

**Chudala – Shikhardhwaj  
(The legend of an esteemed  
queen Chudala and revered king  
Shikhardhwaj)**

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## **About the authors**

His Holiness Swami Teon Ram Maharaj is a renowned spiritual leader who has inspired and helped millions of people worldwide. He founded the Prem Prakash Panth, a humanitarian nonprofit organization that teaches love, spiritual wisdom, and service to humanity. His dear disciple, Swami Sarvanand Maharaj completely surrendered unto him at a tender age and dedicated his entire life to his guru and the omnipresent divinity around him. He learned under his guru's benevolent tutelage and became a crown jewel among the saints of India. Swami Sarvanand Maharaj possessed Swami Teon Ram Maharaj's divinity and religious authority. His constant communion with the Supreme was evident in his luminous eyes.

Chudala Shikhardhwaj, a legend derived from the famous Yoga Vashisht Nirvana Prakaran, was one of the many books authored by Swami Sarvanand Maharaj. His surrender at the lotus feet of his guru was so complete that he even offered all of his writings to his guru. He used to narrate this legend in such a melodious voice and explain it in such an entrancing manner that it left a lasting impression on my mind. I feel blessed that Swami Sarvanand Maharaj, my precious guru poured the nectar of this poetic legend in to my ears at a young age. Although, I am unable to translate this book in a way that provides the reader with all the hidden treasures and pleasures of the original writing, this authentic translation accurately conveys its teachings. Swami Bhagat Prakash Maharaj, the presiding sadguru of Prem Prakash Mandal spent his precious time on reviewing the first draft of this book in Curacao and provided me with many valuable suggestions for improvement. I would like to take this opportunity to salute and thank him, my divine sadguru and my parents Mr. P. R. Duseja and Mrs. Shanti Duseja for all they have done for me. I also acknowledge the help of my daughter Geeta Dayal.

Veena (Vasudevi) K. Dayal, a disciple of Sadguru Sarvanand Maharaj

## **Preamble**

I offer my obeisance to the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Preceptor who forms the basis of all that exists. With whose wish, the entire movable and immovable universe is created. I offer my obeisances to Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva, Lord Sun, Lord Ganesh and the goddess of knowledge, Sharda. I offer my obeisances to them and request that all obstacles in narrating this legend may be removed. Swami Teon Ram Maharaj says that I have taken shelter at the lotus feet of my Guru and thereby realized my true self by His grace. Oh dear devotees, listen to the recitation of this legendary story of Shikhardhwaj and Chudala.

In this legend, there is a depiction of knowledge, wisdom and the science of detachment. The duties of an ideal woman are also described through this legend. The entire of humanity is entitled to listen to this legend. Swami Teon Ram says that the one who listens to it, reflects upon it, and adopts its teachings will arrive at the altar of liberation. Such a person will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death and will overcome mortal fear forever.

## **The Legend**

The sage said, O Ram listen to this historical legend which erases sorrows and gives birth to joy. Perform your duties fearlessly just as king Shikhardhwaj did. After hearing this, Ram paid his obeisance to the sage and asked the king how he had ruled so fearlessly.

Sage Vashisht then said, I will tell you many stories. Please listen to all of them attentively and adopt their lessons. Once there was a great king named Shikhardhwaj who ruled the kingdom of Malav located on the Jambu Island. He was well known for

his courage and generosity. This mighty monarch was very influential, bold and had a strong sense of discrimination. He performed his duties earnestly. He used to eliminate the suffering of his subjects with kind words, deeds and generosity. Although he was amidst royal luxuries, he had renounced all his desires. He had untangled himself from the world and was a renounced king.

When the king was 20 years old, he went for hunting. It was the spring season and the flowers were blooming. He dipped in the swimming pool in his garden. In the vicinity of the swimming pool there was a beautiful place, which was studded with diamonds and pearls. In this glittering palace there were magnificent paintings. There were a variety of fragrant flowers in the garden. Birds were chirping sweetly and captivating everyone's heart. The gentle breeze was blowing and spreading sandalwood fragrance. The bees were performing a mating dance around the flowers. The king walked into this palace and saw many, many beautiful things. The king sat on the bed and started wishing for a female companion to enjoy conjugal pleasures. The chief minister became aware of the longing in the king's heart. The minister felt that the king is lonely and should get married. He felt that it was his duty to remove his anguish and so he got up and left.

He started searching for a beautiful bride for the king. While searching, he arrived at another kingdom and learned about a beautiful princess named Chudala. She was well educated, virtuous and generous. After hearing about the princess, the minister went to Chudala's father's kingdom and started admiring king Shikhardhwaj and made a proposal for his daughter's hand for king Shikhardhwaj.

After hearing this, the king felt extremely happy with the minister's proposal. They invited the priest and gave a token of acceptance of the wedding proposal to the minister. The wedding date was set after eight days.

The minister returned to the same place where he had last seen king Shikhardhwaj. He informed him of the happy news of his wedding arrangements with a beautiful princess. After hearing the king became very happy. The minister assembled the court and told them about the wedding plans for the king. Everyone felt excited after hearing the news and got busy with the preparations for the wedding. The wedding procession included the army as well as the civilians. The musical band that accompanied the wedding procession included drums, flute, sitar and other musical instruments. The sounds of music filled the sky. The procession reached its destination. The priest performed the wedding ceremony.

After being duly married, the emperor and the empress returned home and met each other as Sita had met Ram. They loved each other as the Chakor bird loves the moon and began spending a lot of time together. Chudala provided everything the king needed or wished for. She served him with her own hands and always obeyed him. She devoted herself to the king with all her heart. Similarly, the king was also fully devoted to the queen. Both of them lived a carefree and happy life together.

One day, the king decided to entrust the interim royal responsibilities of the kingdom to the chief minister. The king and the queen went to the forest, the territory of the sages. They walked together through the forest like Shiva and Parvati. They started discussing a plan to utilize this opportunity and make it fruitful. They learnt yoga from the yogis. The queen learned everything very quickly. However, the king was unable to

concentrate on learning. Since the king's mind was preoccupied with lustful desires, he was unable to concentrate.

After living for a long time in the forest, they returned to their kingdom. The desire to enjoy did not get satiated because strong desires occupied the king's mind.

After enjoying the worldly comforts the thought occurred to the king that he was losing his life by getting trapped in attachment to the material world. Just as water drains from a vessel with a hole, the king thought of his youth being wasted away. This world is like a cave made out of ice. All human relationships are impermanent. The mother, father and the children although they seem very loving, their love is conditional. This world is like an inn and everyone is a transitory guest here. No one can stay here permanently.

Life is flickering as like a lightening flash. No one has found happiness in this illusory world. Therefore the king decided to give up attachment to the kingdom. The thought of renunciation matured in his mind due to the good deeds he had performed in his previous lives. He said to himself, I am getting old now. I do not have strong desires for worldly comforts. I know that after gratifying my senses every day, I have not been able to satisfy my mind. Although worldly pleasures are enticing, they do not leave a good taste at the end. I have spent most of my life and my desires are still not satiated. It seems that I am approaching death and I am about to lose this precious life. I have not been able to conquer my mind; in fact it has conquered me. Then he started thinking of ways to rid himself of the disease and discomforts of the world. The only way to get rid of it is by acquiring knowledge of the supreme. By learning about the supreme, the knowledge of self is revealed. By acquiring knowledge of the self, all the sorrows are eliminated. The false ego is annihilated. Therefore I must go and take the shelter of a true saint. The

Vedas and Puranas state that this cannot be acquired anywhere else. Just as there is no rain without a cloud, no grains without the moon, no merchandise without a shop, similarly true knowledge cannot be obtained without merging the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

The king and queen decided to seek the advice of a holy man on how to achieve liberation. They bowed at the feet of the saint and surrendered their body, mind and wealth at his feet. They requested the saint to eliminate all their doubts.

They said that they had come to take his shelter and requested answers to the following questions:

Why have I come to this world and what is my aim?

Who am I, where did I come from, who created me, and where will I go after I depart from my body?

Who has created this drama?

Who takes birth and who dies?

Who has to suffer repeated life and death?

What is death and how does it gobble up all three worlds?

Who is the individual soul?

Who is God?

What is mind?

Who is sustaining this world?

He said to the guru, I am ignorant and unable to answer my own questions. Please answer these questions. After hearing this, the guru started answering these questions. His answers were based on the knowledge of the four Vedas.

Know it for certain that you are a pure soul and start chanting "SOHAM" mantra. The soul is indivisible and self-luminescent. It is illuminating all beings. It is beyond death, immovable, indestructible, supreme witness who is the supreme creator. The Supreme Soul is absolute truth, consciousness and bliss. The Infinite Being is all pervading and the basis for everything that has a name and form. It is beyond mind, intellect, speech, sense organs and the three qualities (sattva, rajas and tamas gunas). It is pure, infinite, beyond comparison, immovable, and without a beginning. It is situated within itself. It is immeasurable, incomparable and cannot be described fully.

After hearing the knowledge from the guru, they returned to the kingdom and started thinking over his messages in solitude. The empress was spiritually awakened after hearing this knowledge. She served the king devotedly but her mind was absorbed in this new found knowledge. She realized that absolute truth, consciousness, bliss and beyond name and form. She realized that her true self is the basis for perception of what she experiences during jagrut (waking), swapna (dream), sushupti (dreamless sleep) and turiya states (the super conscious state). This body is made up of five elements. The consciousness is its master which illuminates the mind, intellect, speech and sense organs. The soul is beyond death and birth. It cannot be killed by an arrow. After realizing who she really was, she felt blessed. She was free from me and mine, you and yours as there was no perturbations in her. I am peaceful within my soul. This soul is beyond duality. It manifests itself in many forms. Just as a child takes clay and makes an



elephant or some other form out of it, the foolish may think that these various toys are different from clay. Similarly, to an ignorant person the various people in the world seem separate entities but the truly knowledgeable person sees the same soul within everything. After gaining this knowledge, the empress felt liberated as the sky. She experienced herself to be a non-doer, immovable and indivisible. She said, "There is no duality in me. I am beyond birth and death. All actions are being performed by the mind and the sense organs. I am beyond comfort and discomfort and beyond attachment and hatred. I am beyond victory and defeat. I have no friends and no enemies. The queen started repenting over the lost time. Why did I not acquire the knowledge of the self before? I am situated within myself. Even if the whole world disappears, I will still be there. Just as the waves of the ocean are not different from the ocean water, the living beings in the entire universe are parts of me." With these thoughts in her mind, Chudala went into Samadhi. By being situated in the soul within, she found bliss.

The king was very surprised to see Chudala in a state of ecstasy. He said, "My dear, what have you found that has made you so ecstatic. Have you learned the art of yoga or have you become the queen of three worlds and seven continents? Have you completed a pilgrimage or have you found a kingdom that will never be lost? Or have you tasted the nectar that has made you drunk? It does not seem that it is a royal pleasure; you must have found something really big. Just as in the winter the sky seems bright and unpolluted. You seem so pious and radiant. The glow on you shows that you have found the ultimate bliss. I am very surprised: Chudala then said, please listen to me, I have found my own self and

that's why my mind and body are very happy. After meditating on the supreme soul I feel blissful. I have overcome duality. I am situated within myself. All desires of worldly comfort have departed and I am enjoying the supreme bliss. I am blooming like a flower in the spring after seeing my true self. With light of self knowledge I see myself in everything. This has eliminated my sorrows, the feelings of duality, the discomfort of body, mind and intellect. I have no desire for the royal comforts. I feel I am not this body I am the soul who is playing different roles in different bodies. I neither sit down nor stand. I neither wake up nor sleep. I do not give or take. I do not cry or laugh. I have gone to the abode where mind, intellect and speech cannot reach. I drank the nectar of self knowledge and it has satiated all my desires. After hearing these words of true knowledge, the king felt disenchanted. He started laughing at her, and thought that she was silly. He said if other people listened to what you are saying, they will laugh at you. It is not appropriate for an empress to talk like this. You are describing what is true as apparent and what is apparent as the absolute truth. You are clever and wise. So why are you not able to think clearly? You said that I am pure soul which is the basis for this world, I am present within everyone. People who talk like this are considered silly. Such people do not gain respect anywhere. You are describing everything contrary to what everyone knows to be true. I regret to say but you are blabbering like a silly person. You used to be very clever and spoke everything carefully. What has happened to you now? You do not even think before you speak. It is up to you. Do whatever you want. But people do not like such things. You can say whatever you want. It does not

disturb me; but you are a wise empress so it does not behoove you. I do not really like what you are doing. I know that you think it is good. But it is causing me grief. I have tried to make you understand but unfortunately, you are not able to understand me and you have tarnished the family's fame. After saying this, the king went to take a bath. The empress welled up with feelings and became worried. The king has not absorbed the knowledge of the self. He did not understand what I told him. What more can I say to him? What should I do or where should I go? I have to live with the king. Making such a determination in her heart, she started performing the duties of a householder and started behaving like before. She kept on behaving like this for a long time. Then it occurred to her that she should advance in yoga and see what happens.

Once when the king was sleeping she wanted to tour the three worlds. Thinking this she started practicing yoga and meditation and attained mystical yogic powers. She fixed her breath and awakened her kundalini and obtained eight siddhis including enlightenment. These included clairvoyance, clairaudience, flying in the sky, invisibility etc. She moved in the sky and reached the heaven and saw that the demigods are sleeping. She then went to the kingdom of death where many sinful people were crying. She then went to moon, sun and the universe of the supreme soul. She then took the form of Kali to see Pataal Lok (the netherworld, one of the domains of the three worlds). She saw shesh-nag (the timeless serpent with a thousand heads) who was supporting the earth. She then saw king Bali where Lord Vishnu had once sat. She then took the form of air through her superhuman powers and saw many places and visited four major

pilgrimages and then reached her palace. She was very happy that she had seen all the lokas and all her anxiety had dissolved. She was happy that the king was still sleeping. She lied down next to him. She woke up in the morning before the king and meditated. The king also woke up, bathed and started performing his duties. She went to the king and gently tried to impart the true knowledge to the king, just as a teacher to a disciple, a father to a child. She invited the learned men and asked them to convey the true knowledge to the king. She also imparted the knowledge to the king. This whole world is illusory. Due to illusion, we may imagine a snake in a rope in the dark, or see silver in a sea-shell, or see mirage in a desert. Similarly, we see illusion in the various forms of this ephemeral world. People keep on suffering day and night in this world. Knowledge of the self is the medicine for this disease. There is no other medicine that can eliminate this ignorance. Chanting austerities, pilgrimages etc cannot remove this sorrow. The empress along with the learned men explained this to the king but the king did not absorb this knowledge and became very angry and walked into the garden. He felt disenchanted and wanted to renounce the kingdom. Everything around me is false. My family, parents, son, wife, none of them are my true well wishers. I have enjoyed many worldly comforts but have not found peace. The pleasures of the world are the reasons for sorrows. Although one attains these pleasures after great efforts they do not last. Once these comforts are lost it makes the mind very upset. Therefore I am going to renounce everything and will seek supreme union and eliminate my sorrows forever. With these thoughts in mind he went and bathed and started donating his wealth. He provided food for the hungry,

beverages for the thirsty, clothes for the poor people and shower kindness upon orphans and distressed people. He donated pearls and diamonds. After donating everything he had, he sat alone. The ministers tried to talk to him many times but he did not want to listen to anyone. After seeing the king in such a condition the ministers became very sad and they came running to the queen and described everything to her.

They told her that the king had announced that he was renouncing the palace, abandoning the pleasures of the world and going to live like a hermit in the forest. The queen felt very happy and very fortunate. She went to see the king along with the ministers and the learned men. She then started imparting knowledge to the king very affectionately. Whatever you see around you is only an apparent truth. Everything here is destructible and temporary as the lightning.

All worldly pleasures generate sorrow. Although they seem beautiful they are devoid of bliss of the soul. The happiness of paradise and the various domains of the worlds are not fully independent. Soul alone is blissful and fully independent

After listening to this, the king thought that there is no happiness in the world. I should renounce everything and go for a pilgrimage. The king then left for a pilgrimage along with his ministers. He thought that he was going to eliminate all his sins from the previous life time by going for pilgrimage. He went to Pushkar and performed yagan and bathed in the Ganges, Yumuna and Prayag. He donated a lot of wealth to Brahmins. He then went to Gangotri, Jamnotri, Kedar, Tungnath and Badrinath. He also went to Gaya, Benares, and Jaganath Puri, Rameshvar, Dwarka and Sudama Puri. After visiting all these places of

pilgrimage, he felt his suffering was reduced. After performing worship at various temples, the king came back to his kingdom and entered the palace at night. After seeing his beloved wife, tears filled his eyes. He told his wife that even after a long pilgrimage; I have still not achieved nirvana. I will go to Badrinath and perform austerities. I will sit alone in the forest and sing the glory of Govind. After having enjoyed all the comforts I have not found deep rest within. My mind is now detached from the five attraction of the world. I have examined carefully; there is no happiness in this world. The worldly desires which are like terrible enemies, keep dancing in everyone's mind. He has killed many strong people no one can escape from that. I am also afraid of that this world is just like guest house. I must go to the forest. Oh my queen, please do not stop me. Chudala said, oh king please think again this is not the time for you to perform austerities. Youth is not for performing austerities. Please rule your kingdom. Please go to the forest and perform austerities after you become older. In our old age we both will go to the forest and sing glory of God as we had promised God in- utero. She noticed that the king's mind was already detached from the world. Her words had no effect on his decisions. The company of saints during his pilgrimage and his philanthropic efforts came to fruition and the king became detached and left the palace. Seeing her husband leaving, the queen said please do not leave me. You are the primary support of my life. The king said please do not stop me. I do not like anything anymore. I must go to the forest. The queen said who will take care of you when you are in the forest. He said that mother earth will take care of me. I shall not suffer. All the deer will be my

friends; all direction will be my clothes; various types of lilies will my jewelry; the wood of the forest will be my weapon. I will sleep on stone bed inside a beautiful cave. I will eat the flowers, and herbs and vegetables to satisfy my hunger. After saying this king started walking towards the forest. The queen became very sad after seeing this. The queen along with her friends followed the king and reached the fort door, and she closed the door. When the king saw the door closed, he started thinking. In the mean time, the queen came and told him in a very sweet voice that it is night time now. Please do not leave now. We will discuss this tomorrow and remove all sufferings from your mind. After listening to this, the king went to sleep. The queen and her friends stayed awake. After some time they also fell asleep. After midnight, the king woke up and decided to leave. He went to the door and asked the gate-keeper to open the door for him. The gate-keeper started following him but the king told him that he was going for hunting and did not wish to be followed. After walking a short distance, he mentally said; oh queen the wealth of this nation I bow to you. I spent magnificent time with you. The king then started walking fast as his heart was full of devotion. He was walking in the dark night. He walked through the forest where there were terrible lions. He kept walking fearlessly with full determination. After walking the whole night he reached a place which was free of danger. He came to a pond and after taking his bath; he performed worship and ate something. He then got up and started waking again. He was thinking again that the queen might come and stop him. He kept on walking for 25 days and reached the Mandrachal Mountain and sat under a beautiful tree. He then ate some wild fruits and went to sleep.

When he awakened, he looked at the beautiful forest around him and decided to live there to protect him from heat and cold and he decided to make a hut for himself. On one side he kept deity of God. On the other side he put some flowers. He spread a mat to sit on and in one corner he put fruits and vegetables. Early in the morning he woke up, bathed in the river and performed japa meditation. He meditated and worshiped God. He gathered fruits and flowers to satisfy his hunger. In the evening he meditated again. After sleeping for a short time in the night, the king performed naam japa again. His body started becoming weak. He still remained determined and continued with this routine. He started feeling sad and started lamenting that even after giving up the kingdom he did not find peace. Even under these conditions he still continued to perform austerities. Now listen to the queen's story.

When the queen woke up, she felt very unfortunate to realize that the king had already left. She awakened all her friends and told them that the king has gone to the forest and left me alone. She started thinking that her husband must be in a lot of difficulties while walking in the dark night. I do not know how I can search for him. She asked her friends for advice on how to find her husband.

**(Raga Zila Bhajan)**

Wake up my friends and get ready so I can go and see my husband in the forest. Do not delay; my heart is yearning to see him. The night is dark and the lighting is terrifying. I am very disturbed and the comforts of the palace are causing me discomfort. I do not know why I am not dying. Perhaps, the yearning in my heart



does not allow me to die. The queen said that even after listening to my pain you are still sleeping here! My beloved has left me and my heart is full of worry and anxiety. After saying these words she started crying. Realizing that she was going through a difficult time, she tried to console herself. She then went to look for her husband with her yogic powers. She saw him walking in the forest. She noticed that he had not started living anywhere. She thought maybe she should disguise herself and stop the king. Then she saw the future with her mystical powers and realized that she was only destined to see her husband after a long time. She had the ability to see past, present and future. She realized that she will go to the forest after a long time and will help the king with self realization and in achieving nirvana. The king's detachment at this time is not firm yet. I should not disturb him. He will not listen to me at this time due to ego. With these thoughts she came back to her original form and happily went back to the palace with her friends. She sat on the bed and started thinking, how do I take care of the kingdom. Now I have to take care of kingdom now. In the morning she called the minister and told him that the king has gone for a pilgrimage do not worry I will take care of the kingdom. Please make sure everyone continues to perform their duties and the kingdom is safe and must make sure that all citizens of the nation are free from stress. After listing to this all minister started doing their works. The queen sat on throne and started ruling the kingdom carefully. She followed her duties very well. She removed distress from people even when she to tolerate the hardship herself. Just as a gardener takes care of each flower in the garden, the queen kept on protecting the public. She ruled with royal grace of equal justice to

all for eight years. She then thought, I should go to the forest and remove the suffering of my husband. My husband is suffering in the forest. It does not behoove me to enjoy royal comforts. It is my duty to help my husband. The perfect woman cannot see her husband in misery. She always wants her husband to be happy. She worships her husband as God. She cannot even think of anyone else other than her husband. She never disobeys her husband and offers everything to him. She worships him with body, mind and all resources available to her. By doing this she is able to obtain all her heart's wishes.

Realizing that the time had come for her to again see her husband, she went forth to remove her husband's suffering. I will feel happy when he is happy. Therefore I will go to the forest and remove his ignorance. I will do everything else later but I must do this now. The king has been performing austerities for the last eight years. His heart and mind has been cleansed and his mind is now ripe for spiritual wisdom. She thought that he deserves my help. I will go and see where he lives and impart to him the knowledge of self and see what he says. She called the ministers and said, the king has been gone for a long time and no one has told me about his condition. You please remain alert here and take care of the kingdom. I am going for a pilgrimage. I will go to the forest and I will find the king quickly. After saying that, she flew over mountains, forests and the rivers and reached Mandrachal. In that place, she started searching for her husband. She controlled her mind and sense organs and established herself in yoga. With the help of yogic powers she was able to determine where the king is living. She found that he had become very weak and had been tolerating extreme weather. He is sitting in an

isolated forest where no one visits. There are not even birds in this place. He is performing these austerities because of ignorance. He is performing japa but the ego is still residing inside his mind. I should make great efforts so he wakes up from attachment. He should obtain self knowledge and start performing severe austerities. With this body, I will not be able to make him understand and give himself knowledge. He will get angry after seeing me. He will say because of you I left the kingdom. I have found some happiness here and you came here to hurt me again. Therefore I should disguise myself and then impart knowledge to the king. I should disguise myself such that he would not recognize me. Then she changed her clothes and dressed up like sage. She put hair up and then put a garland around her neck. She carried deer skin, a cane and a bud vase. She calmed herself down and walked towards the king. The king saw a sage coming towards him he got up and gave respect to sage. He paid obeisance to sage and offered him flowers and fruits. He said that I am very fortunate that you have come here. In the last eight years no sadhu has come to this forest. The Vedas describe that it is very difficult to find company of saints. I am very fortunate that I have received your company. The company of saints helps people to cross the ocean of misery. Even the demigod wishes to be in the company of saints. No one is fully knowledgeable about the vast greatness of saints. There is no difference between saint and God. A saint is a personification of Brahman. The benediction that one achieves in the company of saints is not available anywhere else. One can achieve all of the heart's desires in the company of saints. When good deeds from various life times of someone come to fruition, only then one is able to get the

company of saints. The king said it is very kind of you to come here. I am very happy to see you. So please tell me what brings you here. Then the sage said, listen to me carefully. Oh king! I will tell you about all my adventures. I have seen the Himalayas, vindyachal and Kailash Mountains. I have seen the abode of Lords Brahma, Shiva, Yakhshas and the other demigod. I am traveling around world and am visiting sixty eight places of pilgrimage. I have visited many beautiful forests before. Today I came to visit this forest. Oh king! I am very happy to see you. I am very pleased with your great affection. You are indeed unique. I have not seen this kind of devotion in anybody else that I have seen within you. You have performed severe austerities and controlled your body. You are detached from the world and free from all bondage. You are indeed worthy of great respect and I offer my obeisance to you. The king had made a garland for worshipping the deities. He picked it up and put it around the sage's neck. When the king saw how beautiful sage was, he was very surprised. After thinking, he slowly and hesitantly said these words: "Your body looks like the body of my queen". Your peaceful demeanor is very pleasant but you are a very knowledgeable sadhu. I want to say that you are Chudala, but it is inappropriate to say that. Therefore, I request you to be truthful with me and tell me why you are roaming around in this forest. Oh sage! What's your name? Which country do you come from? Where were you born? Who is your father? Who is your grandfather? Who is your guru? You are very compassionate and destroy the doubt in everyone, please destroy my doubts as well. You are a sadhu and you have taken this form to remove human suffering. Please help me. When the queen

heard this, she became concerned. She thought that the King has recognized me. Now what can I do? Chudala then thought and raised her hand and said, please listen to me carefully. I am sage Kumbhaj. I have come from the heavens. Lord Brahma is my grandfather and my guru. I am a son of sage Narad. I was born in Sumeru (Himalaya) Mountain. After leaving from here, I am planning to go the abode of Lord Brahma. What else do you want to know? I will be happy to tell you everything in detail. The king then said why were you named Kumbhaj? Can you please explain it to me as there is doubt in my mind? Chudala then patiently told a story and said please listen to me. One time, sage Narad came to Sumair Mountain. He was very happy to see the mountain. In this solitude there was a beautiful cave and the Ganges River was flowing gently. Sage Narad sat there and for a long time. There were beautiful trees with blooming fragrant flowers. There were birds singing sweet songs. Narad felt very happy in these surroundings. He got up and went to the banks of Ganges River. He took three vessels and filled them up with milk, water and flowers. He took his Iktara (a single string musical instrument) in one of his hand and the cymbals in another. For one month he chanted Veda Mantras. With his yogic powers, he created a child. He took that beautiful child to Lord Brahma with great happiness. He told the story of the child's birth to Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma put the child in his lap and examined the fortune lines on his hand and said that he will achieve self realization instantaneously. Since I was born out of kumbh he decided to name me Kumbhaj. The sage told the king that this is how I got the name Kumbhaj. After hearing this story the king paid his obeisance to the sage. He folded his hands and

said that I am very fortunate that I have an opportunity to see you. You have brightened my humble abode. I am very happy to see you. Just as a peacock becomes happy after hearing the sounds of thunder, similarly your words are pleasing to me. Please forgive me for joking with you. I am now certain that you know everything. Sage Kumbhaj said that please tell me about yourself. Why are you staying in this forest and tolerating this adverse weather? What is your name? What do you do? Whom do you worship? How long have you been here? What do you eat? How do you spend your time? From which country have you come? What will you do after this? Please tell me everything in detail. The king then started answering sage's questions. I am king Shikhardhwaj from country of Malav. I have a vast kingdom and I belong to the high Kshatriya (warrior race) class. Due to fear of birth and death, I have given up my kingdom. I am frightened of the ocean of misery. I have given up my royal duties and have decided to live in the forest. I bath three times a day and perform japa. I lead a much disciplined life. I fast frequently and perform many austerities. I worship Lord Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Surya, and Ganesh. And I eat fruits once a day. With tears in his eyes the king said, now I tell you the reason for my coming to this forest. I have been performing severe austerities to find peace. But I have not found it yet. Oh Lord! Although you know everything, but I am still telling you my condition as you asked me to do so. Please tell me what kind of japa I should perform so I can find peace and may rescue myself from the suffering of birth and death. After hearing this sage Kumbhaj said, my dear king, please listen carefully. You have come out of a ditch (the kingdom) and fallen in to the dark well of rituals. You

have not been able to do what you want to do even after giving up your kingdom. You have only one pair of clothes and a very few possessions. But these types of renunciation cannot bring happiness. If you want lasting peace, meditate on your own soul. By realizing your own true self you will be able to eliminate the suffering of birth and death. The sage said, one time I asked following question to Lord Brahma. Which is superior of the two, religious rituals or knowledge? Then Lord Brahma said supreme knowledge is higher than religious rituals. Everyone knows that Silk is superior to ordinary fabrics. If you have not seen silk you may continue admiring other ordinary fabrics. Supreme knowledge is like silk. Religious rituals are like ordinary fabrics. Lord Brahma has said that religious rituals cannot bring lasting peace to human mind. However the Vedas do prescribe the practice of religious rituals for people of lower intellect. It helps prevent sinful actions and leads to heaven. You should realize your own true self. Give up rituals and perform japa on the “SOHAM MANTRA”. Earlier you lived in a palace and now you live in a forest. But you still have ignorance in your heart. As long as you think you are the doer, you will not be peaceful. Renounce all worldly desires as these are the seeds of repeated birth and death. Give up your attachment to the world. Situate yourself within your own soul. Without attachment you are liberated. With attachment you are in bondage. I pay obeisance to the one who has conquered the ego. You have not been able to accomplish what you had set out to do. You came here for self realization but got entangled in the rituals. All happiness resides in detachment. All greatness resides in devotion. The austerities increase mystic powers. However liberation cannot be

achieved without knowledge. With all your efforts you will not be able to break the bondage of karma. You will be able to enjoy the bliss of Brahman only after you detach yourself from all worldly desires. Oh king you gave up your kingdom to achieve your goal. But you should have also spent time in the company of saints and learned the spiritual science. You should have gone to the learned saints and asked them the following questions in a humble manner. Who am I? What is this body? Who is the one residing inside the body? Who endures repeated birth and death? How did this multifarious world come in to being? What was it created from? Where does it go after annihilation? This is the work you should have done and which you were not able to do. But, you still can get the necessary knowledge from the saints and realize your own self. After listing to this, the king said you are my sudguru. Please grant me the knowledge. You the creator Brahma, the preserver Vishnu, the destroyer Shiva, you are Govind and you alone are my Giridhari. You are Omnipresent and beyond duality. You are a true saint and fully knowledgeable. You know everything. Please remove my doubts my Lord. Ego and desire are always smoldering my subconscious mind. Even after performing severe austerities my mind did not find peace. Please give me knowledge and advice which will remove my doubts and give me peace of mind. Sage Kumbhaj then said please have faith and cut away the bondage of karma with the knowledge that I am going to give you. Please have full faith in my words. Knowledge does not come to fruition without true faith. A crow does not listen to any one and continues its low practices but a parrot listens and continues to repeat what he is taught. You cannot teach a crow. If you are going to



listen to my teaching like a crow, I want to leave for the abode of Brahma right now. The king said Oh my Lord! I will do whatever you say. Just as I have been obeying the teaching of Vedas and performing austerities, I will obey your teaching. I will not disobey even if you ask me to give up my life. Seeing complete devotion in the king the sage said oh king! Please listen to my teachings with sharp mind as they are for your benefit. Just as parents never think ill of their children the sadhu are also everyone's well wishers. They take birth solely to remove suffering of others. Similarly I am telling you the truth for your happiness. I will only ask you to do what will help you remove your sufferings. Oh king! I am going to tell you story that will benefit you very much. There once was a pundit who was very knowledgeable. He wanted to obtain Chintamani (wish-fulfilling gem). One day he went to the top of a mountain and saw chinatmani. He said if it is a true Chintamani I will obtain it. If it is not the true gem, it is useless. He thought that it was not a genuine chinatmani since it takes great fortune to find one. If it was so easy, everybody would find a Chintamani. Since I found this Chintamani so easily, it must not be real. A genuine Chinatmani cannot be found so easily. With these thoughts he rejected the Chintamani. Due to this disrespect, the Chintamani disappeared. Superior things disappear when they are disrespected. It curses the disrespectful person by quickly destroying their wealth and intellect. The ones who disrespect venerable people are never happy and die in misery. When the Chintamani disappeared, pundit started worrying. He realized that it was a true gem and now it had disappeared. He started searching for Chintamani everywhere. He was crying and laughing like

a maniac as he wanted Chintamani so badly. People were surprised to see him in this condition and started wondering why he was acting in that manner. He used to be very knowledgeable but what was happening to him now perhaps was due to illness, some even said he must be drunk, some said he possessed by ghost. People started asking the pundit why he was in that condition. He answered that I saw a true Chintamani in the forest but it has disappeared. I am desperately searching for it because it has disappeared. After saying that, he fell down. People thought that he has gone mad and they went away. The pundit got up and started searching for Chintamani again. He kept worrying about the gem. In the mean time, someone dropped a piece of glass in front of him pundit picked it up quickly and took it home. Just as people take the temporary world to be real and become attached to it, the pundit became very attracted to a piece of glass. Since he thought he possessed a genuine Chintamani, he gave away all his possessions. He did not tell anyone of his family members about the Chintamani. He fought with everyone and went to the forest and started worshiping Chintamani. Since it was a piece of glass, worshiping did not do anything. The pundit became miserable and started crying. He started lamenting that he left his home and gave away his wealth for piece of glass. The sage said I am going to tell you the moral of this story. Please think it over carefully. The saints and guru gave you the knowledge of self which is more valuable than Chintamani. You did not respect that knowledge and held on to the rituals. The austerities are like a piece of glass compared to the supreme knowledge of the self. The foolish people discard very

valuable things without knowing their worth; instead they keep running after useless things.

Oh king! I will tell you one more parable. Please listen to it carefully. Once there was a mighty elephant in the Mandrachal forest. It was the king of elephants and walked proudly in the forest. Its teeth were very strong. It used to crumble hills. Just as Lord Vaman tied up king Bali in one promise, a hunter trapped the mighty elephant by using deception. He chained the elephant and sat on top of a tree. The elephant started screaming. It then remembered its own powers and broke the chain with its teeth. The hunter noticed that the elephant had freed itself. He knew that he was going to die. He started trembling with fear and lay down in front of the elephant. The elephant saw the hunter at its feet. He thought that he was already dying because of fear, why should I bother killing him. Although he is my enemy, I will not touch him. It does not behoove me to kill a weak person like him. The kind elephant did not kill his enemy. It left the hunter alive and quickly walked in the forest alone. The elephant quickly walked into the forest. The hunter became very alert and wanted to kill the elephant again. Just as Rahu follows the moon, the hunter kept on following the elephant. He found it sleeping in the forest and decided to kill it. He quickly prepared a ditch and covered it with hay. He then hides behind a tree. The elephant woke up and walked a little. It then fell in the ditch. The hunter then started beating up the elephant. Since elephant did not think of potential problems that could happen in future, it endured a lot of pain. The elephant kept lying in that ditch and kept enduring a lot of pain and suffering. It is very difficult to describe the distress of that elephant. Oh king! I

will tell you the moral of this story. Your mind will become peaceful after hearing this. Oh king! Listen to me very attentively. Understanding the moral of this story will help you eliminate your ignorance. You are the elephant of mandrachal. Ignorance is the hunter which has trapped you in worldly desires. Just as the elephant broke the chain with its own teeth, you untied yourself from worldly desires with the power of detachment and discrimination. When you became free and fearless after detaching yourself from your desires, ignorance got disappointed. Your ego prevented you from destroying ignorance. When you came to live in the forest, ignorance followed you. It created the ditch of ritualistic practices and austerities for you. Ignorance made you fall in to this ditch. You have been enduring a lot of discomfort due to these austerities. Oh king! You have not been able to pull yourself out of this ditch yet. Instead, you continue to identify yourself with your body. You consider yourself to be the doer of all actions. You thought that living in the forest is going to help you achieve liberation. You did not fully understand the valuable teaching of saints. You have read many scriptures but did not fully understand their teachings. Due to ignorance you endured a lot of distress. Those who do not fully understand the teachings are always miserable. Just as pundits created a lion in the forest without thinking and the lion killed them all. Similarly you did not realize that this ignorance will kill you. This is the reason for your distress. One should not underestimate the enemy and leave it safe and sound due to foolishness. You did not think clearly and did not destroy ignorance, your enemy. It is still not too late to destroy ignorance. Fill your heart with the power of discrimination and you will

achieve your goal. Discrimination leads to detachment which leads to true knowledge. The knowledge of Brahman liberates one from identification with the material body. Oh king! Whenever you remember the story of the elephant and reflect upon it, you will become blissful. Oh king! Let me tell you one more thing. You have a wife named Chudala. She is very knowledgeable. She tried to impart supreme spiritual knowledge to you. You disrespected her words. The pundits also tried very hard to make you understand but you didn't understand the spiritual knowledge. At that time your mind was full of pride. Oh king! Just as the wind scatters large clouds but the resulting smaller clouds coalesce again, your pride was shattered by austerities but attachments have increased it again. Your true self has been covered by ignorance. This is the reason why you are miserable and not peaceful. The king became very surprised after hearing this. He asked how you know everything about me. Please explain it to me. The sage said I know everything that happens in the past, the present and the future. Please do not doubt my words and listen to me attentively. You made a mistake by discarding the knowledge of Brahman. Your other foolishness was that you did not fully detach yourself. The knowledge of self liberates us from the cycle of birth and death. By giving up everything, one can achieve happiness and suffering is destroyed. Hearing this the king asked, why do you say that I did not renounce everything? Oh Lord! I have renounced my kingdom, family, country, wealth and even my queen. I live here in an isolated forest. I am honestly telling you everything. As you yourself can see, I have a very few possessions. Hearing these words of pride the sage said that you did not renounce anything. Why do you feel

so proud? The country, family and wealth existed before you. You just stayed there for some time. Nothing in that kingdom is yours. So what did you renounce? Everything you think you have renounced belongs to God. Why did you get attached to the things that did not belong to you? You need to renounce what belongs to you. Giving up your own possessions will give you happiness. After hearing these words of the sage the king thought that the sage was saying these words as he had not given up his tree, a well and the hut he had been living in. So, he gave up his hut, garden, garland, cane, deer-skin, mat and clay pots. He then said to the sage, I have given up everything now. I have renounced completely. Listening to this the sage said, Oh king! Be alert. None of these things that you have renounced belong to you. The flowers and garden were here before you. The cane which you renounced is made from the forest wood and therefore belongs to the forest. The hut is made out of hay which is not yours. Deer-skin comes from the deer and the pots are made of clay. What else can I tell you? The mat you sit on is made from the sheep wool. Although none of these things belong to you, your mind has imagined that they do. You have to renounce what is yours. Please renounce completely and eliminate your sufferings. After hearing these words of Sage Kumbhaj, the disciplined king got up immediately. He gathered wood and made a pyre and set it on fire. When the wood started burning, he threw all his material possessions in the fire including deer-skin, garland, cane etc. He burnt his hut and garden. Just as King Daksh Prajapati performed yagan with demigods and the messenger of Lord Shiva went and destroyed the yagan, the king destroyed everything that was in his possession and used it to build a big fire.

Because of this big fire all the animals and birds left the forest. Everything was burnt down and nothing was left. The king therefore thought that all his attachments had also been burnt to ashes. He thought that he was now fully detached. He thought to himself I am very happy today because all my sufferings have been destroyed. The misery in the world is due to attachments. I am very fortunate that my attachment is destroyed. I renounced everything and I am a true ascetic now. Knowing this in his heart, he said to the sage, with your grace I am now a true ascetic. I have renounced everything. Then Sage Kumbhaj said it is good that you renounced many things. But you have still not completely renounced everything. Whatever is your own is what you must renounce. Upon hearing this, the king stood up and made an appeal to the sage. Oh Lord! I have nothing left except this body. If you wish I will renounce this body by jumping from the top of a mountain. After saying this, he prepared himself for death. Now I am going to renounce this body which I have loved so dearly. The king started running towards the mountain top. The sage asked the king to be patient. Why do you want to kill this body? This body is a means to liberation. The human body is the best out of all 84, 00,000 body forms created by the Lord. With this body you can obtain knowledge, detachment, discrimination and knowledge of your true self. You can meditate with this body. This cannot be accomplished with any other but the human form. This body is very useful. Discarding this body is not renunciation. Immediately renounce what is yours. You should only renounce what is worth renouncing. The king said, Oh Lord! What is it that I must renounce now? What will help me to go across the realm of duality (in the world everything

exists along with its opposite: joy and sorrow; heat and cold etc.) and remove my misery? I have performed many austerities and many rituals but I have not found happiness. Please tell me what I must renounce. I surrender unto you. Please tell me how to overcome the misery of death and birth. Instruct me as I am your servant. After hearing humble words from the king the sage said, Oh wise king! Please renounce your worldly desires. Due to conditioning of your subconscious and unconscious mind, you see a variety in this world. The desires residing in the subconscious and unconscious mind lead to attachment, pride, ego, distress and happiness. All the worldly relationships are also due to the desires residing in the subconscious and unconscious mind. All family relationships are created and affected by the subconscious mind. Everything you see is due to the desires and impressions stored in the subconscious mind. Therefore renounce desires residing in your subconscious mind and all your misery will be gone. When you achieve this, you will find total happiness. If you do not renounce desires residing in your subconscious mind, you will have to endure repeated birth and death cycle.

You will have to endure pangs of Yama and the fire of hell. One seed can result in a big field by multiplying itself. But if you roast the seed in fire and then sow it in, it will not sprout and result in a crop. Similarly desire results in everything. When the knowledge of Brahman destroys the desires stored in the subconscious and unconscious mind, we need not take birth again. Giving up all worldly desires is what I call total renunciation. The one who has renounced everything is always happy. The sky remains unattached but can be perceived in all vessels. But when the vessels are destroyed, the sky is not destroyed. Similarly Oh King! You



should remain unattached. Your kingdom, family, and wealth were created by your desires. Renounce all desires and remain detached. After eliminating your desires you will achieve complete renunciation. Desires in the subconscious mind are cause of misery while Soul consciousness is the basis of all happiness. The worldly comforts are temporary. The soul is indestructible. You are a soul and not the body.

You illuminate and sustain everything. You are the silent witness. You will be able to establish yourself in Brahman after you have eliminated all desires. All duality in your mind and all your sufferings will be destroyed and you will achieve liberation while still living in this world. The one who can silence the mind and renounce all desires and cravings is a truly renounced person.

Saint Swami Teoon Ram says such a person is very fortunate in all the three worlds. When the sage asked the king to destroy all desires in his mind, the king made the following request with folded hands. Oh Lord, the mind is very fickle and very strong. It can go around the world in seconds. Sometimes it flies above and sometimes it goes under. It is constantly moving with the speed of wind. It keeps on jumping around the body like a monkey on a tree. It is attached to worldly desires just like a pig, a dog and a crow. How do I still my mind? I cannot get a grip on it. It does not have a form and a color. It walks without feet and cannot be captured. Hearing the condition of the king the sage said, please do not be discouraged. It is not very difficult to control the mind. Controlling the mind does not even take as long as blinking the eyes. It is difficult for an ignorant

person to control the mind. But for the one who is equipoised, it is easy. Oh king! You are very wise. You will be able to control your mind when you realize that you are the consciousness which is witnessing everything. Absorb yourself in deep meditation. The king said with folded hands that I still find it difficult to control my mind. It is as difficult for me to control the mind as it is to swim across an ocean. It is difficult for a handicapped person to climb a mountain. It is difficult for a blind person to visualize form and colors. Similarly it is difficult for me to control my mind. Please tell me the form of mind which has been making me cry repeatedly. I am telling you the truth that it causes me a lot of distress.

After hearing this, the sage said that the mind is shaped by the desires residing in it. The subconscious and unconscious mind is directed by desires. Therefore, once desires are destroyed the mind becomes tranquil and loses its powers. Without destroying desires, the thoughts will continue to arise in the mind again and again. A tree cannot be destroyed by cutting its branches. But if you roast its seeds, there will be no sprouts or a tree. Therefore, destroy the seeds of persistent thoughts in your mind. Desires cause unrelenting thoughts and these thoughts then motivate us to perform actions. Desires form the basis of all actions performed in the world. Repeated births are caused by desires. Therefore, think about these ideas and establish yourself within your own soul. Your true self is the soul and not the body. Contemplate on the Supreme Soul. Swami Teon Ram says that contemplation on the soul eliminates false identity with the perishable body. Contemplation on Brahman sparks Brahman energy. This

energy quickly destroys false ego and attachments etc. Once false ego is destroyed, you will realize your true self and situate yourself within it. Once you are established in this state, you will be in a state of bliss.

Oh King! After listening to what I have told you, what do you think is your identity?

What do you think of this world?

The king said Oh great sage! I now know that I am beyond the three states and I am Existence Absolute, Consciousness Absolute, and Bliss Absolute. I am separate from the mind, the intellect, and the ego. I am not this body, blood, muscles and the human form. But this false ego still clings to me. I am not capable of giving it up by myself. Kindly help me as I have no one except you who can help me. Please tell me in detail how I can eliminate false ego. Please tell me the form of pride which has caused many people to cry pitifully. Pride is like a wild fire which has burnt everyone in the world. Pride is like a disease which has distressed everyone. Pride destroys everyone and causes a lot of misery. Only a few people who are helped by their sadguru are capable of ridding themselves of pride. Even I am inflicted by pride, I consider myself to be the king of Malav. I am embarrassed to acknowledge that I do not know how to get rid of this pride.

Sage Kumbhaj smiled and said, Oh clever king! I will tell you the secret of destroying pride. Please listen to it carefully. Body consciousness causes pride. The pride in one's own body results in false ego. It is evident that the body is created by parents. The founding father of all of us is Lord Brahma. Please know

for certain that this entire world is not real but appears to be real and permanent just as mirage seen in dessert. This world is an apparent reality. Oh king! Awaken yourself and cast the doubt that you are this body. Just as in the dream state, we think we are performing various actions when nothing is actually happening; everything seems real when we are in this world. This world is not a permanent reality. Atman (individual soul or self) is immovable, unchangeable, and an absolute reality. Anything that is changeable gets destroyed at the end. The world is changeable but Atman is not. After listening to Sage Kumbhaj, the king said that I am very happy now due to your kindness. Now I know that Atman is separate from the body. It is the creator and the silent witness. Atman is illuminating the entire universe. It is flawless, eternal and free of bondages. It is the absolute reality which is not attached to anything. It is the silent witness beyond duality. I now know that I am this silent witness. Although I reside in everything, I am not associated with anything. I am near and I am far. I am everyone's beloved. I am beyond the boundary of space and time. I am the foundation of this universe. I exist in the past, the present and the future. Whatever you see around you, is me. I am the one who has created this drama. Atman resides within every "I". I am beyond description. Even Vedas cannot fully describe me. After uttering these words, the king became absorbed in meditation. Sage Kumbhaj awakened him after several hours. Oh king! Now I know that you have achieved the supreme knowledge. You are beyond attachment and hatred. You are now beyond distress. Now you are truly liberated. You can now live your life without sufferings. You will no longer be affected by lust,

greed, anger, pride and attachment. After listening to this the king became very happy.

He then humbly asked one more question.

Why do we perceive various differences in the world even though Atman is immovable, indestructible, beyond birth and absolute?

Atman is self illuminating, beyond duality, infinite and the silent witness. Oh sadguru! Kindly remove this doubt in my mind. You are the only one who can help me. After listening to this, the sage thought over the king's question. Oh King! Please listen carefully to the answer to your question as described in the scriptures. Brahman (infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality) pervades everything. The seer, sight and seen (or knower, knowledge and knowable) are all manifestation of the supreme consciousness. The tides in the ocean are not different from the water in the ocean. The jewelry made out of gold is not different from gold. Various pots made out of clay are not different from clay. Similarly, the world is a manifestation of Brahman. It is not different from Brahman. Just as tides arise out of ocean because of fluctuations and then merge into it again, the world comes into being from Brahman and merges back into it. The one, who has worldly desires, continues to suffer. The one who has established oneself in Brahman is always blissful. We perceive happiness and distress due to various desires and emotions in our mind. Swami Teon Ram says that do not blame anyone else for your suffering. There is a story related to it. Please listen to it carefully. You will achieve peace by listening to it.

One day Lord Krishna called Yudhishtir and Duryodhan. He asked Yudhishtir to go and find a dishonest person. He then asked Duryodhan to go and bring an honest person. Both of them searched for the whole day and came back without success. Lord Krishna smiled and asked why they did not bring anyone with them. Duryodhan said that I searched for an honest person for the whole day in the entire town and I did not find anyone. After hearing this, Yudhishtir was surprised. He said I too searched the entire town for the whole day, but I did not find a dishonest person. After listening to this, Lord Krishna said that in reality there is no good or evil in the world. Our emotions color our perception of the world. It is our attitude that makes us see the things from our prospective. This world is a like a mirror palace. The world shows us our reflection as a mirror does. The ignorant people do not realize that God pervades everything and therefore they suffer through repeated birth and death. The self realized person sees Bahaman in everything and therefore is always blissful. Oh king, establish yourself in Bahaman and leave all other thoughts. You will be always happy if you do that. Whatever you hear, visualize or know through other means is an expansion of Braham. They Vedas say that there is nothing except Brahman, the absolute truth, absolute consciousness and absolute bliss. When you hold on to this thought in your mind, you will experience presence of Atman and false ego will be destroyed. When false ego will be destroyed all suffering will be destroyed. When you contemplate on consciousness you will merge in to consciousness. After listing this king said I have achieved my goal after listing to your words of wisdom. I now recognize my true self and all my doubts have been

eliminated. I have achieved a state that sages crave to achieve. My lord, I have found peace within by your grace. The sages describe that one achieves nectar in the presence of self realized saints. The ones who drink such nectar become immortal. You have kindly given me this nectar. Oh my sadguru you have awakened me from the deep sleep of attachment. You have invited me with Braham; you have helped me attain a state where the death cannot reach. There is no night and day there is no illusion in this state. I do not have any desire left. I feel that I have reached my permanent abode. Oh lord, please explain to me why I was not able to comprehend this knowledge when it was told to me initially. Kumbhaj sage then said, Oh king we are able to attain the knowledge when our intellect has been cleansed. Just as clean piece of clothes takes on color easily similarly cleansed intellect takes on color of devotion quickly. Just as one can see reflection in clean mirror one can experience Atman in a clean intellect. The person whose mind and intellect are contaminated cannot comprehend spiritual knowledge. The person with a clean heart has no doubt in their mind. When you are initially given this knowledge there was pride in your mind. Since you have given up false ego, you have been able to grasp this knowledge quickly. You have reached state where mind intellect and words cannot reach. You have renounced all worldly desires. You are indeed very fortunate. After saying that the sage said, I am going to go the abode of Brahman. You continue your contemplation on your own self. Lord Brahma (Creator god of the Hindu trinity) has organized a congregation of saints at the abode of Brahman. Sage Narad is also invited there. If I do not go over there, my father will be angry. Therefore I must go there

immediately. You continue to meditate. Main teaching of all scripture is that one must destroy all worldly desires. Oh king! Be careful. Do not engage your mind in anything else. Just keep practicing what I have told you. Continue contemplation on Atman and do nothing else. Do not think about anything. The king gathered flowers and leaves to worship his guru. In the mean time the sage disappeared from there. The king was surprised to see that the sage had disappeared. The king started wondering about his friendship with sage. Sage Kumbhaj is from the heaven and I lived in Mandrachal. After listening to his words of wisdom, I have reached this state. Perhaps God himself came to instruct me in the form of Sage Kumbhaj. The great sage was very knowledgeable. He awakened me from the sleep of attachments. All my suffering has been destroyed and I am submerged in the bliss of Brahman. Remembering this thought the king went into deep meditation. In the mean time, Chudala disrobed her sage garb. She dressed like a queen and came back to her kingdom. She quickly called her minister and told him that she found the king. He was very happy. You do not worry about him. He will be here soon. He will come back and lead the country. After saying that, queen ruled for three days and did everything she needed to do. She fulfilled her duties as a queen. On the fourth day, she reached Mandrachal again and disguised herself as sage again. She reached where the king was seated in the deep meditation. She was very happy to see him in that state. The queen understood that the king has realized himself. She knew that he was absorbed in meditation. But she decided to awaken him. She made the sound of a lion. This made all animals in the forest scared and made them run away. Even then the king didn't



awaken from his deep meditation. She then held his hand and started shaking him. She then decided to sing some songs from Samveda. After hearing this sweet song, the king awakened and realized that the sadguru Kumbhaj had come. The king felt very happy that his sadguru had come. He paid his obeisance to the sage. He said Oh Sadguru! You are very gracious. I am very happy to see you. I will gladly give my life for you. You have made me immortal by giving me the spiritual knowledge. You have eliminated all my sorrows by giving me the most pious spiritual knowledge. The sage said I am also happy to see you. Oh gracious king! I have come back quickly from the abode of Brahman because I like you. I didn't even like the comforts of the abode of Brahman. You are my dearest. Without you everything seems unpleasant. After seeing your affection, I do not wish to go anywhere else. I will be happy to stay with you here. After hearing this king affectionately said, I will be very fortunate if you stay here. Whatever I have is yours. I too am your servant. I will be happy to serve you with all my heart. After hearing these king's words, the sage decided to stay with him. The sage then said you have achieved peace. How did you stop all thoughts of duality in your mind? Oh king! Describe everything in detail. How did you keep your mind calm during gain and loss as well as acceptance and rejection? If you have any remaining doubts, I will be happy to clarify them. The king then said that I have achieved the state of nirvana with your grace. I have been able to establish myself in that state. All thoughts of duality are unable to disturb me. I have no doubts remaining. I am established within Atman. They continued their discussion for some time. After bathing they went to rest in the hut. After a few days, the Sage

Kumbhaj said to king that let us leave from here. The saints and sages should not stay at one place for long time. They should live in the world without becoming attached to it. This results in much happiness. After saying that, both of them went to visit many places. They saw many cities and place of pilgrimage. They remained in the same state of mind while visiting the places of intense activity, inertia and places of pilgrimage. Sometimes they put on sandalwood and sometimes they put on ashes on their forehead. They remained in the same state of mind through their entire journey. They sat down in the forest. They spend time together and meditate together. Sage Kumbhaj took him for this journey because he wanted to find out if the king can remain balanced in various conditions of happiness and distress. The king was unaffected by the happy-unhappy circumstances. He continued to contemplate on Atman. The queen then understood that the king had achieved the state of liberation. She wanted both of them to go back to the kingdom. However, she wanted to know what the king wanted to do. She started planning what to do next. She told him that I am going to the abode of Brahma and you continue to stay here. There is a festival going on at the abode of Brahma today. My father will be visiting there. Therefore I must go there. I will come back today. You must stay here. Do not go anywhere else or do anything else. After saying this, the queen flew away in the sky. The king was surprised to see the sage disappear. He started contemplating on Brahman. The queen returned to her kingdom. She called a meeting of the ministers and told them to get busy with their work. She also informed them that the king will be returning soon. She then came back to the king and noticed that

he was sad. The sage also pretended to be sad. The sage sat next to the king. The king saw sadness on the face of his guru and enquired about the reason for his sadness. Did someone hurt you at the abode of Lord Brahma? Did someone hurt you during journey to and from the abode of Lord Brahma? You are full of spiritual knowledge which destroys all sorrows. I am surprised to see you unhappy. Sage Kumbhaj then said, Oh brave king! I am in anguish because of something that has happened recently. Since you are my true friend I will tell my true story. After the meeting of saints at the abode of Lord Brahma, everybody started leaving. My father Narad told me that you may go wherever you wish. But, come and visit Brahmlok every year. When I left from there, I met sage Durvasa on the way. I paid him my humble obeisance. He was dressed in beautiful clothes and jewelry. He had adorned himself with beautiful gems and garlands. The jewels were as brilliant as the lightning. His body was more luminous than the moon. After seeing his beautiful body, I joked with him and said that you look as beautiful as a woman and I am attracted towards you. After hearing this, sage Durvasa became very angry and cursed me. He said Oh grandson of Brahma! How dare you make fun of me? Have you not heard the name of sage Durvasa? Are you not afraid of me? I punish those who dare to make fun of me. I destroyed the Yadu dynasty because of a practical joke played on me. I am like a fertile ground. People harvest the crop of the seeds they have sown. I am going to punish you for making fun of me. This punishment will make you unhappy. I place a curse upon you that you will become a woman every night. The sage said that after hearing this curse I felt very sad. I know that

a saint's words are never untrue. I left from there and came here to meet you. I am worried about the curse that Durvasa sage has placed upon me. How will I go to the heaven with this female body? I will feel embarrassed in the company of the demigods. This worry is causing me a lot of suffering. I have told you this because you are very dear to me. The king then laughed and said Oh honorable sage! What harm has Durvasa sage done to you? You are Brahman which is separate from the body. You are beyond the three states and beyond the rajas, tamas, and sattva gunas. You are neither a man nor a woman. You are not touched by any activity. Why are you afraid of this curse? The knowledgeable people do not get affected by happiness and distress. When they are in circumstances of attachment/hatred, comfort/discomfort, they know that it is only related to their body and not to their true self. The sage said you are correct. Only body is subject to happiness and distress. Atman is separate from everything. Words cannot fully describe the nature of Atman. Even Vedas have not been able to describe it fully. I am that same silent witness, Atman. I cannot be harmed by anyone. I am neither a man nor a woman. However the reality of body does have its influence. Nobody can change destiny. Even the knowledgeable people have to carry out mundane activities in the world as everyone else. The ignorant and the knowledgeable people perform similar activities in the world. The knowledgeable people remain detached while ignorant people get involved in the worldly affairs. The learned people should accept and respect all circumstances and situations and utilize them for their benefit. After saying this Sage Kumbhaj went and sat in solitude. It was sunset time. The king started contemplating. The sage dressed up

as beautifully as Goddess Lakshmi. She went to the king and said, please look at me. I am a woman now. The king was surprised to see the sage in the form of a woman. He was a bit disturbed momentarily and then became happy. He then said Oh gurudev! Why do you worry? You are not this body. You are absolute truth, absolute consciousness and absolute bliss. I am still your servant. Why are you afraid? After saying this, both of them went to their hut and started resting. They didn't talk to each other the whole night. In the morning Chudala disguised herself as a sage again. She was very happy because the king's doubts and anxiety were fully resolved. When the king awakened, he saw the sage sitting down. Then they bathed and contemplated on Brahman together. The sage continued to become a woman during the night and sage during the day. She went to Mandrachal along with the king. At night time, she told the king that due to her female body she wanted a male companion. She said I do not have any other distress except this desire. A woman does not look beautiful without a husband even if she adorns herself well. This is how Lord Brahma has created the world. The night does not look beautiful without the moon. The river does not look good without water. Intellect is not valuable without spiritual knowledge. The cow is useless without milk. The earth does not blossom without clouds. Mother Sita does not look glorious without Lord Ram. The scriptures cannot be magnificent without words. The mind loses its splendor without discrimination. Ras Lila has no glory without Lord Krishna. The legend cannot be described without devotion. The body is lifeless without consciousness. Law is ineffective without discipline. Similarly Oh king! I lack splendor without a husband. I am

unable to sleep at night due to this anxiety. Oh king! Please listen to this rule of Kshatriya families. If a girl wants someone as her husband, her wish is granted. I wish that you will accept me as your wife even if you do not want to do so. Please do not reject me. You are established in Atman. You are beyond acceptance and rejections. A person with spiritual knowledge is not affected by human activities. When the sage said those words, the king regained his composure. Swami Teon Ram says that I have no desire for acceptance and rejection. I am not attached to anything. There is no happiness and distress within me. I am in a blissful state. I only see Atman in every direction. Please do as you wish. I am happy doing whatever you ask me to do. They kept on talking all night. In the morning the queen dressed up like a sage and started talking to the king. Oh king! Let's get married tonight. After saying this, she got everything necessary for her wedding from the Kalp tree (the wish granting tree). They both bathed and contemplated in the evening. She helped the king get dressed with beautiful clothes and a crown. She decorated a bed with flowers and put sandalwood paste on the king's forehead. Chudala then dressed herself with beautiful clothes and jewelry. She told the king that everything I have belongs to you now. You are my dear husband. My name is Madanica (aroused female). Then she brought everything necessary for the wedding ceremony including incense sticks and sandalwood. They performed Lord Ganapati worship to remove all obstacles for the wedding ceremony. They also worshiped other demigods. The demigods were very pleased with their worship and showered them with blessings. In the night time, they went inside the hut and fell asleep. In

the morning Chudala dressed up like a sage again. The king was not affected by happiness or distress. His mind remained stable. For one month, they continued to live in Mandrachal. Chudala continued to act as Madanica at night and Sage Kumbhaj during the day time. After that they both visited many places together. The king remained equanimous in all circumstances. Chudala then found that the king had established himself in Brahman and he was not affected by loss and gain. She then decided to test him again. Swami Teon Ram says she devised a very difficult test for him. Chudala created a unique drama with her yogic powers. She created a heaven, all demigods and Indra. In this heaven, beautiful celestial nymphs were dancing. The king started wondering who has created this heaven in front of him. He realized that his guru had done all this. He started worshiping his sadguru with various beautiful things. Then he asked demigod Indra, Why have you come here? Why have you created a beautiful heaven here? The demigod Indra said that I am very pleased with your austerities. I have come to visit you from heaven. You are a great ascetic and very unique. I will do everything for you. Please come with me to the heaven. After hearing this, the king said to Lord Indra that I am happy here. After achieving self realization every place seems like heaven to me. The heaven of self realization is even bigger than your heaven. I do not see hell anywhere. I am blissful in this state. After saying that, the king started contemplating on Brahman. After seeing king's determination, Lord Indra departed. After getting up from deep meditation, the king took bath in the Ganges. Sage Kumbhaj dressed up like Madanica. He was happy that the king was not tempted by the comforts of heaven. He is now

established within his Atman. The king is not attracted to comforts of the heaven. He has remained equipoised. I have accomplished my mission. Now I want to subject him to one more ordeal. I want to see if I can provoke him to become angry. Now I should create another drama. She created a beautiful palace that was decorated magnificently. She created a bed and decorated it with beautiful flowers. She also created a man at that time and sat next to him very affectionately. When the king came back after his bath, he could not find Madanica. He was surprised to see a beautiful palace. He arrived at the palace door. He saw that Madanica was talking to another man. He saw them sitting together on the same bed. The king did not say anything. He left from there and sat under the shade of the Kalp tree (wish granting tree) and started meditating. When Madanica noted that the king was absorbed in deep meditation, she quickly made the other man disappear. She came to the king and felt much embarrassed. She confessed to the king and asked for his forgiveness. She told him that I will tell you everything that has happened. When you went for a bath, I was reading the scriptures. A man came and grabbed me. I kept on calling you but you did not come. I scolded him as an ideal woman should. I insulted him very much and now I have come back to you. The king then said, what and who should I complain about? I only see Brahman everywhere. I am fully satisfied with the knowledge of Braham. I am beyond gain and loss. I am equipoised. Although what has happened is not praiseworthy, I will continue to worship you as my sadguru. However you are no longer my wife. Sage Kumbhaj is my sadguru who is always with me. You were born out of a curse. I have nothing to do with you from now



onwards. After hearing this, Chudala thought that I have now fulfilled my mission. The king has found peace within himself. He has eliminated all ignorance. Now I am going to return to my original form of Chudala. I will tell the king the whole story. With these thoughts in her mind, she discarded the form of Madanica. With her yogic powers she regained her original form as Chudala. The king was very surprised to see Chudala. He started reflecting on what was happening around him. After seeing the queen the king asked, when did you come here? What brings you here? I am so surprised to see you. Chudala said that I am your queen. Since you are asking me, I will tell you the true story. Since you left the kingdom, I am the one who has been spending time with you in various forms. I am the one who dressed up like Madanica and I am the one who dressed up like Sage Kumbhaj. Reflect on what has happened and you will understand the whole drama. After hearing this, the king reflected upon everything that had happened and understood the whole drama. He embraced the queen. He was in such a state of bliss that even Shesh Naag (celestial snake with thousand fangs) cannot describe it with his thousand tongues. Tears started streaming from his eyes after seeing Chudala. Tears from his eyes were streaming as rain falls from clouds. He was deeply engrossed in love with Chudala and became speechless for a while. Then he started talking to the queen. Oh Queen! How do I describe your acts of kindness? How should I describe your greatness? There is no one like you in this world. I saw during my contemplation and reflection that you took all these forms for me. You disguised yourself as Sage Kumbhaj and Madanica to awaken me spiritually. You tolerated so much hardship

to help me. You have imparted supreme knowledge to me. With great efforts you have helped me achieve nirvana. You have performed higher deeds than mothers Sita, Lakshmi and Parvati. What can I give you for all you have done for me? Chudala then folded her hands and said humbly to the king that she had not done anything. She said; please do not praise me so much. My lord! I have done everything for my own sake. I have not done any favors to you. I have only performed my duties. When you left the kingdom and came to the forest to perform austerities, I saw you in the state of distress. Therefore I decided to impart the spiritual knowledge to you. I took the form of sage Kumbhaj to remove your ignorance. Now tell me what is your true identity? What do you think this world is? After hearing this king said, you know everything what more can I tell you? However since you have asked me, I will tell you about my own experience. I lived in a state that is beyond time, space and material things. My ignorance has been destroyed. I am able to see my own self. I see that Brahman pervades everything. You are my sadguru. You are the one who gave me spiritual knowledge. He touched her feet and told that I am your servant. The queen folded her hands and said please do not touch my feet. You are my beloved husband. Then the king said, Oh dear! You have made me immensely happy. You have taken me out of the ignorance and ignited the candle of knowledge within me. You have pulled me out of ritualistic practices. All my doubts have been eliminated and I have found peace within myself. You are incomparable. You are the perfect ideal woman. How can I describe your glories? I will happily sacrifice my life for you. After hearing this, the queen said Oh king! Please tell

me where you want to live and what do you want to do next? The king then said that I have no desires left. I have no desire to gain or lose anything. I am established in total bliss. I have completed everything that I wanted to do. I have no false ego and desires remaining. I am situated within myself. I will do whatever you want me to do. I will always obey you. The queen said it is really great that you have been able to achieve this state of bliss.

Oh king! Let us go back to our country. You should go back and rule the kingdom without being attached to it. Establish yourself in the state of liberation and perform all your duties. I also have no desire but I still continue to perform my duties. As long as we have this human body, we have to live in this world. We should perform our duties for the kingdom and remain detached. The king got up and got ready. The queen created the ministers, the army, clothes, jewelry and beautiful music with her yogic powers.

The queen then created an elephant which was decorated with various gems. They both mounted the elephant's back, and reached near the kingdom. The demigods were very pleased on this occasion and showered them with blessings. The messenger informed the ministers and the public about the king's arrival. They welcomed the queen and the king. The army escorted them to the city. All of them worshiped them in many ways. The people of Malav continued to celebrate this event for eight days. The king and queen were enthroned, ruled wisely and performed all their duties.

Swami Teon Ram says that they ruled the kingdom without attachment and fear. They were not affected by attachment and hatred. Both the king and queen

remained united and healthy. They were always fully satisfied. They were as detached from everything as a lotus flower is from the dirty water in a pond. Although, they kept living in the comforts of the palace, they had no desires in their hearts. They kept on performing all their duties without feelings of pride. They kept on ruling for a thousand years and attained liberation while still alive. They then left their bodies and merged into transcendental Bliss.

Guru Vashisht then asked Ram to reflect on this story that he narrated. Just as king Shikhardhwaj remained librated while ruling his kingdom, you should also rule your kingdom with equanimity. Remain established within your Atman and be librated. If you do this, you will not be touched by any kind of mental or physical suffering and attain the most pious state of Self Realization. You will remain in this world as lotus flowers blossom in contaminated waters. You will be immersed in a state of total bliss and attain liberation just like king Shikhardhwaj and queen Chudala.

### **Importance of this story**

Swami Teoon Ram states that recitation of this legend has been completed. Please listen to the significance and benefits of this legend. The listeners will benefit in many ways. A serious student will achieve self realization. If a woman hears this story with great devotion, she will become an ideal woman. By performing the duties of a perfect woman she will attain heaven. The person who listens to this legend and reflects on its meaning and acts on its teaching will

achieve self realization and eliminate the sorrows of repeated birth and death. Swami Teon Ram says Oh great poets! Please forgive me for any flaws or grammatical errors in this narration. Oh readers! Please read and listen to this story as it will benefit you in many ways. This narration was completed by Swami Teon Ram on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> of Jayesthh (July) month, Shyam cycle (dark cycle, lunar calendar) during the Vikram year 1987. Swami Teon Ram states that this completes the narration of the Chudala Shikhardhvaj legend at Amarapur Darbar.

### **Glossary of terms**

Amarapur Darbar – the main ashram of Prem Prakash Panth located in Jaipur, India

Atman - An individual's soul or self

Badrinath - a major pilgrimage site, located in the Garhwal hills on the banks of the Alkananda River.

Bali- the king of the nether world, well known for his philanthropy

Benares - Varanasi - Kashi is considered to be the holiest of all pilgrimage sites in India. It is considered home to Shiva - Vishveshwara. Benares is also known as Kashi because it is believed that Supreme brilliance shines there, and lights the way to salvation (Kas - to shine). Varanasi is located between two rivers Varana and Asi, and hence the name Varanasi.

Brahma - Creator god of the Hindu trinity

Brahman - (ब्रह्मन्, nominative Braham, ब्रह्म) is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond in this Universe)

Chinatmani – wish granting gem

Durvasa - an ancient sage, son of sage Atri and Anasuya. He is considered to be an incarnation of Shiva. He is known for his short temper.

Ganesh, Ganpati- God of wisdom and good fortune

Ganges - It has long been considered a holy river by Hindus and worshiped as the Goddess *Ganga*. गङ्गा, one of the major rivers of the Indian subcontinent, flows east from the Himalayas through the northern India into Bangladesh.

Gaya - Situated on the banks of Falgu River, is a place sanctified by both the Hindu and the Buddhist religions.

Iktara – a single stringed musical instrument

Indra - the leader of the demigods

Jagrut - the wakeful state

Mandrachal – located on the east side of the Himalaya Mountains

Narad – the sage of demigods who renounced his life for the propagation of Knowledge and devotion.

Nirvana - Nirvana is a compound of the prefix ni[r] - (ni, nis, nih) which means "out, away from, without", and the root vâ [na] meaning "weaving", = "freedom from the knot of the distressful thread of karma."

Rahu - According to legend, the demon Rahu drank some of the divine nectar. But before the nectar could pass his throat, Mohini (the female avatar of Vishnu) cut off his head. The head, however, remained immortal. It is believed that this immortal head occasionally swallows the sun or the moon, causing eclipses. Then, the sun or moon passes through the opening at the neck, ending the eclipse. Astronomically, Rahu and Ketu denote the two points of intersection of the paths of the Sun and the Moon as they move on the celestial sphere. Therefore, Rahu and Ketu are respectively called the north and the south lunar nodes. The fact that Eclipses occur when Sun and Moon are at one of these points, supports the above mentioned belief of the swallowing of the Sun.

Ram - the 7th incarnation of Vishnu and the central figure of the Ramayana epic.

Samaveda - Sanskrit: sāmaveda, from ' "melody" + ' "knowledge", is second (in the usual order) of the four Vedas

Samadhi ( "establish, make firm") is a Hindu and Buddhist term that describes a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing subject becomes one with the experienced object, and in which the mind becomes still (one-pointed or concentrated) though

the person remains conscious.

Swapna - he state of dreaming

Vashisht - (Sanskrit: वसिष्ठ), was one of the Seven Great Sages in the seventh, and the Raj guru of the Solar Dynasty.

Veda - the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, in Sanskrit equates to knowledge, from a root meaning know, similar to English wit.

Vikram Year - Vikram era that is believed to have begun with the coronation of King Vikramaditya. The year 1987 in this system corresponds to 1929 AD. According to the Hindu calendar, a lunar year consists of 12 months. A lunar month has two fortnights, and begins with the new moon called "amavasya". The lunar days are called "tithis". During the waxing phases, tithis are called "shukla" or the bright phase, beginning with the full moon night called "purnima". Tithis for the waning phases are called "Krishna or shyam" or the dark phase.

Yoga - cessation of mental fluctuations; communion of the individual soul with the Supreme

Yogi - One who is seeking to or has been able to unite with the Supreme consciousness