

A Humbling Realization



The four passions, anger, pride, deceit and greed, are hard to temper. It is often difficult to realize one's vanity (pride). Rich and powerful, scholars and thinkers, poets and writers, all suffer from vanity to a greater or lesser extent.

This is the story of Raja Bhoj who was the ruler of Dhara Nagari. Raja Bhoj was rich and noble. He was a scholar and a poet. He was a benevolent ruler. He showered artists, scholars and poets with luxurious gifts. His people were happy. The king had ample time for the pursuit of art, literature and poetry.

One day, Raja Bhoj was composing a verse describing his wealth and fortunes. The first three lines of the verse were:

CHETOHARAAH YUVATAYAH SUHRIDONUKOOLAAH

SADBAANDHAVAH PRANAYAGARBHA

GIRASHCHABRITYAAH

BALGANTI DANTINIBAHAH TARALAASTURANGAAH

Charming and beautiful young women, dear and congenial friends,
loving and pleasant family and relatives,
gentle and dedicated employees,
and myriads of beautiful and thunderous elephants and horses;

Raja Bhoj had finished composing the above three lines of the verse and did not know what to say in the fourth line. Just then, the great Sanskrit poet, Kalidas, came by. He asked the king his problem. The king showed the unfinished verse to Kalidas. The great poet said, "O Scholarly King! If you please, I can complete the verse." The king agreed. Poet Kalidas added the fourth line as follows:

SAMMEELATE NAYANORNAHI KINCHIDASTI

When an individual passes away (his/her eyes are closed), nothing remains; riches, power and all means of comfort become immaterial.

Raja Bhoj realized his vanity. He expressed his deep gratitude towards Kalidas and honored him with precious gifts.

Cnu.pne