



## KING OF BOKHARA SERVES KABIR FOR 12 YEARS

Ibrahim Adham was the king of Bokhara in Persia. He was very fond of the spiritual way of life and always sought the company of saints. However, he lived in such luxury that he slept on a bed that was at all times covered with one foot of flowers. One day, when he was about to lie down, he heard a noise on the roof of the palace above his room. On investigation, he found two men roaming up there.

"What are you doing here?" he asked them sharply.

"Sir, we are camel drivers and are searching for our lost camels," they replied. Amazed at their stupidity, he said to them,

"How do you ever expect to find camels on the roof of a palace?"

"In the same way that you are trying to realize God in your bed of flowers," they replied.

This reply greatly shocked the king and changed his way of life completely. He left his kingdom for India in order to find a Realized Guru. When he reached Kashi, he heard about

Kabir. Going to his house, he asked him to accept him as a disciple.

Kabir said, "There is nothing in common between a king and a common weaver like myself and two such different persons could hardly get on together."

But the king pleaded with him and said, "I have not come to your door as a king but as a beggar. Again I beg of you the boon which I seek." Loi, Kabir's wife, asked him to accept the king and so Kabir acceded to her request.

The king was given the menial work of the house - cleaning the wool and thread, bringing water and firewood and other such jobs. Six years passed and the king did all the work without a murmur. One day, Loi entreated Kabir, saying,

"This king has now been with us for six long years, has been eating what we offered him, and has been doing what we have ordered him to do, without uttering a word of complaint. He appears to be highly deserving of initiation."

Kabir said, "As far as I can see, the king's mind is not yet crystal clear." But Loi again entreated the saint saying that she could not believe that he was unfit for initiation. Kabir replied, "The best way to prove it to yourself is to do what I ask you to do, and thereafter come and tell me what you heard from his mouth. Please go on the top of the roof and, as the king comes into the street, throw the entire sweepings of the house upon his head." Loi did as she was told and as the rubbish fell

on the king's head, he looked up and sighed, "If only this were Bokhara, you would not have dared do this to me."

Loi returned to her husband and told him what the king had said. "Didn't I tell

you that the king was not yet fully deserving of initiation?" said Kabir. Another six years passed during which the king worked just as hard as he had during the first six. One day, Kabir said to his wife, "Now the vessel is completely ready to receive the gift." His wife said, "I do not find any difference between the condition of the king six years ago and now. He has been ever dutiful and willing and has never uttered a word of complaint even on days when there was not enough food to feed him. Kabir said, "If you want to see the difference, you may once again throw the rubbish on his head. So the next day, when the king was passing the house, she did exactly as her husband had told her. The king looked up and said, "May you live long. This mind was still full of ego and self. It had to be treated this way."

Loi then went and told her husband what the king said. He called the king and gazed at him. By the power of Kabir's gaze, the king's mind went up and up and merged into the Supreme Being.

"Your sadhana is complete. Now you had better return to your kingdom," said Kabir. The king went back to his country but not as a king. He lived as a sannyasi by the side of the Tigris River. One day he was sitting by the river stitching his cloth with a small needle and thread. Just then, a man from the royal court who was out hunting, rode by on his horse. He recognized the king and enquired whether he was the same person to which the king replied in the affirmative. The man said,

"Your Majesty, I am your prime minister and have raised your children in your absence. They are all now grown up and well. I request you to return to your throne." On hearing this, the king threw his needle into the river. "Can you get the needle back for me?" asked the king. "It is not possible to do that, but if Your Majesty can wait a little while, I can bring a hundred thousand such needles from the city," said the minister. "No, I am interested only in my own needle," said the king. "Sir, the water is very deep and the current is rapid. It is absolutely impossible for anyone to recover that needle," said the minister.

The king then gazed at the river and lo! a small fish jumped out of the water, placed the needle that was in its mouth at the feet of the king, and jumped back into the river. The king said,

"What would I do with your kingdom when I have now gone into the Court of the Lord who rules over all the universe? Please go and do whatever you like. I am not interested in your kingdom."

Love not this world for a single instant; birth, death, and return consume the body every moment; the lure of the world enslaves body, mind and soul; through Knowledge some enlightened saint obtains release.

