting, going or wandering about, during the twenty-four hours, he held his master in watchful remembrance. This, indeed, is the custom; if a man sell another the latter is sold, but a servant by doing service sells himself, and when a man has become dependent, how can he be happy? Certain it is that however intelligent, clever, or learned a man may be, yet, while he is in his master's presence, he remains silent as a dumb man, and struck with dread. Only while he is away from his lord can he be at ease. Hence, learned men say that to do service aright is harder than any religious study.

On one occasion it is related that there happened to be heard at night-time the wailing of a woman in a neighbouring cemetery. The king on hearing it called out, "Who is in waiting?"

"I am here," replied Birbal; "what command is there?"

"Go," spoke the king, "to the place whence proceeds this sound of woman's wail, and having inquired the cause of her grief, return quickly."

On receiving this order the Rajput went to obey it; and the king, unseen by him, and attired in a black dress, followed for the purpose of observing his courage.

Presently Birbal arrived at the cemetery. And what sees he there? A beautiful woman of a light yellow colour, loaded with jewels from head to foot, holding a horn in her right and a necklace in her left hand. Sometimes she danced, sometimes she jumped, and sometimes she ran about. There was not a tear in her eye, but beating her head and making lamentable cries, she kept dashing herself on the ground.

Seeing her condition, and not recognizing the goddess born of sea foam, and whom all the host of heaven loved, Birbal inquired, "Why art thou thus beating thyself and crying out? Who art thou? And what grief is upon thee?"

Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity. Raj-Lakshmi would mean the King's Fortune, which we should call tutelary genius. Lakshichara is our "luckless," forming, as Mr. Ward says, an extraordinary coincidence of sound and meaning in languages so different. But the derivations are very distinct.

"I am the Royal-Luck," she replied.

"For what reason," asked Birbal, "art thou weeping?"

The goddess then began to relate her position to the Rajput. She said, with tears, "In the king's palace Shudra (or low caste acts) are done, and hence misfortune will certainly fall upon it, and I shall forsake it. After a month has passed, the king, having endured excessive affliction, will die. In grief for this, I weep. I have brought much happiness to the king's house, and hence I am full of regret that this my prediction cannot in any way prove untrue."

"Is there," asked Birbal, "any remedy for this trouble, so that the king may be preserved and live a hundred years?"

"Yes," said the goddess, "there is. About eight miles to the east thou wilt find a temple dedicated to my terrible sister Devi. Offer to her thy son's head, cut off with shine own hand, and the reign of thy king shall endure for an age." So saying Raj-Lakshmi disappeared.

Birbal answered not a word, but with hurried steps he turned towards his home. The king, still in black so as not to be seen, followed him closely, and observed and listened to

everything he did.

The Rajput went straight to his wife, awakened her, and related to her everything that had happened. The wise have said, "she alone deserves the name of wife who always receives her husband with affectionate and submissive words." When she heard the circumstances, she at once aroused her son, and her daughter also awoke. Then Birbal told them all that they must follow him to the temple of Devi in the wood.

On the way the Rajput said to his wife, "If thou wilt give up thy son willingly, I will sacrifice him for our master's sake to Devi the Destroyer."

She replied, "Father and mother, son and daughter, brother and relative, have I now none. You are everything to me. It is written in the scripture that a wife is not made pure by gifts to priests, nor by performing religious rites; her virtue consists in waiting upon her husband, in obeying him and in loving him - yea! though he be lame, maimed in the hands, dumb, deaf, blind, one eyed, leprous, or humpbacked. It is a true saying that 'a son under one's authority, a body free from sickness, a desire to acquire knowledge, an intelligent friend, and an obedient wife; whoever holds these five will find them bestowers of happiness and dispellers of affliction. An unwilling servant, a parsimonious king, an insincere friend, and a wife not under control; such things are disturbers of ease and givers of trouble.'"

Then the good wife turned to her son and said "Child by the gift of thy head, the king's life may be spared, and the kingdom remain unshaken."

"Mother," replied that excellent youth, "in my opinion we should hasten this matter. Firstly, I must obey your command; secondly, I must promote the interests of my master; thirdly, if this body be of any use to a goddess, nothing better can be done with it in this world."

("Excuse me, Raja Vikram," said the Baital, interrupting himself, "if I repeat these fair discourses at full length; it is interesting to hear a young person, whose throat is about to be cut, talk so like a doctor of laws.")

Then the youth thus addressed his sire: "Father, whoever can be of use to his master, the life of that man in this world has been lived to good purpose, and by reason of his usefulness he will be rewarded in other worlds."

His sister, however, exclaimed, "If a mother should give poison to her daughter, and a father sell his son, and a king seize the entire property of his subjects, where then could one look for protection?" But they heeded her not, and continued talking as they journeyed towards the temple of Devi - the king all the while secretly following them.

Presently they reached the temple, a single room, surrounded by a spacious paved area; in

front was an immense building capable of seating hundreds of people. Before the image there were pools of blood, where victims had lately been slaughtered. In the sanctum was Devi, a large black figure with ten arms. With a spear in one of her right hands she pierced the giant Mahisha; and with one of her left hands she held the tail of a serpent, and the hair of the giant, whose breast the serpent was biting. Her other arms were all raised above her head, and were filled with different instruments of war; against her right leg leaned a lion.

Then Birbal joined his hands in prayer, and with Hindu mildness thus addressed the awful goddess: "O mother, let the king's life be prolonged for a thousand years by the sacrifice of my son. O Devi, mother! destroy, destroy his enemies! Kill! kill! Reduce them to ashes! Drive them away! Devour them! devour them! Cut them in two! Drink! drink their blood! Destroy them root and branch! With thy thunderbolt, spear, scymitar, discus, or rope, annihilate them! Spheng! Spheng!"

The Rajput, having caused his son to kneel before the goddess, struck him so violent a blow that his head rolled upon the ground. He then threw the sword down, when his daughter, frantic with grief, snatched it up and struck her neck with such force that her head, separated from her body, fell. In her turn the mother, unable to survive the loss of her children, seized the weapon and succeeded in decapitating herself. Birbal, beholding all this slaughter, thus reflected: "My children are dead why, now, should I remain in servitude, and upon whom shall I bestow the gold I receive from the king?" He then gave himself so deep a wound in the neck, that his head also separated from his body.

Rupsen, the king, seeing these four heads on the ground, said in his heart, "For my sake has the family of Birbal been destroyed. Kingly power, for the purpose of upholding which the destruction of a whole household is necessary, is a mere curse, and to carry on government in this manner is not just." He then took up the sword and was about to slay himself, when the Destroying Goddess, probably satisfied with bloodshed, stayed his hand, bidding him at the same time ask any boon he pleased.

The generous monarch begged, thereupon, that his faithful servant might be restored to life, together with all his high-minded family; and the goddess Devi in the twinkling of an eye fetched from Patala, the regions below the earth, a vase full of Amrita, the water of immortality, sprinkled it upon the dead, and raised them all as before. After which the whole party walked leisurely home, and in due time the king divided his throne with his friend Birbal.

Having stopped for a moment, the Baital proceeded to remark, in a sententious tone, "Happy the servant who grudges not his own life to save that of his master! And happy, thrice happy the master who can annihilate all greedy longing for existence and worldly prosperity. Raja, I have to ask thee one searching question - Of these five, who was the greatest

fool?"

"Demon!" exclaimed the great Vikram, all whose cherished feelings about fidelity and family affection, obedience, and high-mindedness, were outraged by this Vampire view of the question; "if thou meanest by the greatest fool the noblest mind, I reply without hesitating Rupsen, the king."

"Why, prithee?" asked the Baital.

"Because, dull demon," said the king, "Birbal was bound to offer up his life for a master who treated him so generously; the son could not disobey his father, and the women naturally and instinctively killed themselves, because the example was set to them. But Rupsen the king gave up his throne for the sake of his retainer, and valued not a straw his life and his high inducements to live. For this reason I think him the most meritorious."

"Surely, mighty Vikram," laughed the Vampire, "you will be tired of ever clambering up yon tall tree, even had you the legs and arms of Hanuman himself."

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And so saying he disappeared from the cloth, although it had been placed upon the ground.

But the poor Baital had little reason to congratulate himself on the success of his escape. In a short time he was again bundled into the cloth with the usual want of ceremony, and he revenged himself by telling another true story.

Sacrifice

Value is of the feeling in sacrifice

Vikram again came after him, caught him, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vikram said angrily - "Why do you deceive me?" Vaitaal said - "I am very happy to see your justice, that is why I go back to the tree and celebrate it. Don't be angry, because you are a just King. But I pity you, that you are making untiring efforts without relaxing, as if you wish to achieve something. So just to pass time, listen to this story now." Vaitaal started his story and Vikram started listening.

Vaitaal said - "Once a king lived in Vardhmaan city. His name was Roopsen. He was very kind and a gracious king. Hearing his praise, once Beerbal named soldier came to his kingdom and got very happy to find everything as he heard. One day he came to the palace and desired to see the king. He was taken to the royal court. Beerbal bowed the king and said -

"Raajan, I am very sad." "Why are you so sad?" Beerbal said - "I am very faithful, I can obey, I can work as a night watchman, but nobody is giving me any work." "Why doesn't anybody give you job?" "Because I demand 100 gold coins daily"

Hearing this, king also compelled to ponder over the matter, then asked him - "How many members are in your family?" Beerbal said - "We are four, Sir. My wife, one son, one daughter and myself. I served the King Jayasen for many years. He has died now that is why I have come here to serve you." The king asked - "What did he give you?" Beerbal said - "I got 100 gold coins daily." The king said - "But nobody gives so much salary just for nightwatching." Beerbal said - "Even this money is less for my services." The king thought for a while and said to him - "OK, You will stay with me."

Beerbal got very happy to get the job and all courtiers got very surprised to see the salary of a night watchmen. They started criticizing the King, but the King had already employed him. Beerbal used to keep watch the whole night and take his money in the morning and go away.

One day the king asked his spy to spy on his new employee that what did he do of his money? He reported back, that Beerbal used to give 25 coins to poor, saying "Pray for the King Roopsen, that he should live long." He gave 25 coins in temples and 25 coins to Braahman. He gave 10 coins to widows and orphans, and another 10 coins to lepers and handicapped. The remaining 5 coins he gave to his wife.

Roopsen got very happy to hear this, so he didn't feel any problem in giving 100 coins to him. He was very happy with Beerbal. Whenever he used to ask "Anybody is there?" Beerbal always replied "I am here, Sir."

One day when Roopsen was sleeping comfortably that he woke up hearing the sound of a crying woman. Roopsen called as usual, "Anybody is there?" and Beerbal replied as usual, "I am here, Sir", Roopsen asked him to find out who was that woman who was crying at such a late night time?

Beerbal proceeded towards the direction from where the sound was coming. It was coming from the cremation ground side, so he came there and saw a woman crying. She was wearing many ornaments from tip to toe. She was very beautiful, but there was no tear in her eyes. Surprised to see this, Beerbal asked her - "O Beautiful, Why are you crying like this?" She said - "My name is Lakshmee and I live in a royal family, but at this time Shani (Saturn) has attacked on that family. Roopsen's all kingdom will be lost and he will die in a very bad condition, that is why I am crying."

Hearing this Beerbal asked - "Is there any solution of this problem, so that the King is saved." At this she said, "Yes, If somebody can sacrifice his own son with his own hand

then the King can be saved." Beerbal thought and thought and then turned around.

In the meantime, Roopsen also thought, "Let me see what Beerbal does." so he followed him and witnessed all that conversation which took place between Beerbal and Lakshmee. When Beerbal returned from there he also followed him.

Beerbal didn't go to the palace, he went straight to his house and told everything to his wife. The wife said - "Go and sacrifice our son. This is the opportunity to do our duty towards our master." They woke up their son and told him everything, so he also got ready to be sacrificed. All went to the Deveen temple to sacrifice the son.

First Beerbal worshipped Deveen, then prayed her - "Hey Deveen, Please save my king, I give you my son to save his life, be pleased with me." And he cut his son's neck with his own hand. O Vikram, Seeing this Beerbal's daughter also cut her neck that "when my brother is not there, what I will do to live." Beerbal's wife also died in the grief of her children. Now Beerbal thought, "My whole family has gone, what I will do in this world?" So he also cut his neck. Seeing this Roopsen also could not hold himself, he picked the same sword and cut his neck."

After telling this much, Vaitaal got silent. They have come more than half way long. He said - "Vikram now tell me, whose sacrifice was most valuable - Beerbal's, son's, daughter's, wife's or king Roopsen's?"

Vikram thought for a while and said - "In sacrifice, feeling is the main element. Among them whoever's feelings are highest, his sacrifice will be considered most valuable. Beerbal was faithful to his master, sister sacrificed because of love of her brother, mother had the feelings of motherly love for her children, Beerbal had lost his family that is why he sacrificed himself, but what was the feeling of the king? Why did he sacrifice himself? Sacrificing oneself for a servant is a strange thing for a master. That is why Roopsen's sacrifice was the most valuable."

As the king spoke, his promise was broken so Vaitaal ran away laughing loudly from King's shoulder and hung upside down from the same tree. The King Vikramaaditya again got worried at this. He took out his sword and came back to the same place. Vikram asked - "Why did you run away?" "Hearing your judgment." "Was my judgment wrong?" "No, You were right, I admire you." "Is that why you came here?"

"No, I came here because I didn't tell you the story further. One ghost lives here on this tree. He also asked me the same question which I asked you. He told me that he would tell me the further story after getting the right answer. I have given him the right answer, he has told me the story further, now you can take me." So the King again lifted that Vaitaal, put him on his shoulder, and started walking again.

"Now listen to that, O Vikramaaditya, what that ghost told me. Seeing all these sacrifices. Devee got pleased and he revived all of them. Roopsen was also happy to see all those people alive. He brought all of them in his palace. At this his minister got very angry, he said - "First you gave him 100 coins daily, now you have brought him and his family to your palace."

King said - "You don't know, what is Beerbal for me? Whatever he has done for me, nobody else can do it for me any time." Minister got silent hearing this, but one other person got Beerbal killed. This time Beerbal could not be revived. Tell Vikram, Why?" Vikram said - "This is all fate There was no sacrifice in this one." "You are right." and Vaitaal again ran away jumping from king's shoulder. Vikramaaditya came back quickly to the same place only to find that Vaitaal was still hanging from the same tree.

Wisdom is Greater

Everything is possible if acted wisely

As king Vikramaaditya took Vaitaal on his shoulder, Vaitaal started telling him a story - "Listen O King, Once upon a time, there ruled a king in Vaaraanasee city. He had a son named Vajramukut. King had a minister who also had a son named Ratnraaj. Both were very good friends. They both were seen together. They used to go together for hunting too. Once they went to a forest for hunting, but got separated while they were following their deer. After some time, Vajramukut sensed that he had come very far, and now he should go back. So he turned back without hunting the deer.

When he was coming back, he saw a beautiful palace. It looked like a king's palace. There was a beautiful garden also beside the palace. Many kinds of flowers were blooming there. There was a small temple also in the garden. Prince was very tired, so he came in the garden with the idea that he would take some rest there. He was about to lie down there, that the gardener of that garden came and said to him - "O traveler, You go from here because the princess is just about to come here to worship. If she saw you here, she would scold me." Prince said - "OK, I will go from here." Gardener went away assured that the prince would go away. Prince also started preparing his horse to go from there.

In the meantime, the princess came there with her friends to worship in that temple. Vajramukut got stunned to see her and continued looking at her. She was very beautiful. He has never seen such a beautiful girl before. She went to the temple to worship and when she came back she saw the prince standing there. She also got attracted to him.

She picked up the lotus flower from her head which she brought from the temple, touched it with her ears, bit it by her teeth, put it under her foot and then touched it with her heart. Vajramukut was still looking at her. The princess went away, so he also came back. He was very sad as he was unable to forget the princess. On the way he met his friend Ratnraaj.

Ratnraaj found him sad, so he asked him - "O Prince, What is the reason, why do you look so sad?" First the Prince didn't tell him any thing, but when Ratnraaj insisted, he told him the whole story. Ratnraaj smiled and asked him - "What do you want now, tell me." The prince said - "I want to marry her." Ratnraaj asked - "Did she also see you?" "Yes, She also saw me." "Then what did she do after seeing you? If you tell me everything, maybe I can help you." The prince told him everything as how she picked up the lotus flower from her head, touched it with her ears, bit it by her teeth, put it under her foot and then touched it with her heart. Hearing this Ratnraaj got very happy. He said - "You are through now." Vajramukut asked him - "How do you know?"

O Vikram, listen further what happened. Ratnraaj told him that "she touched the flower with her ears", it meant that she lived in Karnaatak Pradesh; and "bit it by her teeth", it meant that she was the daughter of king Dantvaad; "put it under her feet", it meant that her name was Padmaavatee; and then she "touched the flower with her heart", it meant that she loved you. Vajramukut got very happy to hear this and said to Ratnraaj - "So now we should go there." "Sure".

Both started towards king Dantvaad's city. In Dantvaad's city, Ratnraaj started looking for someone who often used to go to the princess. After some time he found an old woman who used to go to her daily. So they came to her house and knocked the door. When she came to open the door, Ratnraaj said to her - "Mother, We are travelers. We wish to see king Dantvaad's city, can we stay with you for a couple of days?" The woman said - "If you wish so. I live here alone." So Hey Vikram, They both stayed with that woman. That woman had brought up the princess by breastfeeding her, that is why she used to go to her once a day, just to see her.

Next day when that old woman was about to go to see the princess, Ratnraaj said to her - "Will you take our message to the princess?" "What is that?" Ratnraaj said - "Tell her that whoever she saw in the temple, he has come." The woman said - "If she got angry, she will kill me." Ratnraaj assured her that this would not happen. The woman agreed.

When the woman met the princess, she conveyed the message of Ratnraaj. The princess first smeared some sandal paste on her cheek and then slapped her five times and pushed her out of the palace. The woman got frightened, because the princess has never behaved with her like this before. She immediately came back home and said to the boys - "You

have put me into trouble. I am sure the king will severely punish me for this. The princess was very angry with me. She slapped me five times and pushed me out of the palace."

Hearing this the prince got worried, but Ratnraaj laughed. The prince said - "This poor woman was slapped and you are laughing? What is there to laugh?" Ratnraaj stopped laughing and said - "The princess has said that "let five days of bright fortnight pass, then I will tell you, what to do." Both, Vajramukut and the woman, got a sigh of relief. When the woman went there next day, the princess behaved normally with her, so the woman got happy.

After five days, the princess slapped her with inked hand and sent her out through west door. The woman told this to those boys. Vajramukut asked Ratnraaj - "Now tell me what does this mean?" Ratnraaj said - "Now the princess has sent the message that you go there in the night through west door, and she will meet you there." Prince got very happy to hear this.

At midnight, when the prince went to the west door of the palace, the princess was waiting for him. She took him inside, he stayed there for overnight. He came back from there next day. But when he came back, he was very sad. Ratnraaj said - "Friend, What is the matter? You are coming after meeting your beloved, and still you are sad? You should be happy." Vajramukut said - "The princess told me that she loved me very much but her father has fixed her marriage somewhere else. What to do now?" Ratnraaj said - "Let me think, I try to find some way."

Ratnraaj asked - "When she has asked you to come back?" "She has called me tomorrow." "OK, then I will tell you tomorrow." Next day, when the prince was about to go, he gave him a Trishool (trident) and asked him to make a mark on her thigh with that Trishool and come back with all of her jewelry. First Vajramukut hesitated but then agreed to do the same. He did so. He made a mark with Trishool on her thigh, took her all jewelry and came back. Now Ratnraaj assumed his guise as a Saadhu and Vajramukut as his disciple and went to a temple.

Ratnraaj sat in the temple and asked the prince to sell that jewelry in the market. The Prince said - "But these are princess' jewelry, as I will sell them, I will get caught." Ratnraaj said- "We want the same thing, when they will catch you, you will tell them, "My Guru has given them to me to sell." When they will come to me, I will deal with them." The prince went to sell that jewelry to the same jeweler who used to make jewelry for the king. As the jeweler saw the princess' jewelry, he handed him over to the king's men.

The king's men asked him - "Where did you get these ornaments?" The prince said - "My Guru gave me these to sell in the market." "Who is your Guru?" "Come with me, I show him to you." So all came to Ratnraaj. They arrested Ratnraaj and presented them in the royal

court. Ratnraaj said to the king - "Mahaaraaj, A witch came to me last night, I made a mark on her thigh, and took all ornaments off her body."

The king got very surprised to hear this. He found out that the princess had that Trishool mark on her thigh. He expelled her out of his kingdom. The prince went to see the princess. First the princess got very angry, but after knowing the purpose of this, she got very happy. The prince took her away, married her, and they lived happily ever after.

After telling this story, Vaitaal asked Vikram, "Who is at fault in this?"

Vikram said - "Listen O Vaitaal, The minister's son kept his friendship, the soldiers obeyed their king, but the king himself is at fault, because he expelled the princess without consideration."

"You are right." Saying Vaitaal ran away from the king's shoulder laughing loudly and hung upside down from the same tree. The king Vikramaaditya got worried that this Vaitaal had deceived me. He took out his sword and came back to the same place. He asked him - "Why did you come here?" "Why did you speak?" The King said - "You asked me to do justice, and I did that." Saying this the King again took him from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vaitaal said - "King, You are very cruel. You twisted my neck in such a way that it is hurting me terribly." "Then why did you run away?" "This is my nature, what can I do?" The king was holding him tightly and was walking fast.

After a while, Vaitaal said - "I have heard, that you have a throne in which there are 32 female figures?" The king said - "Yes, I have it, but why do you ask?" Vaitaal said - "In fact my great grandfather sculptured them, that is why I know them very well. In fact, that throne itself was made by my great grandfather."

Vikramaaditya kept quiet. Now he had firmly believed that he was the same Taantrik, who was referred to by that Dev, that was why he thought to be careful, and the king became more careful. Vaitaal said - "O King, Just to pass time, listen to this story now."

"You be quiet."

"Vaitaal cannot keep quiet."

"I will not listen to your story."

"Then I will run away." and he ran away again.

Vikram had to run after him, he caught him again and started walking. Vaitaal again ran away, and Vikram again had to bring him back. At last Vikram said - "OK, Tell your story, I will listen to it."

Three Princes

Whoever is mighty, only he is the master

Vaitaal again started speaking - "Listen now, I tell you a story just to pass time, listen to it." Vaitaal started his story and Vikram listened.

Vaitaal said - "The princess of Magadh Desh, Chandralekaa was very beautiful. As she grew up, many princes proposed to marry her, but she refused to marry anyone. Then one day her mother asked - "Do you want to marry or no?" "Yes, I will marry, but only when I will get an appropriate boy." Mother again asked her - "So there is no boy appropriate for you among them?" "No." "Then who will be the appropriate boy for you?" "Who is mighty and can protect his wife." Mother said - "OK, Then only you decide to whom you want to marry." The princess agreed.

After some time a prince's proposal came, the princess asked - "What is your quality?" The prince said - "I can see past, present and future." The princess didn't reply him anything. After that another proposal came. The princess asked him the same question, he said - "I have a chariot which can run anywhere - on water, in air, on road, and I have built it myself." After that another proposal came and the princess asked him the same question. He said - "I have a sword whose hit never misses, and nobody can save himself from it."

Some other proposals also came, but the princess was unable to decide. Her mother was very worried with this. She told her that she would tell her her decision next day.

By chance those three princes, who told her their qualities, came next day. The first prince's name was Veerendra, the second one's name was Udayaveer and the third one's name was Dhananjaya. The princess asked them to wait. In the meantime the princess got disappeared. Everybody got worried about the princess.

As all the princes were present there, Veerendra was asked to tell where she was. He did some calculations and told that a Raakshas had fallen in love with her beauty, has taken her and kept her in his palace in Araavatee hills. He told the way to reach up to the palace and drew the map also of that palace.

At this Udayaveer said - "I can take you right into his palace by my chariot." Dhananjaya said - "Nobody can save him from my sword." Now Veerendra and Dhananjaya sat on Udayaveer's chariot and it soon came to the place of the Raakshas. Veerendra said - "The princess is in her room and crying, and the Raakshas will be killed by Dhananjaya."

All the three attacked on the Raakshas. Dhananjaya killed him with only one hit of his sword. As he was killed, his Maayaa palace also vanished, and the three brought the princess back. Now all started claiming the princess. Veerendra claimed that if he had not drawn the map, both could not find the princess. Udayaveer claimed that if he did not have that chariot, those two could not have reached there in this life. And Dhananjaya claimed that if he had not killed the Raakshas, the address and the chariot couldn't do anything, that is why the princess was his.

All were right in their own ways. But when the princess was asked, she told that she was obliged to all of them. They should decide among themselves. Now tell, whose right is on the princess?"

Vikram thought for some time and said - "The princess is of Dhananjaya's. Because whoever is mighty, only he has the right. The Raakshas was killed by Dhananjaya. Only he is the true husband who protects his wife."

"You are right." Saying this Vaitaal again laughed heartily and ran away from the king's shoulder and hung upside down from the same tree. The king Vikramaaditya again got very angry at this. He took out his sword, followed him, took him from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking.

Vaitaal again started speaking - "O King, You are very courageous. And you are indeed a just king." He was speaking and Vikram was listening.

Severed Nose

A meanest person can also have humanity

This time Vikram got very angry with him. He again came after him, caught him, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vikram said angrily - "You

deceive me, Vaitaal? I will cut your head. Why do you run all the time?" Vaitaal first didn't say anything, but after a while he said - "Why are you so angry?" Vikram said - "Why do you run away?" I run because of your correct answer. What was our condition? Do you remember? That you will not speak at all." Vikram said - "But when you talk about justice, then I have to speak. You know that it is my nature." Vaitaal said - "Then running away is my nature." and he laughed heartily. "OK Listen now, I tell you a story just to pass time." Vaitaal started his story and Vikram listened quietly.

Vaitaal said - "This time the story is very strange, and you have to tell me the correct judgment, otherwise your head will split and scattered away in pieces, you know that. This is my Shaap to you " Vikram nodded silently.

Vaitaal started - "Once upon a time, there lived a rich man in Avanteepur. His name was Gunvant. He was very religious. His wife was very beautiful but was very wicked. She gave birth to a daughter who was from some other man, and that is why she was more beautiful. After some time she grew up and became like her mother. Her name was Ratnaavatee. Her father started looking a boy for her, but in the meantime, she had illegal relations with her servant. Hearing this Gunvant sacked his servant. He went away and started living at another place.

But Ratnaavatee still continued to see him. She used to go in night and come back in night. Only her mother knew about this affair. In the meantime Gunvant had searched a good match for her and married her to him. Thus she went to live with her husband, but she could not break her relationship with her servant. She took her maid in confidence and continued to visit him in the night. The maid helped her brother also to meet Ratnaavatee.

After a while her husband came to know about this, he sacked the maid. Now it had been difficult for Ratnaavatee to meet her lover, but one night she got this chance. She went there and told him the story. He advised her that she should wait for sometime, and when the situation is better, she might come again. Her husband knew everything, so he managed to give that servant poison. He took the poison mixed with food and slept. In sleep, he died. On the same night, Ratnaavatee went to meet him.

On the way a thief saw an ornament-laden woman going in dark, so he followed her. When she had entered in the servant's house, he watched her

from hiding. Now, under whichever tree the thief was standing, a Vaitaal lived on that tree. He also saw Ratnaavatee going inside the house and fell in love with her instantly. He thought why shouldn't he enter the servant's body and enjoy with Ratnaavatee. So he entered the dead body of the servant. Ratnaavatee had come to him. She met with her lover. In excitement he bit her nose with his teeth. After biting her, Vaitaal went out of the servant's body, but the piece of her nose still remained in his dead body's mouth.

Ratnaavatee cried with pain. Besides she saw her lover dead. Seeing her lover dead, Ratnaavatee got confused and ran away from there. The thief was also watching, he also got frightened. He didn't leave Ratnaavatee, he still followed her. Ratnaavatee came back to her own house and started crying in front of her husband's room. Her husband got up, his other family members also got up. She said that her husband had bit her nose. Ratnaavatee's husband was giving explanations but nobody was listening to him

The matter went to king's soldiers. Ratnaavatee and her husband were presented in king's court. There she blamed her husband for her bitten nose. The king got angry and ordered to hang her husband. When the thief heard this, he went to the king and told him everything and said - "If you will see the dead body's mouth, you will find the piece of her bitten nose in his mouth." The king sent his people there, and indeed they found the piece in his mouth. The king released Ratnaavatee's husband, and expelled Ratnaavatee after shaving her head.

Vaitaal said - "Now you do justice, who was at fault, and who stayed on his good path?" Vikram didn't reply. Seeing him silent, Vaitaal said to him - "OK, I tell you another story. In Indraapur named city lived a very rich religious man named Mahaadhan. He had a son whose name was Shreedhan. He was very wicked. Fed up with his wickedness, Mahaadhan had expelled him from his house so he went to Chandra Nagar.

There lived a rich man named Hemgun whose daughter Chandramukhee was very beautiful. Hemgun was in the process of searching a good boy for her, and Shreedhan was in search of money.

One day he disguised as a poor and went to Hemgun and told that he was robbed by robbers while he was going for trading. Now he doesn't have a single penny. The rich man pitied him and let him stay in his palace. Hemgun

told everything to his wife. His wife thought why not they should marry their daughter to him. She told this to her husband, the man liked the proposal and he talked to Shreedhan.

Shreedhan got very surprised to hear this, because he came here only for some money while that man wanted to marry his daughter to him. He immediately got ready to marry her. So they were married and he started enjoying life with his wife. Hemgun had given him lots of dowry. After some time, Chandramukhee asked him - "Will you not go home?" Shreedhan said - "Yes, I will go. In fact I just forgot everything in your love."

Shreedhan started for his home. At the time of going from there, he got more wealth. He was not a good man, so as he was passing through a lonely forest, he threw Chandramukhee in a well, and went away with all the wealth. Now Shreedhan came to another kingdom. There he started gambling with that money.

Chandramukhee got stunned to see the behavior of Shreedhan. Luckily the well was dry. As she fell down her head got hurt and she became unconscious. When she gained consciousness, she started crying. A traveler was passing by, he heard a woman's cry, but couldn't see anybody around. Then he peeped in the well and took her out of the well.

Chandramukhee introduced herself to him and told him that she was going with her husband that some thieves surrounded them. They took her husband away and threw her in this well. The traveler was very kind, he took her to her father's house. She told the same story to her family also what she told to that traveler. Chandramukhee just started passing her time there, and Shreedhan was enjoying his money.

One day came when he had nothing in his pocket, so he started begging. He came to Hemgun's city. Although he did not want to go to Hemgun but still he tried to find out about him and his family. He was surprised to know that Chandramukhee was still alive. He got scared. Later he came to know that thieves took away Chandramukhee's husband, threw her in a well and some kind traveler brought her here. He got very surprised at his wife's behavior.

Vikram, Now you see Shreedhan's drama. He was already poor, he entered Hemgun's house. In spite of his bad condition, Hemgun recognized him. He was very surprised to see him. Shreedhan told him that somehow he was coming escaping from thieves after four days of crossing the forest.

Hemgun let him stay with respect for some time, and then later bade farewell. e again gave lots of money to him. This time also he behaved in the same way. This time he didn't throw Chandramukhee in well, but he killed her and went away with all the wealth."

Now you tell, that in these two stories, who is more respectable? The just king of the first story or Hemgun of the second story? One did justice and the other one trusted his son-in-law every time."

Vikram said - "These are not important in any way. In the first story, I consider the thief honest and great, because if he didn't tell about the incident, then that innocent man would have been hanged; while in the second story, Chandramukhee is like Seetaa or Saavitree. She accepted to die by her husband but didn't say a word against him. That is why these both are respectable."

As the king spoke, Vaitaal laughed heartily and suddenly he disappeared from the king's shoulder and hung upside down from the same tree. The king Vikramaaditya again got very angry at this. He took out his sword and caught him before he could reach the tree. Vikram said - "You again ran away?" "No, I didn't. I am still walking with you." and he again sat on his shoulder. Vikram started his journey again.

[The Marvellous Delicacy of Three Queens.](#)

The Baital said, O king, in the Gaur country, Vardhman by name, there is a city, and one called Gunshekhar was the Raja of that land. His minister was one Abhaichand, a Jain, by whose teachings the king also came into the Jain faith.

The worship of Shiva and of Vishnu, gifts of cows, gifts of lands, gifts of rice balls, gaming and spirit-drinking, all these he prohibited. In the city no

man could get leave to do them, and as for bones, into the Ganges no man was allowed to throw them, and in these matters the minister, having taken orders from the king, caused a proclamation to be made about the city, saying, "Whoever these acts shall do, the Raja having confiscated, will punish him and banish him from the city."

Now one day the Diwan[169] began to say to the Raja, "O great king, to the decisions of the Faith be pleased to give ear. Whosoever takes the life of another, his life also in the future birth is taken: this very sin causes him to be born again and again upon earth and to die And thus he ever continues to be born again and to die. Hence for one who has found entrance into this world to cultivate religion is right and proper. Be pleased to behold! By love, by wrath, by pain, by desire, and by fascination overpowered, the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahadeva (Shiva) in various ways upon the earth are ever becoming incarnate. Far better than they is the Cow, who is free from passion, enmity, drunkenness, anger, covetousness, and inordinate affection, who supports mankind, and whose progeny in many ways give ease and solace to the creatures of the world These deities and sages (munis) believe in the Cow.[170]

"For such reason to believe in the gods is not good. Upon this earth be pleased to believe in the Cow. It is our duty to protect the life of everyone, beginning from the elephant, through ants, beasts, and birds, up to man. In the world righteousness equal to that there is none. Those who, eating the flesh of other creatures, increase their own flesh, shall in the fulness of time assuredly obtain the fruition of Narak [171]; hence for a man it is proper to attend to the conversation of life. They who understand not the pain of other creatures, and who continue to slay and to devour them, last but few days in the land, and return to mundane existence, maimed, limping, one-eyed, blind, dwarfed, hunchbacked, and imperfect in such wise. Just as they consume the bodies of beasts and of birds, even so they end by spoiling their own bodies. From drinking spirits also the great sin arises, hence the consuming of spirits and flesh is not advisable."

The minister having in this manner explained to the king the sentiments of his own mind, so brought him over to the Jain faith, that whatever he said, so the king did. Thus in Brahmans, in Jogis, in Janganis, in Sevras, in Sannyasis,[172] and in religious mendicants, no man believed, and according to this creed the rule was carried on.

Now one day, being in the power of Death, Raja Gunshekhhar died. Then his son Dharmadhvaj sat upon the carpet (throne), and began to rule. Presently he caused the minister Abhaichand to be seized, had his head shaved all but seven locks of hair, ordered his face to be blackened, and mounting him on an ass, with drums beaten, had him led all about the city, and drove him from the kingdom. From that time he carried on his rule free from all anxiety.

It so happened that in the season of spring, the king Dharmadhvaj, taking his queens with him, went for a stroll in the garden, where there was a large tank with lotuses blooming within it. The Raja admiring its beauty, took off his clothes and went down to bathe.

After plucking a flower and coming to the bank, he was going to give it into the hands of one of his queens, when it slipped from his fingers, fell upon her foot, and broke it with the blow. Then the Raja being alarmed, at once came out of the tank, and began to apply remedies to her.

Hereupon night came on, and the moon shone brightly: the falling of its rays on the body of the second queen formed blisters And suddenly from a distance the sound of a wooden pestle came out of a householder's dwelling, when the third queen fainted away with a severe pain in the head

Having spoken thus much the Baital said "O my king! of these three which is the most delicate?" The Raja answered, "She indeed is the most delicate who fainted in consequence of the headache." The Baital hearing this speech, went and hung himself from the very same tree, and the Raja, having gone there and taken him down and fastened him in the bundle and placed him on his shoulder, carried him away.

Varmaalaa

A man is whatever are his Karm

As Vikramaaditya walked away from the tree, Vaitaal was silent for some distance, but then he again started speaking - "Listen now, To listen to your

justice I tell you a story. It is just to pass time, listen to it and do justice." Vaitaal started his story and Vikram started listening quietly.

Vaitaal said - "There lived a princess in Avantee Desh. Her name was Shashi. She was very beautiful. As she grew up, many proposals came for her, but the king of Avantee was unable to decide to whom to marry his daughter. After a while the princes themselves started coming to the king and ask his daughter's hand.

One day it so happened that the king was sitting in his court, that his gatekeeper informed him that the prince of Chol Desh wanted to see him. The king called him with respect and asked the reason of his coming. He expressed his desire to marry the princess. Chol Desh was a very mighty kingdom in those times, so the king had to think about it. He said to him - "Please you stay in our special guest house, we will consult the princess and then only we can reply you. By the way what is your specialty?" The prince said - "I am a good archer. I can shoot "Shabd-Vedhee" (shooting an arrow just only listening by sound) arrow and I don't miss my target." And the prince was sent to the guest house.

After this another prince, prince of Vaishaalee, came with the proposal. King asked him also, "What is your specialty?" He said - "Nobody can make a cloth like me. I alone know how to make the best silken cloth." And he presented a very good silken cloth to the king. All courtiers got stunned to see the quality and softness of that cloth. That cloth was sent to the princess and the prince was sent to the guest house.

After this another prince came with the marriage proposal, he was from Bang Desh. His specialty was that he was very learned. He remembered all Ved, Geetaa, Puraan etc books. Anybody could ask him anything from anywhere. The king sent him too to guest house respectfully. Now came the prince of Chedi Desh. On asking his specialty, he told that he knew all the body parts and the princess will never be sick if she was married to him. He was also sent to the guest house. Thus four princes gathered in king's palace as suitors for the princess.

Now the king said to his daughter - "Dear daughter, Four princes have come with the desire to marry you. Take this Varmaalaa and put it in the neck of the prince you like most. The princess came to the guest house with the

Varmaalaa. Now tell to whom the princess should choose as her husband. If you did not reply in spite of knowing, your skull will split into pieces." Vaitaal got silent after telling this.

Vikram was also silent. He was walking fast and he had held Vaitaal tightly. He knew that he had to reply, he could not be silent, so he said - "Listen O Vaitaal, A man is a Braahman, or Kshatriya, or Vaishya, or Shoodra by his Karm (actions) only not by his birth. So the princess should marry the prince of Chol Desh because only he is a true Kshatriya; others are Vaishya, Braahman and Shoodra respectively. Only a Kshatriya can be the appropriate husband for a princess."

As Vikram broke his silence, Vaitaal said laughing - "You are right Vikram, only a Kshatriya can be the appropriate husband for the princess." and saying this he again ran away from the king's shoulder. Although the king was attentive still he took some time to capture him. He again started walking towards the cremation ground.

After a while Vaitaal said - "You are right, a man is Braahman, or Kshatriya, or Vaishya, or Shoodra by his Karm only not by his birth, then who will be the carrier of a dead body?" "Shoodra." And Vaitaal broke into laughter.

After a while, Vikram saw a fire burning at one side and a woman was crying. Hearing this, Vikram stopped. Vaitaal said - "Don't stop, keep moving. This is a lonely forest. Ghosts and vampires play games here. Don't even look at that, just keep moving on." Vikram obeyed him and kept moving.

Two Friends

Only face is the introduction of a man

As Vikramaaditya walked away from the tree, Vaitaal again started speaking - "Listen now, and do not be angry. Your justice is very good that is why I like to talk to you, it increases my knowledge." Vikram didn't say a word and continued to walk. Vaitaal also continued his talking, he said - "Now I tell you

a story just to pass time, listen to it and do justice." Vaitaal started his story and Vikram started listening.

Vaitaal said - "There lived a rich man in Ujjayinee Nagaree. He had only one son. His name was Gandharvsen. He was very handsome, like a prince. He used to go to city riding on a horse. Many girls were attracted to him, but he didn't like any of them. By chance, one day he went to that side of city where washermen were washing the clothes. Suddenly he saw a girl who was washing her clothes with full attention. He instantly fell in love with her. He gazed at her for a few moments, then sat on the steps of a nearby temple. He sat there till sunset. All washermen had gone from there after loading their clothes on donkeys.

Gandharvsen got very sad. Then he got up and said to Deveen in the temple, "If I am married to this girl, I will offer my head to you after one month." And he came back to his home. He was not able to forget that girl even for a moment. He fell sick. His family got worried about him. Several Vaidya (traditional doctors) came to see him but nobody was able to identify any disease.

He had a good childhood friend. His name was Devdatt. He also got worried seeing his condition. He asked him the reason of his sadness. Then he told everything to him. Devdatt went to the father of that girl and talked to him. He got very happy with this proposal. The girl, whose name was Roopmatee, told that she also liked him but was helpless. Hey Vikram, Thus Gandharvsen and Roopmatee got married. Gandharvsen loved Roopmatee so much that he did not allow her to go anywhere even for a moment.

Thus one month had passed. Gandharvsen remembered his vow taken in the temple, so after one month he came to the temple along with Devdatt and Roopmatee. He asked them to wait outside and he alone went inside the temple. He cut his head and offered it in the feet of Deveen. When he did not come out of the temple for some time Devdatt and Roopmatee got worried. Devdatt went inside and got stunned seeing the severed head of his friend.

He thought, if he tells this to others, they will think that Devdatt himself has killed Gandharvsen to get Roopmatee, so he also cut his head and offered in Deveen's feet. Seeing this sacrifice, Deveen appeared and she joined both the heads to both the bodies, but in hurry, she made a mistake. She joined

Gandharvsen's head to Devdatt's body and Devdatt's head to Gandharvsen's body. Thus both were alive but with different bodies.

Now you tell Vikram, to whom Roopmatee should choose as her husband? If she chooses Gandharvsen as her husband, will she be not a sinner?"

Vikram got silent hearing Vaitaal. He was walking fast and he had held him tightly. Then he said - "Listen O Vaitaal, Roopmatee should select only that body on which Gandharvsen's face has been joined . " "Will it not be a sin?" "No, It will not be a sin, because only face is the introduction of a person, only face shows the feelings of a person, that is why Gandharvsen's face is very important. This body is the slave of eyes. Whatever they will say, the body will do the same. In this way Roopmatee will get the love of Gandharvsen only, if she will marry the body on which Gandharvsen's face was joined. "

Hearing Vikram, Vaitaal said - "You are right Vikram, only face gives the introduction of a person." Saying this Vaitaal again laughed heartily and ran away from the king's shoulder and hung upside down from the same tree. The king Vikramaaditya again got very angry at this. He followed him taking out his sword, took him from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking.

He said to him - "If you will run away this time, I will cut your neck." Vaitaal spoke softly - "Don't be so angry, O Vikram. You are very courageous. And you are a just king, that is why I want to gain some knowledge from you." He was speaking and Vikram was listening.

Consciousness

A man's consciousness is everything

As Vikramaaditya was walking fast toward cremation ground, Vaitaal spoke again - "Vikram, What is in a man which makes him different from other living beings and he is regarded the highest among brave people?" Vikram didn't say a word, he continued to move on silently. Vaitaal continued - "OK, Then I tell you a story in this regard.

There was a king in Magadh Desh. His name was Shoorsen. He was a very good king. Many kings came in his court just only to see him. People said that his palace was more beautiful than Indra's court.

Once he went for hunting and went far in search of the hunt. He was following a deer. He was a very good horse rider. He had come very far, his people were left far behind. He was alone. Suddenly his deer disappeared. Now he had the chance to look around. It was a very dense lonely forest. He started thinking that in which direction he should go, he couldn't make out so he just started moving in one direction. But the day was getting over, and he was still in the forest. He was hungry and thirsty also. There were many wild animals around him, but he was not afraid of them, the problem was only of his hunger and thirst.

The night had fallen by now, he could not move more, so he loosened his horse, tied him with a tree and lay down on the ground. He kept his sword near him. He was worried, he was hungry, and he could not sleep. At about midnight he heard the sound of two lions fighting together for a lioness. He got up, picked his sword and started seeing their fight. A lioness was standing nearby. Suddenly the lioness ran away, so both lions also ran away after her, and the whole atmosphere became quiet again.

The king again lay down and waited for the morning. But in the meantime he heard a sound and he again got up taking his sword. His pearl necklace and diamond and pearl studded sword were shining. He heard a voice - "Who are you?" The king got very happy to hear a man's voice, so he very softly asked him - "First you tell me, who are you?" The man replied - "I am a traveler, but who are you? You look like a king. How have you come here?" "How did you know that I am a king?" "Your shining gems are telling this."

Then Shoorsen introduced himself, that man also came near him and said to him - "I know the way, I can take you out of this forest. I have something to eat, you may satisfy yourself." He gave a couple of Chapaat and some vegetable to him. King ate them, they were like Amrit to him. The man said - "Now you take some rest. I will keep watch." Then the man told him that his name was Gunaadhip and he was an orphan. His elder brother had brought him up. His sister-in-law had expelled him saying that he was a loafer. Now he was traveling on foot and was looking for a job. Shoorsen didn't say anything, he slept comfortably.

In the morning he made the traveler sit on his horse and they came to his capital after mid-day. He made a comfortable arrangement for Gunaadhip to stay. He appointed him as his counselor and made the arrangement of palace, servants and maids etc for him. Gunaadhip felt lucky."

After a little pause, Vaitaal continued - "One day, Gunaadhip went to the city and saw a beautiful woman taking bath in a pond. He fell in love with her, she also liked him. She asked him - "Do you like me?" "Yes" The woman whispered - "Then come tomorrow at this time." He came back and told everything to the king. Shoorsen said - "I will also go with you tomorrow." Gunaadhip came back to his palace, he could not sleep the whole night.

Next day both went to the same place, she was taking bath in the pond like yesterday. Seeing Gunaadhip coming she came to him and asked about Shoorsen. Gunaadhip told her that he was the king. Hearing this she said - "I will marry Shoorsen." Shoorsen got stunned hearing this, even Gunaadhip couldn't digest this. Both looked at each other. Then Gunaadhip said to the king - "O King, You marry her." Shoorsen got silent for a moment then said - "No, Gunaadhip, You marry her." But the woman refused to marry Gunaadhip.

King asked her - "But you have already agreed yesterday?" "Yes" "Then why did you change your decision today?" "Because I want to live in a palace." Shoorsen said - "Don't worry, you will live in palace because I have given him a palace to live." Now she agreed to marry to Gunaadhip and they were married. Now tell, O Vikram, whose consciousness is purer? Gunaadhip's, who got ready to give up that beautiful woman for whom he himself wanted to marry; or Shoorsen who was also attracted to the beauty of the woman but still left her for Gunaadhip?

Vikram first kept silence. Vaitaal said - "Speak, Vikram. If you will not reply me in spite of knowing the answer, your head will split into pieces. He knew that he had to reply, so he said - "You asked me a question, that "what is in a man which makes man higher than other beings?" This is the answer of the same question. You remember you told that two lions were fighting for a lioness. This is the point where man differs from animals, and its reason is his consciousness. Only the consciousness makes him higher than other beings."

As Vikram broke his silence, Vaitaal said laughing - "You are right Vikram." and saying this he again ran away from the king's shoulder. Although the king

was attentive still the king took time to capture him, but he captured him almost immediately and started walking fast again towards the cremation ground.

After a while Vaitaal said - "Why are you so much in hurry? Trust me we will be there in time." Vikram said - "Already two Prahar night has passed and I have to reach there before the end of the third Prahar." Vaitaal said - "You will reach there Vikram, don't worry, just listen to the story." Vikram did not speak.

Vaitaal said - There was a Tapaswee Muni in Avanteepur. His name was Shankhdhar. Once he saw a beautiful woman in his Aashram, and got attracted to her. The woman also blinked at Muni. But Muni remembered his Tapasyaa, so he gave her Shaap, "You become an old woman." That woman became an old woman. She said crying, "Hey Muni, What was my fault? Why did you give me such Shaap?" Muni said "You came to break my Tapasyaa." "Then why did you take my youth, why didn't you control yourself?" Muni didn't say anything and went away from there. Now tell me, was it appropriate for the Muni to give such a Shaap to that woman?

Vikram said - "Yes, It was appropriate. If that woman had not blinked at him then the Muni was at fault; but since she blinked at him, she was at fault. She had no right to blink at the Muni. If Muni was attracted only toward her beauty, then Muni was at fault, but in this case he was not at fault. That is why she was punished."

This time Vaitaal didn't run away, so Vikram continued moving.

Welfare to Others

To do good to others without selfishness is the real doing good to others

As Vikramaaditya was walking fast toward cremation ground, Vaitaal spoke again - "Vikram, You seem to be angry, but I am very happy to be with you. Now listen to another story. There was a rich man lived in Gaandhaar Desh. His name was Brahmddatt. He had only one wife and had made the rule for others also not to marry more than one wife. Women were very happy with

this arrangement. Brahmndatt had a son named Somdatt. He was very handsome and unmarried.

One day Somdatt went out in the city and halted in front of a temple. After a while a beautiful woman came out of the temple. Somdatt fell in love with her. That woman also saw him, smiled and went away shyly. Somdatt came back and thought about that woman. He took the help of his friends and found out about her. She was the daughter of the king's minister and her name was Chandrasenaa. Somdatt sent his proposal to marry her to her parents but they refused it because she was already engaged to some other man, named Jayakarn.

Hearing this Somdatt got very sad. He thought to take Sanyaas, that a messenger from Chandrasenaa came to him and gave him a letter. She wrote in that letter, that she would meet him after her marriage. At present she did not want to create any scene by breaking her marriage. Somdatt got a new life. He waited for Chandrasenaa. Chandrasenaa got married to Jayakarn. She did not create any scene during marriage ceremonies, but when, after the marriage, Jayakarn was about to hold her hand, she withdrew it.

Jayakarn asked her "What is the matter?" She told him that she loved Somdatt. Hearing this Jayakarn could not speak anything. After a while he asked her - "Do you want to go to him?" "Yes" "You may go." Chandrasenaa went to Somdatt's house. It was midnight. All was quiet and Chandrasenaa was going there laden with ornaments.

Suddenly a thief saw her and came in her way. Chandrasenaa got scared, she told him that she was going to see her lover, when she would come back, she would give her all ornaments to him. The thief took a promise from her and let her go. He said - "I will wait for you here only till you come back." Chandrasenaa agreed and went to Somdatt's house.

Seeing her in this guise, Somdatt got scared. She said - "Why are you so scared? I wrote you that I would come after my marriage." "Are you married?" "Yes" Somdatt did not know what to do. Chandrasenaa said - "What are you looking at? Love me."

Somdatt said - "No, I cannot love you. You know the law of our kingdom. You are now Jayakarn's wife. I will be hanged for this crime." Chandrasenaa said

- "Then, you won't?" "No, It was another matter before marriage, but now I cannot." Chandrasenaa went back disappointed. She came back to the thief. The thief got very happy to see her coming back, but when he saw her sad face, he asked her - "Why are you sad? What happened?" Chandrasenaa told him everything. The thief pitied her and said - "I like your truthfulness that you came back to me. Now I will not take your ornaments, you may go." and the thief went away leaving Chandrasenaa there. Chandrasenaa also came back to Jayakarn.

Jayakarn asked her - "Why have you come here now?" Chandrasenaa told him everything. Jayakarn said - "Now I cannot accept you, you may go wherever you like." Thus he left Chandrasenaa. Since she had nowhere to go, she committed suicide by jumping in a well.

Vaitaal said - "Now you do justice, Vikram."

Vikram said - "What is there for justice. Chandrasenaa died, whatever she did, she got its result." Vaitaal said - "That is all right, but in this story, whose obligation is more, Jayakarn's, his own wife's, or Somdatt's who did not accept Jayakarn's wife, or of the thief who did not take her ornaments? Vikram said - "Whatever obligation is done without selfishness, that is known as real obligation. Whoever has done the obligation without any selfishness, only his obligation should be regarded greater."

"Is it Somdatt?"

"No, Because he refused to accept her only because of king's fear. He did not oblige Jayakarn." Vaitaal asked - "Then, Is it Jayakarn?"

"No, His heart was broken because of his wife's bad character, that is why he left her."

"Then, Is it Chandrasenaa?"

"No, She was doing all that because of her love. In fact it was the thief. He didn't have any selfish motive, that is why he didn't take her ornaments. That is why I consider the thief the greatest."

Vaitaal said - "You are right, you have done the correct justice." Since Vikram broke his silence, Vaitaal again ran away from the king's shoulder and hung on the tree upside down. Vikram caught him by his hair, put him on his shoulder and started walking fast again towards the cremation ground.

After a while Vaitaal said - "You are a very good judge, you can separate water from milk." Vikram remained silent. Vaitaal said - "Don't be angry Vikram, I have been entertaining you." Vikram said - "You have been entertaining me or you have been troubling me?" Vaitaal assured him - "Trust me, I wish your good. You will see a surprise on this coming turning, but don't stop."

Vikram continued walking, but stopped on the turning. Some beautiful women were dancing there. Suddenly they all surrounded Vikram. The then he remembered Vaitaal's instruction that he should not stop there so he continued walking. Vaitaal said - "Bravo". Vikram asked - "Who were they?" Vaitaal said - "It all goes on in forest that is why people are afraid to come here, but you are really brave, you came here. In fact they were witches. If you had stopped here they would have eaten you." "But when I was coming here, they were not there." "They appear at this time only. All were lost souls. Among them some were queens, and one of them was my wife." "Your wife?" "Yes" "Doesn't she know you?" "There is no relationship after death." And suddenly Vaitaal ran away from his shoulder and hung from the same tree.

Four Delicate Princesses

Real tenderness is of heart, not of the body

Vikramaaditya had again lifted Vaitaal, put him on his shoulder and continued walking. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, There is lots of time. You will be successful in your mission, you will reach the cremation ground in time, but till then let us enjoy. So listen now to another story.

The king of Swarn Desh was a very gracious king. He had four beautiful daughters. They all were very tender and delicate. His first daughter was like that, if she came out in moonlight, she had blisters on her skin. Her second daughter was like that, if any rose flower is thrown at her body, it bled from that place where it hit. The third daughter was like that, if anybody spoke a little loudly, she became unconscious. And the fourth one was like that if somebody touched her, a mark was made at the same place. All princess became very famous for their tenderness, even in far countries. Whoever heard about them, he got surprised at this.

The first princess was always kept in shade; nobody touched the second one; all only whispered in the presence of the third princess; and the fourth princess was like the second princess. The king was very much worried about their marriage, how they will be married? Will they be able to live after their marriage? He was especially worried about the second and the fourth ones.

The king had employed separate maids to take care of them. One of those maids was very kind. She used to donate something to a beggar whenever she got an opportunity, especially when she went out of the palace.

Because of their tenderness, the princesses used to wear extremely light clothes and jewelry. One day, the maid, who used to give alms to beggars, came out of the palace carrying an ornament. A poor man saw the ornament in her hand and requested her to give that ornament to him as he wanted to marry his daughter. He didn't have any ornament to give to his daughter in her marriage. O Vikram, the maid pitied him, and gave that ornament to him and came back empty hand. The king got very angry at this and he sacked her out. She went back to her house.

After a while a Vaidya (traditional doctor) came in that country. The king told him about his daughters and asked him, "Who is the most tender girl among them?" Vaidya laughed. King got surprised at this laugh and asked him why he was laughing. Vaidya said - "I am laughing at their tenderness." The king said - "Can't you treat my tender most daughter?" Vaidya refused to treat any of them and went away.

Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Now tell, Vaidya said right or wrong? Who was the most tender princess among them?" Vikram was silent. Vaitaal again said - "Is keeping quiet your justice? You are famous for your justice, speak something."

*Vikram said - "No princess was tender among all the princesses."
"What are you saying?"*

Vikram said - "My justice says that only, because the tenderness of heart is more important than the tenderness of the body. The most tender was that maid who used to give alms to beggars. If somebody's heart is not tender, then what is the use of tenderness of body, that is why the Vaidya refused to treat them. This is my justice."

Vaitaal remained silent for a while, then he broke into laughter and wanted to run away from Vikram's shoulder but Vikram had held him tightly. He said - "You are running away, I will not let you run away." "OK, OK, But only one condition. I will tell you another story and you will do justice as usual." Vaitaal continued - "After that Vaidya went away. After some time the king married his first daughter. The prince always kept her in shade. When the time came she gave birth to a daughter. On this occasion many Deepak (lamps) were lit in the palace. Somehow, one Deepak's light fell on princess' body and it caused blisters on her body." Hearing this Vikram also laughed. Vaitaal asked why he was laughing. Vikram said - "Because this is not the tenderness of the body. This is kind of disease. That is why I am laughing."

Since Vikram broke his silence, Vaitaal again ran away from the king's shoulder and hung on the tree upside down. Vikram again went back to the tree, caught him by his hair, put him on his shoulder and started walking fast again towards the cremation ground.

Learning

One should learn from others

As Vikramaaditya was going, Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Listen to another story, so that we pass time. I tell you the story of Bhadrasen who was the king of Punyapur. He was very religious and a learned king. As he grew old he thought "if I have not enjoyed pleasures being a king, then my life was useless". So he started enjoying beautiful women, so much so that he forgot his kingdom.

Bhadrasen's minister Suyash was also very intelligent. He got worried seeing the king's condition. He tried to explain the king several times but Bhadrasen was adamant. He didn't listen to him at all. His desires grew so much that he took even one of his courtier's wife as his keep. His people were abusing him but Suyash was so intelligent that people were not able to agitate against the king.

Suyash's wife was also worried hearing all this. One day she said to her husband - "For how long we will tolerate this defame. Let us go from here pretending that we are going for pilgrimage." Suyash agreed at this. Next day

he requested the king to grant him leave for the pilgrimage, and he left the city with his family.

The king appointed another minister replacing Suyash, but he himself started conspiring to take the kingdom. One day Suyash got the news that the people of the kingdom had agitated; the minister, who had replaced him, had taken kingdom, and expelled the king. Suyash got very sad to hear this, but he didn't return from the pilgrimage. Suyash had come to Raameshwaram where Raam built the bridge on sea. Next day when he went to take bath in the sea, he saw a beautiful woman sitting on a branch of a tree coming out of the sea. Seeing that woman Suyash got attracted to her, she also smiled at him, and the tree disappeared in the sea along with the woman.

Suyash got very surprised to see this, he came back but he could not forget that woman and he longed for her. Next day he again came at the same spot and as he came there, that tree again appeared there. The woman sitting on that tree smiled at him. Suyash could not hold himself any more and jumped into the sea. He swam to the tree and sat beside the woman. He introduced himself to the woman, and asked her introduction. She said that she lived in Paataal Lok, but she liked the people of Prithvi Lok that is why she used to come here often. She waited for somebody to come there but nobody came there. She had seen only him and she had liked him.

Suyash also liked her. She said to him - "Come along with me to Paataal Lok." Suyash agreed and the tree went into the sea. Thus for how long he stayed there in Paataal Lok with her, he couldn't know. He didn't remember his wife also. After a while that Naag woman was fed up with Suyash and she asked him to leave. Suyash was not ready to go, but she threw him out of the sea forcefully. As he came out of the sea, he remembered his wife. He came to know that his wife died waiting for him sitting on the shore of the sea. Suyash got shocked to hear this. She died many months ago. He went mad.

After saying this Vaitaal got silent. He spoke again - "Now Vikram, Do justice. What punishment should be given to that Naag woman for the death of Suyash?"

Vikram was silent, but he had to do justice, so he said - "Why should that Naag woman be punished? What is her fault? She is innocent." Vaitaal said - "But she is responsible for Suyash's condition." Vikram said - "No, Suyash

knew all this, that what is the result of enjoying such pleasures. King Bhadrasen's kingdom was gone because of this, even he was expelled. Still Suyash did this? He did not learn from king's mistakes? Listen, Who does not learn from others, he suffers like that. That is why Suyash himself is responsible for his death, nobody else."

Vikram got silent after saying this. Vaitaal broke into laughter and ran away again. Vikram tried to hold him tightly, but he escaped and hung on the same tree upside down. Vikram again had to go back to bring him. He said - "You again ran away?" "No King Vikram, I am coming with you." and Vaitaal himself came to sit on his shoulder. Vikram again moved towards the cremation ground.

Who is at Fault?

It is sin to blame others for no reason

Vikramaaditya had held Vaitaal tightly. He was very angry with Vaitaal. Vaitaal said - "Why are you so angry with me?" "Why do you trouble me so much? Why do you run away like this every time?" "You don't worry, whatever I am doing, I am doing for your good only. A time will come when you will feel obliged to me. OK, Now listen to another story, so that we pass our time easily. If you will not reply in spite of knowing, your head will split and scatter all around, you know that." Vikram did not say anything, he listened to him quietly.

Vaitaal started his story - "There lived a learned Braahman, named Choodaavat, in Choodaapur city. He had a son whose name was Bhadraavat. He was also learned like his father. When he grew up, his father started looking for a girl for him, but he could not marry him in his life time. After the death of his father, Bhadraavat maintained the respect of his father. But only a few people can control their desires.

One day Bhadraavat went to one of his Yajamaan's house. There he saw a beautiful girl and fell in love with her. That girls also expressed her love to him. Bhadraavat expressed his desire to marry her, she accepted the proposal and both were married. That girl's name was Laavanyavatee.

All days are not made equal. One day, it so happened that Bhadraavat went to a pond to take bath along with his wife. Unfortunately she drowned in the pond while taking bath and her body rested on the bottom of the pond. Bhadraavat got mad, he remained seated on the banks of the pond for quite some time. Later he ran away towards forest shouting her name. His condition was like a beggar. He was wandering from country to country.

Wandering thus he arrived in Kanchanpur. There lived his father's fast friend - Vaasudev. He recognized him, got very sad to see his condition. He wanted to take him to his house, but Bhadraavat didn't agree for it. Vaasudev said to his wife - "Today is Tuesday, prepare some Kheer for him." She cooked Kheer for him and gave it to him, but he didn't eat it, just took it and sat outside the house in the garden.

Now, a poisonous snake lived in the root of the tree. It came out of its burrow, spit its poison in that Kheer and went away. Bhadraavat was so lost in his ideas that he couldn't know it. After that Bhadraavat ate that Kheer and in a little while he felt the effect of the poison. He rushed to the door of the house and shouted - "You have given me poison." and saying this fell down at the door only. He had died.

Vaasudev got worried seeing him falling down like this. He abused his wife that she had killed a Braahman. She had given him poison. Since she was innocent, hearing this blame she committed suicide jumping in the well."

After saying this Vaitaal said to Vikram - "Now Vikram, Do justice. Was Vaasudev to be blamed for her death? Should he be punished for this or not? Or Bhadraavat is responsible for this? because he blamed Vaasudev's wife? What is your judgment?"

Vikram said - "Vaasudev is innocent in this incident. He abused his wife without knowing the facts, and she committed suicide. And Vaasudev also didn't know that a snake had spit its poison in his Kheer." "Then who is at fault?" Vikram said - "It is the greatest sin to blame other without any reason. Nobody was at fault." Vaitaal asked - "What about the snake? Is it not at fault?" "No, Because spitting poison is its nature." Vaitaal asked - "What about Bhadraavat himself?" Vikram said - "He could be, but he was not, because he had gone mad and a mad man has no sense of anything."

Vaitaal asked - "Then who is responsible for this?" Vikram said - "In fact nobody. It was all destined like this."

Vikram got silent after saying this and Vaitaal also did not laugh at this time. He just said - "You are right, Vikram." Vikram was moving towards the cremation ground. They had come more than half the way. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Change your path, take the right path, this time is for a poisonous snake to appear." Vikram obeyed him. He was happy as Vaitaal was protecting his life also.

Why Wept, Why Laughed?

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Only jeweler knows the value of gems

After a while Vaitaal said - "I am very happy with you Vikram, now I tell you another surprising story. It is a real incident. I have witnessed it. There lived a king, named Chandraveer, in the city of Chandrahridaya. He was a very mighty king. He took a good care of his people. A rich man also lived in the same city, his name was Dharmveer. He had daughter, her name was Shobhanaa. She was very beautiful. Her father wanted to marry her, but she had told him that whenever she would like any boy, she would tell him herself. Dharmveer didn't speak anything after that.

Now, a day came that thefts started taking place in that city, but the thief was not caught. Then the people requested Chandraveer. He sent all his soldiers on vigilance, but still the thefts could not be stopped. People doubted that the soldiers were with thieves. People again went to Chandraveer. This time Chandraveer decided to vigil himself. This made his soldiers also honest.

After 3-4 days, when Chandraveer was roaming in the streets of the city, he saw a man running away. "Go, and catch him." He ordered his soldiers. Soldiers followed him and caught him. He was found with stolen goods. He accepted that he was stealing till now and he was the thief. Next day it was announced that the thief has been caught and he will be hanged tomorrow after giving him a round of the city.

People got very happy to hear this news. Next day when the thief was taken for the round in the city, all people came out to see him. When the thief was passing in front of Dharmveer's house, Shobhanaa also saw him. She got attracted to the thief. She immediately went to her father and told him that she wanted to marry him and he should be saved. Dharmveer got stunned to hear this. He tried to explain her but she did not listen to.

Shobhanaa said - "I have chosen him my husband. If he was hanged I will become Satee with him." Hearing this he went to the king and requested him to free the thief. The king got surprised to hear this, he said - "What are you saying? How can it be possible? The thief has to be punished, otherwise what my people will say?" Dharmveer came back home disappointed. Shobhanaa was adamant on her decision. Dharmveer tried to explain to her but she didn't listen to it.

This news spread all over the city. The thief also heard this. When he heard it, he started weeping. Then the time came to hang him. The whole city was present there. The thief was brought at the place where he was to be hanged. The then Shobhanaa also came there. She announced that she had chosen the thief as her husband, that is why she would become Satee with him. When the thief heard this he laughed. After that he was hanged. Hey Raajan, Shobhanaa became Satee carrying his dead body in her laps. She kept her promise.

I have seen this incident myself, still I am not able to understand that why the thief first wept hearing the news of Shobhanaa's love; and why did he laugh at hearing Shobhanaa's becoming Satee with him. In fact it should have been otherwise. He should have laughed at the first time and wept at the second time.

Vikram said - "Vaitaal, Only the jeweler knows the value of gems. When the thief came to know that the rich man's daughter Shobhanaa loved him, he wept, because he thought, if this had happened before, he could be reformed; second time he laughed because of the foolishness of Shobhanaa. He knew that it was only a part of her womanish character."

Vikram got silent after saying this. He had held Vaitaal tightly that suddenly Vaitaal laughed heartily in that dark night and said - "You are right, Vikram." and ran away from his shoulder. Vikram again pulled Vaitaal from the tree,

put him on his shoulder and started walking. He said - "If you will runaway like this, I will cut your head." Vaitaal again laughed and said - "No Vikram, You cannot do this, because if you will cut my neck then what will you take to that Yogee?" and he again ran away. Vikram went away to that Yogee without taking Vaitaal.

Obligation

The true obligation is without self motive

Vikram pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and continued his journey. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, You are really working hard. Every time I run away, and every time you take me to that Yogee. You don't feel bored, that is why I tell you a story, listen--

A king, named Jeemootvaahan, lived in Himaachal Pradesh. He was very religious, but his son Agnivaahan was very cruel. Agnivaahan expressed his desire of becoming king while his father was alive. He threatened him to forcefully descend him from the throne if his desire was not fulfilled. Jeemootvaahan handed over his kingdom to his son Agnivaahan and went away to forest.

Agnivaahan started many atrocities with his people. Jeemootvaahan was passing his life doing Tapasyaa. One day when he was singing Bhajan, he heard a cry of an old woman. He went to that woman and asked the reason of her crying. She said - "I have only one son. Here lives a Daanav, he will eat my son tonight." Jeemootvaahan consoled her and said - "Don't be so sad, mother. I will be very happy if my this body comes in use for somebody. I will become your son and will become the food of that Daanav." The old woman could not agree at this, but the king was firm on his decision, so she had to agree at last.

In the evening the woman's son came back. She told him everything. Her son also didn't agree for this, and he asked king to go back, but the king flatly refused to go back, and somehow he made him agreed. Thus Jeemootvaahan became the food of the Daanav and the woman's son was saved. Now tell me, what kind of obligation was this?

Vikram thought for a while then said - "There is no obligation in this, Vaitaal." "What? You mean that Jeemootvaahan's obligation went waste?" "No Vaitaal, He did a great obligation on the woman, but O Vaitaal, the real obligation is that which is unselfish. Jeemootvaahan sacrificed himself with the desire of Moksh and Punya. Who could not do anything for his own son, if he does something for the other's son, this is not logical. Jeemootvaahan should have given up his life instead of making his son king. He handed over his kingdom to a cruel person to rule and left his people to suffer under him, he cannot be pardoned for this. This is my justice - you think yourself."

Vaitaal got silent hearing Vikram. After a while he spoke - "You are right, Vikram." Then he laughed heartily, ran away from his shoulder and hung from the same tree. Vikram again pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking.

Truth

Truth is the same what the world sees

Vikram came straight to the cremation ground. The Yogee asked him - "Come Vikram, Have you brought that dead body?" Vikram told him everything what happened with him. The Yogee said - "But I cannot do anything without that dead body. Time is short. If you will be late then the Muhoort will pass, so bring him soon." Vikram said - "But he tells too many stories." "Keep listening, and bring him here." Vikram went back to the same tree, pulled him from the tree, put him on his shoulder and continued his journey. Vaitaal said - "I knew that you will come, because you need me very badly." and he laughed at himself. "Why do you laugh?" "I am laughing, because sometimes even learned people cannot value the time." Vikram asked - "What do you mean by that?" Vaitaal said - "Listen, I tell you a story--

A trader, named Sumant, lived in Kaling Desh. He had a handsome son, named Hemant. He also went country to country to trade along with his father. Once he went to Gaandhaar Desh for trading. They showed their materials to its king in his court. The king asked him to show it to princess in his inner apartments. Hemant went in his inner apartment. Going in inner apartment was

not a new thing for him, he often used to go in kings' inner apartments. He was brought to the inner apartments under strict watch.

There he started showing his materials to mother queen. At the same time princess Chandrababhaa also came there. Hemant got stunned to see her. He had been to many inner apartments, but he has never seen such a beauty elsewhere. He got attracted to her. By chance the princess also fell in love with him. After selling his things, he came out of the inner apartments, but he was not able to forget the princess' beautiful face.

Hey Vikram, Now He didn't like trading at all, he always thought about the princess and how to see the princess again. There was a strict watch in her apartment, he could not go there. He went around the palace several times in the hope that he might see her once, but all the time he got disappointment. He did not say a word about his feelings. He refused to go back from Gaandhaar Desh. Then one of his helpers went to inform his father, and rest remained with him. He was staying near the main gate of the palace.

Now, there came a Taantrik, named Bhootdev, after learning Tantra. One of Hemant's servants went to him hearing his fame. He described his master's condition to him. Bhootdev came to see him and understood his mind with the power of his Mantra. He asked him - "Are you really restless to see the princess Chandrababhaa?" Hemant nodded. He said - "I can arrange the meeting." Then he gave a Taabeez to Hemant and said to him - "As you will tie this Taabeez on your body, you will be converted into a fine young woman, and when you will untie it, you will be returned to your original form. That is how you can see her." "But how will I go inside?"

Bhootdev said - "I have a way." He converted himself into an old man and tied the Taabeez on Hemant's arm (this converted him into a beautiful young woman), and both went to the king. He said to the king - "Mahaaraaj, You are very kind. I am a poor old Braahman, I wish to go for pilgrimage. This is my daughter, she will not be able to go with me, so if you keep her, I will be able to earn some Punya. When I will come back, I will take her."

The king agreed, he sent that woman to his daughter in his inner apartments. Bhootdev told Hemant that he would come back in a week time. Till then he can live with her, then he will see further. In the inner apartments, Chandrababhaa got a new friend. When they were alone, he came into his

original form. The princess got very happy to see him. Both were happy, nobody could notice anything. When that week had passed, none of them could know. Bhootdev had come back to take him, but Hemant requested him to give him one more week. Bhootdev agreed and Hemant stayed back there for one more week.

O Vikram, It so happened that the king's minister's son got attracted to Hemant's woman form. He wanted to marry her, so he requested the king that he should be married to her. King asked him to wait till Bhootdev comes. Now that another week was also over. Bhootdev had come again to take him. The king proposed Bhootdev for his daughter for his minister's son. Bhootdev said politely - "Mahaaraaj, I will tell you after asking my daughter."

Hemant was brought in his woman form. Bhootdev asked her about the proposal, he clearly refused it. Now Hemant had come out of the palace. He told Bhootdev that the princess is pregnant. Bhootdev got happy to hear this, as he can get married to her on this basis only. Hemant was satisfied. Bhootdev went away. Then Hemant went to the king and asked the hand of Chandraprabhaa. The king clearly refused. at this Hemant said - "The princess is expecting my child." Still the king didn't agree.

Hemant got disappointed with king's answer. When the king asked Chandraprabhaa, she told him everything clearly, still the king refused to marry her to Hemant. Hemant go so much shocked by his refusal, that he committed suicide. Now you judge, "was the king not responsible for this sin? Was the king not worthy to be punished?"

Vikram thought for a while then said - "No Vaitaal, The king did right." "How." "Listen, Whatever this world sees, only that is truth. Whatever is done at the back, is not considered the truth. That is why, it was all right for the king to refuse go Hemant to marry his daughter. "Then why did Hemant commit suicide? Because he himself was at fault. The minister's son was also attracted to Hemant's woman form, then why didn't he commit suicide? He lived very well. This is my justice - that whatever sees the world, that is the only truth, rest is a lie."

Vaitaal said - "You are right, Vikram." He laughed heartily and ran away from his shoulder. This time Vikram didn't feel bad, he again pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vaitaal again started

speaking - "O Vikram, Listen further. Thus Hemant died. When the princess knew it, she became very sad. At the same time she gave birth to a son. The king gave that boy to a woman and he got ready to marry her. One prince got ready to marry her, so she was married to him. Both started living happily. After some time, Hemant's son grew old and came to see his mother but she refused to accept him as her son.

Now tell Vikram, What type of form is this of a mother? Is this not a sin?" Vikram said - "This son of the princess was illegitimate, how could she accept him as her son?" Vaitaal asked - "Then was it a womanish behavior?" "Yes" "You are insulting the whole woman class." and he again ran away from his shoulder. Vikram couldn't hold him back this time, but he had to take him to that Yogee, so he went back again, put him on his shoulder and started his journey.

Duty Duty is higher than faithfulness

Vikram again pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and continued his journey. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, You don't feel bored, that is why I tell you a story, listen--

The king of Malaya Desh Samarjeet was very brave and learned. There lived a rich man, named Chandramani. One day a courtier asked king's permission to say something to the king. The king permitted him. He said - "Mahaaraaj, We have a rich man, named Chandramani in our kingdom. His daughter Manimaalaa is very beautiful. There is nobody else as beautiful as her. She is now of marriageable age, if you like her, you may marry her."

Hearing this the king Samarjeet told that if she would be really beautiful, he will surely marry her. The courtier went away. After the courtier had left, the king called his trusted maid and said to her - "You are my most trusted maid, find out something for me." "Command me please." King said - "Our Chandramani's daughter is very beautiful. Find out if she is worthy of becoming my wife." She replied - "I have also heard it, but I have never seen her." Saying this the maid went away.

Vikram, When the maid saw Manimaalaa, she just got stunned to see her beauty. She was much more beautiful than what she heard. All wives of Samarjeet were nothing in comparison to her beauty. She came back from there and decided that she will observe her duty. If she will tell him the truth, then he will make her his wife and will be lost in her beauty and will lose his control on his kingdom. He will not be able to leave her even for a moment.

So she told Samarjeet that his many wives were more beautiful than Manimaalaa. So the king changed his mind. In the meantime, Chandramani also came to know about this that the king had sent his trusted maid to see Manimaalaa. He immediately went to the king and was happily ready to give his daughter to the king. But the king refused his proposal and he came back disappointed. He then married her to the king's courtier Krishnaanand. They started living happily.

After some time the king went to see his kingdom. As he was passing by the palace of Krishnaanand, he saw a woman standing at the window of its second floor. The king just stood seeing her. He could not believe his eyes that she could be a human being. She seemed to him an Apsaraa. He got restless and came back to his palace. He asked his soldiers to find out about the identity of that woman. They told him that she was the wife of Krishnaanand.

When Krishnaanand came to know that the king has made an inquiry about his wife, he straightway came to the king. Samarjeet asked him - "Is she your wife?" "Yes, Sir." Krishnaanand further said - "She is the daughter of Chandramani." The king got shocked, "What?" He said - "Yes Sir, When you refused to marry her, I married her." The king dismissed him and called his maid whom he sent to find out about Manimaalaa. He asked her - "Why did you lie to me?" The maid said politely - "If I had told you the truth, you would lose your kingdom. I put my duty in front of my faithfulness, Sir."

The king got very angry at this. He ordered to kill her. Krishnaanand was hearing all this, he said - "I am ready to give Manimaalaa to you, but please, don't kill this maid." The king said - "I don't touch other people's wives." When the maid requested him for some leniency, he expelled her instead of killing her. Now tell Vikram, Was the maid really at fault?"

Vikram said - "Duty is higher than the faithfulness. The maid was certainly at fault by not being faithful to her master, but this crime was committed at the cost of duty. That is why, in fact, Samarjeet had committed crime by expelling her, not that she was at fault."

Vaitaal laughed heartily hearing Vikram and said - "You are right, Vikram." He jumped away from his shoulder, ran away and hung from the same tree. Vikram was very angry. If he did not have to take Vaitaal to that Yogee, he would have killed him. He again pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vaitaal again started his story--

"O Vikram, Once the king of Chitrakoot went for hunting alone. He lost his way that he saw a large pond around which many tall trees were standing. The day was very warm, so the king got down from his horse and lay down under the shade of a tree. At the same time a Rishi's daughter came there. The king fell in love with her instantly. Her father also followed her. King greeted him, the Rishi asked him - "Why are you here?" The king told that he came there for hunting. Rishi got very happy with the king, he asked him to ask for anything he desired for. King said to him - "Please give me your daughter." Rishi married his daughter to him.

Both rode on the horse and started their journey. The Sun was shining very hard, so the king and his wife slept under the shade of a tree. In the meantime, a Raakshas came there and said to the king, "I will eat your wife." The king asked - "What do you want?" The Raakshas said - "Either you give me a 7-year old Braahman boy, or your wife?" The king said - "If you come to my kingdom after four days, I will give you a 7-year old Braahman boy." Raakshas agreed and both went their own way.

After four days Raakshas came to the king. The king called the 7-year old Braahman boy and got ready to sacrifice him taking a sword in his hand, that the boy first laughed and then wept. The king hit the sword and cut his head. After telling this story, Vaitaal said - "King, Now tell that why that boy wept at the time of his death?"

Vikram said - "The boy thought - mother brings up the child in childhood, father takes care of the child when he is grown up, but when the same mother and father have sold their child for a few chips, then to whom to complain?"

Vaitaal laughed, jumped and ran away to hang from the tree. Vikram again went there, put him on his shoulder and walked towards the cremation ground.

Volatility

Volatility is the man's worst characteristic

Vikram pulled Vaitaal from the tree, put him on his shoulder and continued his journey again. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, You don't feel bored, that is why I tell you another story, listen--

In Ujjain city lived a Braahman. His name was Vaasudev Sharmaa. He was very religious. He had a son, his name was Gunaakar. Gunaakar had very bad habits. He lost his father's all wealth in gambling, so his father expelled him from the house. He refused to accept him as his son too.

Gunaakar started wandering around. Once he came to a cremation ground. He was very hungry. He saw a Yogee there who was sitting beside a burning pyre. He asked some food from him. Yogee pitied him, so immediately he took the human skull and offered him food in that. Gunaakar could not eat food from that skull, so he said - "I cannot eat food from this human skull." Then Yogee read a Mantra and a beautiful woman appeared before him. Yogee asked her to take him and give some food. She took Gunaakar in a beautiful house and offered him nice food. Gunaakar got attracted to her so they enjoyed each other's company. After that, that woman disappeared.

Gunaakar came to Yogee and said "Mahaaraj, She has gone away." Yogee said - "Yes, She had to go, she was only a Maayaa (illusion)." Gunaaker held his feet and requested him to teach that knowledge. Yogee said - "You have to do Saadhanaa for this." "I am ready for this, tell me what do I have to do." Yogee told him the Mantra and the method of Saadhanaa. But that woman didn't come even after a week of Saadhanaa. Sad Gunaakar again came to the Yogee and told him that she didn't come. Yogee said - "You might have made

some mistake in Saadhanaa." "No, I followed your instructions exactly as you gave them to me." "OK, Then do it in front of the pyre."

Gunaakar did it in front of a pyre also, still she didn't come. Gunaakar again went to the Yogee and reported that she didn't come. Yogee kicked him away and said - "Oh, What a foolish disciple I have got." Gunaakar didn't go from there and continued to request Yogee, but the Yogee was not paying any attention to him.

At the same time another young man came there and became his disciple. Yogee told him the same thing what he told to Gunaakar. Gunaakar was very surprised to see that his Saadhanaa got complete and that woman had appeared before him. Gunaakar started crying, then Yogee threatened him with Shaap and asked him to leave. Gunaakar got very disappointed so he committed suicide by jumping in a well.

After saying this Vaitaal got silent, after a while he said - "Vikram, Now tell "is that Yogee not criminal because of whom Gunaakar had to commit suicide? Why didn't Gunaakar get that woman?"

Vikram said - "Vaitaal, Yogee was not at fault in this, because another man got that woman by the same method. Gunaakar himself was at fault." "How." "Listen, Volatility is the worst characteristic of a man. No man can ever be successful with this characteristic. This was the reason that Gunaakar could not be successful." Vaitaal asked - "What kind of volatility he had?" Vikram said - "He was all the time thinking about the enjoyment with that woman, that is why his Saadhanaa could not get complete. One has to concentrate to succeed anywhere. This was the reason of his failure."

Vaitaal laughed heartily hearing Vikram and said - "You are right, Vikram." He jumped away from his shoulder, ran away and hung from the same tree, but Vikram had held him tightly. He could not free himself. Vikram said - "I will not let you run away this time." "I will also not run away this time. Listen to another story." and Vaitaal again started his story--

Pind Daan
Birth is not the sign of being son

Vikram was continuing his journey, and Vaitaal was telling him a story - "Vikram, A Braahman lived in Kaashee Nagaree. He had a beautiful daughter Leelaa. Once Leelaa was sleeping in her room. Suddenly she woke up hearing some sound, she asked - "Who is it?" Leelaa saw a young man hiding in a corner of her room. She asked - "How did you come here? Are you a thief?" That man said - "Yes, I am a thief, but I have not come to steal anything from your house. I was just going somewhere else to steal that the soldiers had seen me and I came here to hide from them. I will go after a while, I will not harm you, so don't worry."

The then Leelaa heard soldiers' voices. Leelaa believed the thief, so she kept him in hiding in her room. She got attracted to the thief. She enjoyed his company. After a while he went away with the promise that he would be coming there now and then. But he did not come again, because he was caught by king's soldiers next day only, because he stole things from king's palace. Leelaa had heard this. That thief was hanged for his crime and thus he was killed. Leelaa got very sad at this news.

After some time Leelaa came to know that she was pregnant. And at the same time her marriage was also fixed. Leelaa kept all secrets with her, she did not tell anyone anything. She got married and she went to her in-law's house. When the time came Leelaa gave birth to a son. His father was that thief to whom Leelaa protected from soldiers some months ago. But only Leelaa knew this. Her husband also did not doubt anything. Gradually that boy grew up and became a young man. After some time Leelaa's husband died. The same boy did last rites of his father. Vikram, That boy was very intelligent. Later his mother also died and he did her last rites also.

Once Pitra Amaavasyaa came, so he thought to do Pind Daan at Phalgu River. He went to Phalgu River along with a Pandit and completed all formalities of Pind Daan. When the hands came out to take their share, he asked - "Whose hand is this?" A voice came - "I am your mother." He gave a Pind to her. He again asked - "Whose hand is this?" A voice came - "I am your father." Then he saw two hands rising. Whose is this third hand?" The voice came - "I am your father."

Hey Vikram, The man got confused seeing two hands as his father's. He asked the first hand - "How are you my father?" That hand was thief's hand, so the thief told him everything. The son said nothing. Then he asked the

second hand - "How are you my father?" The voice came - "I have brought you up the whole life and considered you as my own son, and today you are not recognizing your own father?" The son got confused, to whom to consider his father? To whom to offer Pind Daan? Vaitaal said - "Now Vikram, you judge, to whom that man should offer Pind Daan?"

Vikram said - "Vaitaal, Nobody becomes father just only by giving birth, who has brought up the child, he is his father. That is why he should offer Pind Daan to the second hand."

Vaitaal kept quiet for some time, then said - "You are right, Vikram, You are one hundred per cent right." The he jumped away from his shoulder, ran away and hung upside down from the same tree. But Vikram brought him back and continued his journey. Vaitaal again started his story--

Who is at Fault?

Blame doesn't prove the fault

Vikram continued his journey, Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Now listen to a story. A Braahman lived in Maheshpur kingdom. His name was Kamal Kishor. His wife Sulochanaa was very beautiful. Once Kamal Kishor had to go out of the kingdom. Two months had passed. Sulochanaa remembered her husband very much. Once she was drying her hair after taking bath on her roof, that a young man, Shyaam Sundar, saw her. He was just wandering on his horse. He got stunned to see her. Sulochanaa also saw him. She wanted to see that man again. Her maid said - "If you want, I can bring him here. I know him."

Sulochanaa agreed and the maid brought him there. Both met regularly till Kamal Kishor came. After Kamal Kishor had come, Sulochanaa could not meet Shyaam Sundar. Now she liked to meet Shyaam Sundar and she withdrew from Kamal Kishor. Kamal Kishor felt a withdrawal, so he tried to find out its reason. He made an inquiry from the maid and she told him everything. Kishor's heart was broken. One day he left Sulochanaa and went away. Sulochanaa again started enjoying the company of Shyaam Sundar. She continued to meet him for a few months, but then she noticed that Kishor had not come back.

Sulochanaa got pregnant. Kamal Kishor was nowhere to be found, so she went to live with Shyaam Sundar. When the time came she gave birth to a beautiful boy, but Shyaam Sundar refused to accept him as his own son. Sulochanaa got sad, she killed the boy and threw him.

Kamal Kishore became a Saadhu. He lived on the banks of a river. By chance where Sulochanaa threw her child, Kamal Kishor lived there. In the morning, king's soldiers found the dead body of the baby near Kamal Kishor's hut, so they took him to the king thinking that Kamal Kishor had killed him. King asked - "You have done this?" "No, Sir." "But the boy's face resembles your face."

King was speaking the truth, because soldiers had also noticed this and they told this to the king. Kamal Kishor did not speak anything. King asked him - "You lie being a Saadhu?" Kamal Kishor still did not speak anything. The king ordered to hang him on a crossroad next day. Next day king's soldiers came to take him. They asked him - "Do you have your last wish?" Kamal Kishor said - "Yes, There is a woman named Sulochanaa who is the wife of Syaam Sundar. Bring her in front of me when I am to be hanged." Soldiers brought her there. She recognized her husband and requested the king not to hang him. She accepted her crime.

Now, tell Vikram, who should be hanged? What is your judgment?"

Vikram didn't say anything. Vaitaal said - "Speak Vikram, speak." Vikram asked - "What did king do?" Vaitaal said - "Leave the king, you tell me your own judgment. If you had such a case in your court, what would you do?" Vikram said - "Vaitaal, My judgment is this that all three should be hanged." "Why?" "Because the child was born because of all the three. Although Sulochanaa killed him, still all three are partners in this one. Nobody becomes criminal just because blamed by other. Its cause is the main reason, and its cause were all the three, that is why the three were equally responsible for his death."

Vaitaal said - "But the king hanged Sulochanaa only." "Well, Its one's own decision." Vaitaal said - "You are right, Vikram." Then he laughed loudly. Vikram knew that Vaitaal ran away only after knowing his judgment. So he became careful. He had held him tightly. Still Vaitaal jumped away from his shoulder, ran away and hung from the same tree. Vikram lifted him on his

shoulder and continued his journey. Vaitaal said - "Don't worry, Vikram, when the time will come I will help you. Till then you listen to another story to kill

Characteristics of the Blood

Blood has its own characteristics

Vikram was walking fast. He had to reach the Yogee in time. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Now listen to the story. The king of Adhak Desh was very brave and mighty. His kingdom was very large. One day a Vaishya came in his court. He greeted him prostrating in front of him and said - "Victory to the king." That Vaishya had three sons, but unfortunately all were blind. They also greeted the king and stood aside.

The Vaishya said - "Raajan, I am in great difficulty. I need 1,000 gold coins. I will return them after 6 months." King asked - "What is such a need?" The Vaishya said - "I want to go to foreign lands for business." The king didn't speak anything. At this the Vaishya said - "I am leaving my three sons in return of the money." The king asked - "But they are blind, what will I do of them?"

Vaishya said - "Please do not say like this about them. my all the sons are very qualitative." "How", the king asked. Vaishya said - "Raajan, They work on the basis of touch and smell. My first son is very good at horse, the second one knows women very well, and the third one knows weapons very well. If you find anything wrong with their judgment, you may cut their head, and punish me also when I have come back. My three sons will help you in carrying out your royal duties." The king agreed, he gave him 1,000 gold coins and the Vaishya went away. The king made the arrangements of his sons' living and food etc.

Thus some time passed. One day a horse trader came in the court and showed a beautiful horse to the king. The king liked the horse, so he got ready to buy that horse. The trader said - "It is very beautiful horse. It is from Kaabul." He told the king very high price for that horse. The king was about

to buy the horse, that he remembered the Vaishya's first son. He ordered to bring him in the court.

The Vaishya's son was brought to the court. He asked him to examine the horse and advise him whether to buy or not to buy that horse. Vaishya's son went to the horse and started examining him by touching him at many places. The trader and the courtiers were smiling thinking that what this blind boy can tell about the horse without seeing him. As he started smelling him, the trader said - "Leave him alone. Is a horse examined by smelling?" Still the boy continued his examination by smelling the horse.

After a while he said - "Raajan, Please, never buy this horse even by mistake." "Why?" "You may ask somebody to sit upon him and try him." The king asked one of his soldiers to try him. He sat on the horse, and drove him, but after a while the horse had thrown him down and started shaking his head badly. The trader got surprised to see this. He said to the king - "Raajan, This horse has never behaved with me like this before."

The boy said - "He will never behave like this with any milkman. You are a milkman. You have abandoned your own job, and now you are in the business of horse trading." The trader asked him - "How do you know that I am a milkman?" "This horse is born in your house only. His parents are also with you. You have fed him buffalo's milk. I knew it by his smell." The trader was very surprised to know all these details. He bowed to the king and went from there asking his forgiveness. The king got very happy with the Vaishya's son, he ordered his people to make his food double.

One day a jeweler came in the court of the king. He showed him many beautiful gems. The king liked some gems, so he got ready to buy some of them. But then again he remembered the Vaishya's second son, he ordered his people to bring him in the court. He was brought in the court.

The king said - "O Boy, I want to buy these gems, advise me on this matter." The boy examined them and separated some beautiful gems and advised the king not to buy them." "Why?" "Because all of them are inauspicious. At least do not buy this ruby. This is very inauspicious. It goes in whichever house, kills somebody in that house."

That jeweler knew this, he got very scared hearing this. The king asked him - "Tell me O jeweler, Is it true?" The jeweler said folding his hands - "Maaraaj, Please forgive me." The king forgave him and the jeweler went away. The king asked his people to make his food also double. After a while a trader in weapons came to the king's court and this time also the Vaishya's third son proved himself.

After a while the Vaishya came back from his business and he asked his sons back. The king asked him - "You are the father of these boys, what is your specialty?" The Vaishya said - "I know the person." The king asked - "Then tell me, what do you know about me?" The Vaishya said - "You are the son of a cook. You have never given any reward to my sons, but to increase their diet." The king became severely angry hearing this. He immediately ordered to kill the Vaishya and his sons.

Vaitaal said - "Tell me, Vikram, Was the king sinner or not?"

Vikram said - "The king was not a sinner. This is true that the characteristics of blood never go away, but the Vaishya should have acted intelligently. He was killed along with his sons only because of his foolishness."

Vaitaal laughed loudly, ran away and hung from the same tree. Vikram was again following him.

Who is at Fault?

A faulty man is he whose behavior encourages the crime

Vikram was walking fast. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Walk slowly. There is still time, till then I tell you another story, just to pass time.

In ancient times, there lived a Braahman in Chedi Desh. He was very healthy but he was very ugly. His complexion was dark and that is why he was not getting married. He was growing older and older day by day but nobody was ready to marry him, so he was very sad. He did not like to do his Karm. His name was Dharmdatt. Although he was not able to perform his work properly, still being a Braahman, he could get some work.

Once he got a job of performing a marriage. He performed many ceremonies of the marriage, but when the girl came carrying Varmaalaa in her hands, he just continued to look at her. Dharmdatt got attracted to her. When the marriage was over then he told the boy that the girl had Mangal Dosh, that is why he should not take her to his house immediately. The boy's parents agreed to this.

He performed some special fake ceremonies to remove Mangal Dosh of the girl and said to her parents that the girl will stay with him alone at Yagya Vedee for the whole night. He will perform some other ceremonies which will last for the whole night and in the morning she will be free from Mangal Dosh. So Vikram, trusting the Braahman, that girl was handed over to that Braahman. Braahman pretending that it was a ceremony, misbehaved with her. Thinking that it was a part of the ceremony, the girl did not speak anything. Next day that girl went to her in-law's house.

After some time that girl gave birth to a son. He was the son of Dharmdatt - bearing the same complexion and ugliness. Her husband got very surprised to see this. His wife told him everything. At this her husband expelled her. She went to the king with her complaint.

Vaitaal said - "Now tell me, Vikram, What justice that king should have done? why did that girl make noise? Why did she tell everything on asking by her husband? Who should be punished? Her husband? Dharmdatt? or the parents of the girl?"

When Vikram didn't speak anything, Vaitaal said - "Speak Vikram, You know that if you did not speak in spite of knowing, your head will split up and will be scattered around." Vikram said - "Listen, First that girl didn't speak, nor she opposed, nor she cried, but she told everything to her husband after the birth of the child; that is why the girl is not at fault at all. She must have been very innocent girl. The sinful Braahman did whatever with her, she considered it a part of the ceremonies." Vaitaal asked - "Then who was the culprit?" "Dharmdatt Braahman is also not at fault for this."

Vaitaal asked - "What about the parents of the girl?" "Yes, Parents of the girl, because first believing that the girl had Mangal Dosh, then to hand over her to that Braahman for the whole night, all are the wrongs of the girl's parents. They must be punished."

Vaitaal again laughed loudly and escaped Vikram's strong hold. He ran and hung on the same tree. Vikram ran after him, lifted from the tree, put him on his shoulder and again started walking. After a while Vaitaal said - "You were right Vikram, but the king punished that Braahman and he was hanged. The girl was considered innocent. The king asked her husband to accept her, but he refused to accept her, so he employed her as his queen's maid. But tell me, O Vikram, why that Braahman did so with her?" "Because he wanted to marry and no girl was marrying him." Vikram was walking fast, he was really in hurry.

Hair in the Mattress

There is no limit of the knowledge of a learned man

Following him Vikram came to the same tree, got him off the tree, put him on his shoulder and started walking. Vikram was walking fast. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, I tell you a story just to pass time.

There lived a religious Braahman in Magadh Desh. He had two sons. Both were very learned. The first one could tell by touch only as what was the thing. He could tell what was in a safe box just by smelling it. This boy earned money by telling things inside the earth. He could tell by smelling the earth where the money was kept. People came, took him along with them. He took his fees and told them whatever it was. Thus he could tell by smelling the earth that whether there will be sweet or salty water if a well was dug there. Wealthy people dug their wells on his advice only.

His second son knew women. He could tell her nature just by looking at her, so people took his opinion while marrying. This boy also earned a fair amount of money by his this quality. Both brothers had extraordinary smelling power.

Vikram, Whoever has come in this world, has to go. Their father fell seriously ill. Both brothers served him very well. The Vaidya (traditional doctor) asked them to bring a tortoise so that he could treat him with that. Both brothers refused to bring tortoise because of its smell, so a servant was sent to bring it. The king's servant took that servant away to the king. Both brothers went to get him freed. They pleaded their case.

The king asked - "What type of sons you are? Your father is so ill, and still you didn't go bring tortoise yourself?" Both told him about their sensitivity to smell. The king got very surprised to hear this. He said to them - "I will treat your father, you be with me, in my service." The king treated him and the Braahman got all right after a while. His both sons started serving the King.

One day two people came in the court quarreling on a valuable necklace. Both were claiming for that necklace. The king asked the second son to tell whose necklace was it." The boy smelled hands of both the people and told that the necklace belonged to the fat man. The fat man jumped with happiness, the other man also agreed upon his judgment. The king asked the second man - "Why were you telling this as yours?" He said politely - "Mahaaraaj, We had only heard about these boys but we had never tested them, so we were just testing. We have no bad intentions, we are Braahman." King got very happy and the respect of those boys also increased in his heart.

Time passed. Once a beautiful prostitute came in the city. The king also got the news about her beauty, so he asked the Braaman's sons to find out how she was. Both went to that prostitute. At that time she was swinging in her garden. Both saw her, both went near her. The prostitute welcomed them. Braahman's first son got attracted to her, and the prostitute also attracted to him. They came back after talking to her.

Then they went to the king. The king asked - "How is she?" The first son said - "She is very beautiful." "What about her qualities?" "She is of simple plain nature, of good character but is a Varnsankar child. Her father is Braahman and mother is Shoodra, that is why nobody is ready to marry her, and for the same reason she has taken this profession." The king appointed her in his court as the royal dancer. When the king told her about her parents, she was shocked to hear. She asked - "How do you know about my father and mother? This is quite a secret, how did you come to know this?" Then he told her the quality of that Braahman's son.

The prostitute started loving him more than before. She invited the first boy to her house and enjoyed with him in a very luxurious room. The boy said - "You are hurting me." The prostitute said surprisingly, "How?" The boy replied - "There is a hair in your mattress, it is hurting me." "Hair?" The prostitute's mouth remained wide open. "Yes, Dear." When the mattress was examined,

they found a hair there. Her love became more intense towards him. Both started living together.

Vaitaal said - "Tell me, Vikram, Which one of them is more qualitative?"

Vikram said - "Look Vaitaal, There is no limit of the knowledge of a learned man. Both are fine at their own place." Vaitaal asked - "Why that hair in the mattress pricked the boy?" Vikram said - "It pricked him because it had a smell. It might have been of some dirty animal."

Vaitaal said - "You are right, Vikram." and laughed loudly. He again tried to run away, but could not escape. Vikram's hold was very strong. Vikram was walking fast, he had to reach there in time.

Who is at Fault?

A faulty man is he whose behavior encourages the crime

Vikram was walking fast. Vaitaal said - "Vikram, Walk slowly. There is still time, till then I tell you another story, just to pass time."

In ancient times, there lived a Braahman in Chedi Desh. He was very healthy but he was very ugly. His complexion was dark and that is why he was not getting married. He was growing older and older day by day but nobody was ready to marry him, so he was very sad. He did not like to do his Karm. His name was Dharmdatt. Although he was not able to perform his work properly, still being a Braahman, he could get some work.

Once he got a job of performing a marriage. He performed many ceremonies of the marriage, but when the girl came carrying Varmaalaa in her hands, he just continued to look at her. Dharmdatt got attracted to her. When the marriage was over then he told the boy that the girl had Mangal Dosh, that is why he should not take her to his house immediately. The boy's parents agreed to this.

He performed some special fake ceremonies to remove Mangal Dosh of the girl and said to her parents that the girl will stay with him alone at Yagya Vedee for the whole night. He will perform some other ceremonies which will last for the whole night and in the morning she will be free from Mangal Dosh. So

Vikram, trusting the Braahman, that girl was handed over to that Braahman. Braahman pretending that it was a ceremony, misbehaved with her. Thinking that it was a part of the ceremony, the girl did not speak anything. Next day that girl went to her in-law's house.

After some time that girl gave birth to a son. He was the son of Dharmdatt - bearing the same complexion and ugliness. Her husband got very surprised to see this. His wife told him everything. At this her husband expelled her. She went to the king with her complaint.

Vaitaal said - "Now tell me, Vikram, What justice that king should have done? why did that girl make noise? Why did she tell everything on asking by her husband? Who should be punished? Her husband? Dharmdatt? or the parents of the girl?"

When Vikram didn't speak anything, Vaitaal said - "Speak Vikram, You know that if you did not speak in spite of knowing, your head will split up and will be scattered around." Vikram said - "Listen, First that girl didn't speak, nor she opposed, nor she cried, but she told everything to her husband after the birth of the child; that is why the girl is not at fault at all. She must have been very innocent girl. The sinful Braahman did whatever with her, she considered it a part of the ceremonies." Vaitaal asked - "Then who was the culprit?" "Dharmdatt Braahman is also not at fault for this."

Vaitaal asked - "What about the parents of the girl?" "Yes, Parents of the girl, because first believing that the girl had Mangal Dosh, then to hand over her to that Braahman for the whole night, all are the wrongs of the girl's parents. They must be punished."

Vaitaal again laughed loudly and escaped Vikram's strong hold. He ran and hung on the same tree. Vikram ran after him, lifted from the tree, put him on his shoulder and again started walking. After a while Vaitaal said - "You were right Vikram, but the king punished that Braahman and he was hanged. The girl was considered innocent. The king asked her husband to accept her, but he refused to accept her, so he employed her as his queen's maid. But tell me, O Vikram, why that Braahman did so with her?" "Because he wanted to marry and no girl was marrying him." Vikram was walking fast, he was really in hurry.

The Meanest Man Even the meanest person has some conscious

Vikram pulled Vaitaal from the tree with full force, put him on his shoulder and started walking fast. Vaitaal again started telling a story to Vikram, he said - "Vikram, Now I tell you a true story of Swarn Desh.

There lived a rich man who helped poor people, that is why all people praised him. Even the king also praised him. He had only one son. Because of being the only child, he was brought up with great care and love. As the time passed, he grew up as a fine young handsome boy.

Now, there lived a newly married woman in his neighborhood. Her husband was not very good, so she got attracted to him. Since both houses were adjacent to each other, they could go to each other's house easily. Once that woman's husband went to foreign lands, so she was alone. She thought to go to that boy's room.

In the night she came to the house of the rich man and then entered that boy's room. She knew the room of that boy. He was awake at that time. He got stunned to see a woman's figure at his room's door. He asked her - "Who are you?" That woman didn't reply anything, just came near his bed and said - "I am your beloved." and she lay down beside him. The boy got scared. The woman requested to love her, but that boy took her as a witch and got unconscious. The woman also got scared seeing him unconscious.

By chance some thieves entered the rich man's house. That woman's husband was also among those thieves. He used to say at home, that he was going to foreign lands, but he used to steal during those days. He told the stolen things as his business profit and impressed his neighbors.

That woman hid seeing the thieves. And she was extremely surprised when she saw her husband among those thieves. She saw everything, her husband and

other thieves stole the things from that rich man's house and went away. The woman came back to her house quietly.

A lot of noise rose from the rich man's house when the boy told everything to his parents. He told about the woman also. Everybody was stunned at this. The boy saw his neighbor's wife and he recognized her and told his father everything.

The rich man told this incident to the king. The king's soldiers came and took the woman to the king. The woman bluntly refused that she had committed any crime. She said - "It is only because of jealousy, that the boy is blaming me."

She was saying this to the king that the king's soldiers brought her husband also for stealing in rich man's house, along with the stolen things. Her husband was caught in a ruins. when she saw her husband, she got scared. After hearing everybody, the king ordered for the husband to be hanged, and for the woman to be expelled.

After telling all this, Vaitaal said - "This was the king's judgment, what is your judgment, Vikram?" Vikram didn't speak anything, Vaitaal asked him again.

Vikram said - "I think the king's judgment was wrong." "Why?" "It was all right to hang the man, but it was wrong to expel the woman." "Why?" "The woman hid everything in spite of knowing everything, and thus tried to save herself only; it was her Dharm." Vaitaal laughed - "Does such a woman have any kind of Dharm, this is only womanish character." Vikram said seriously - "Even the meanest man has some kind of Dharm. Although she lost her mind because of her bad husband, still she loved her husband, that is why she did not want her husband to be punished. That is why it was not right to punish her. It is not right to consider a man mean all the time."

Vaitaal said - "You are right, Vikram." He again laughed loudly, that Vikram held him tightly. Vaitaal said - "Don't worry, I will not run away now." But Vikram didn't trust him so he held him tightly.

Matter of Succession Successor is not only by relationship established

Vaitaal said - "Now the time is very short, let me tell you one another story, may be the last one." Vikram said - "So you will complete 25 stories." "Yes, And these stories will be famous as "Vaitaal Pachcheesee". How much good I have done by telling you these stories, only the Time will tell. So listen to it attentively.

There were two young men, Madan and Ratan, in Baatee island. Both were very fast friends. Once both went to do business together. They made a lot of profit. While returning, they sat down under a tree and started counting their remaining things and profit. They were busy in their work, that a beautiful woman came there.

Both looked at her surprisingly and asked her - "O Beautiful, Who are you?" She told the she was going with her husband that some robbers robbed them and killed her husband. After saying this she broke into tears and started crying loudly. She said - "Since now there is nobody for me to go - there was no use to go to my parents and other relations, I will commit suicide."

Madan and Ratan consoled her and assured her to provide every kind of help she needed. Woman got consoled. Their work was over so they took her along and started their journey. Both were thinking about her, as what to do of her.

Madan suggested that she should be remarried. Ratan said - "Maybe one of us can marry her." "But how?" Ratan said - "If you are interested, you may marry her." Madan said - "Yes, I can marry, but if you want, you can marry her." Madan again said - "Look, We both are interested to marry her. So, let us play the dice game and decide who will marry her. Then we will not have any complaint with each other." Ratan agreed.

Then both sat again under a tree, and played dice game for a long time. In the end, the match was drawn. They again started playing, but again the match was drawn. They did this several times, but nobody won the game, nobody lost the game. So they were unable to decide what to do. Then they asked her - "To whom you want to marry." She shyly told that she could marry both of them, because she liked both of them.

Now they were in real trouble. That woman was still with them. In the end they thought to pick the paper. They wrote their names on two papers and picked one. It was Madan's name, so Madan married her.

Vikram, see the Time, after a child was born to them, Madan died in an accident. The woman asked Madan's share of wealth from Ratan. Although Madan had no partnership with Ratan, still she asked his share from Ratan. Now tell Vikram, how far her demand was lawful?

Vikram said - "The matter must have gone to the royal court." Vaitaal said - "Yes, And I know the judgment also. The king refused her claim, but what is your judgment?" Vikram smiled - "My judgment? My judgment is that she should get it." "Why?" Vikram said - "It was true that Madan had won her by toss, but still she was the property of both of them. She had the right of succession."

Vaitaal said - "You are right, Vikram." He again laughed loudly. As Vaitaal laughed loudly Vikram became careful and he held him tightly, because now his destination was very near. Vaitaal said - "Don't worry, I will not run away now. I am with you." But Vikram didn't trust him so he held him tightly.

How Vaitaal saved Vikram

When the pyre of the cremation ground was in sight, Vaitaal said to Vikram - "Vikram, This Yogee is very cunning. He is planning to kill you. I know his plan. He will ask you to prostrate, and when you will prostrate before him, he will cut your neck with sword. So be careful."

Vikram got surprised to hear this. Although he had this doubt in his mind, but now he was more careful. Vikram came to the Yogee with Vaitaal on his shoulder. Yogee became very happy to see Vaitaal, he said - "Bravo king Vikram, You are really courageous. Now you will rule the whole Prithvi without any obstacles."

The Yogee cut the body of Vaitaal into pieces and sacrificed it in the fire, performed some Taantrik rites, and in the last offered Pourn Aahuti (last Aahuti). Vikram was noticing all this very carefully. He was standing just

straight. After finishing everything, the Yogee said - "King Vikram, Now you earn Punya by prostrating in front of me.

Vikram was waiting for this moment only. He remembered Vaitaal's instruction, that "as you will prostrate in front of him, he will cut your neck." so he said - "I am a king, I do not prostrate in front of anybody. The Yogee got surprised to hear this. He said - "OK, Then I prostrate before you." As he bent down to prostrate before the king, the king cut his neck with his sword. The Yogee was dead.

Then a loud laughter echoed in that lonely forest. That laughter was of that Vaitaal. Vikram got stunned to see Vaitaal, he exclaimed - "Vaitaal you? You were dead?" Vaitaal said - "Yes, It is me. By sacrificing this Yogee, you have given me life. If you had not killed him, I could not have been born again."

The king saw that the form of Vaitaal has changed. Now he was a very handsome young man. Vikram asked him - "Now what will you do?" "Whatever you order." Vikram said - "Then you come and stay with me. I will appoint you my minister." Vaitaal became happy to hear this, he said - "I will serve you with my full honesty." He expressed his gratefulness to Vikram as he gave him a new life.

He said - "Hey Raajan, This Yogee was my elder brother. he had changed me into Vaitaal with the power of his Tantra. He abducted my wife too, and now he wanted to take your kingdom, that is why he wanted to kill you, but since you have killed him, you have saved your kingdom, as well as you have given me a new life. Your fame will remain in this world forever."

The day was about to break, Vikram had returned to his palace along with Vaitaal.

Conclusion

TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND BETAAL THE VAMPIRE-From Bhavishya Puran

Vikram era started in 57 BC by Vikramaditya the Great as a commemoration of his victory upon the Shaks. There is plentiful literature on Vikramaditya, and in the Bhavishya Puran itself there are descriptions of Vikramaditya in more than 40 chapters between Pratisarg Parv I and IV. Pratisarg Parv IV, chapter 1 of Bhavishya Puran says that after the elapse of a full 3,000 years in *kaliyug* (3102 - 3000 = 102 BC), a dynamic Divine personality was born who was named Vikramaditya. Bhavishya Puran further says that the great King Vikramaditya ruled for one hundred years. When he was only five years old he went into the jungles to worship God. After twelve years, when he came out, God Shiv sent for him a celestial golden throne which was decorated with thirty-two statues. According to the above descriptions Vikramaditya lived for (5 years + 12 years + 100 years) 117 years (102 BC - 15 AD).

Kalidas, the greatest poet, writer and the literary figure of his time, living a pious life and sincerely devoted to his scholarly work, was one of the nine gems of King Vikram's court. The "Jyotirvidabharnam" by Kalidas tells in its first cha that Vikram era started at the elapse of (*agni 3, ambar 0, yug 4 and ved 4 = 3,0,4,4*) 3,044 years of *kaliyug*. Thus, the 3,045th year of *kaliyug* was the beginning of Vikram era which is 57 BC. At the end of Jyotirvidabharnam, Mahakavi Kalidas mentions the exact date of his writing and says that in the Kali era 3067 he had started to write this book. It means, he wrote that book when 3,067 years of *kaliyug* had passed. That comes to 35 BC (3102 - 3067 = 35), which is after the beginning of Vikram era. Thus, Vikramaditya was born in 102 BC (3102-3000), established his 'era' in 57 BC and left this earth planet in 15 AD.

Captain sir Richard R Burton has translated 11 stories under the caption

TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND BETAAL THE VAMPIRE and concluded - In otherwords, to the present day, whenever a Hindu novelist, romancer, or

tale writer seeks a peg upon which to suspend the texture of his story, he invariably pitches upon the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of that Eastern King Arthur, Vikramaditya, shortly called Vikram.

The eleventh story given by him was:

TALES OF KING VIKRAM AND BETAAL THE VAMPIRE

Once upon a time there was a king named Vikramaaditya who ruled Pratisthana on the river Godavari. He was a mighty and glorious king. Everyday when he used to hold public court, a beggar used to come along and present a fruit to the king and this went on for a couple of years when curiosity got the better of the king. The king used to pass on the fruit to his treasurer who used to throw them all in the storage. On hearing of the king's curiosity, the treasurer was surprised to see the storage full of emeralds and pearls and the fruit had disintegrated. He reported this to the king. The king questioned the beggar the next day about this. On hearing this, the beggar requested the help from the king for a magic spell he was going to perform. The king was asked to meet him at nightfall of the fourteenth night of the dark moon near the cremation ground. The king did as told and found the beggar there. The beggar was drawing a magic circle and all around were the howling noises of vampires, ghosts and other nightly creatures. The beggar asked the king to go further deep into the woods and bring the corpse, which was hanging upside down on a tree.

The king found the corpse for sure, but as he started lifting it and taking it down he realised that it was possessed by a vampire. Everytime the king talked the vampire jumped back the tree. In the end, the king jumped up silently and brought the corpse down. The vampire then started telling him a story. In the end of the story, he asked a puzzle to the king related to story. As soon as the king finished his answer, he fled back to the top of the tree. This happened 24 times. But for the 25th time, the question was so tough that the king could not answer. These 25 stories are very famous in Indian literature, known as Vikram-Betaal tales. On the end of the 25th tale, the vampire cautioned the king that the beggar would ask him to rest on a piece of wood when he would be sacrificed. In that situation the vampire asked the king to let the beggar show the way and asked the king to get rid of the evil beggar. So did the king. And

the vampire granted the king for a boon. The king requested that the stories whichever were told to him, be told time and again in history and wherever these stories are told vampires would not dare. Hence the famous Vikram-Betaal stories.

As a sample, here we present the last of the stories, which the king could not answer. Betaal said,

"Once there was a king in the South who had lot of relatives. The relatives were always hungry after the throne. So once they usurped the throne, and the king had to flee the kingdom with his wife and daughter. They travelled through dense forests. In one area which was occupied by barbarians, he advised his wife and daughter to hide behind a bush while he fought the robbers but died a tragic death. The queen and the daughter wept for their king.

In the meantime, a peasant and his son came to the forest on horses. They saw the footprints of the ladies, and were impressed. The son decided to marry the lady with the smaller feet while the father decided to marry the lady with the bigger feet. Upon a distance they saw the queen and the daughter. The peasant talked smoothly with the ladies and consoled them and heard their story after convincing them that they were not robbers. The peasant and the son then brought the two ladies home and told them of the plan of marriage. They consented. But alas, the bigger feet belonged to the daughter and the smaller feet belonged to the mother. So the son married the mother and the father married the daughter.

Betaal then asks this question: How are the children born on both the sides related to one another?

Vikram was speechless as he could not get any satisfactory answer. So the Betaal could not escape this time.