

VIPUL AND VIJAY

The hermit heard their story and offered them the fruits. The compassionate hermit told them to rest and sleep. Next day morning, hermit requested one of his disciples to show them a path out of forest to the village. But before Vipul and Vijan left, they folded their hands before the hermit and asked him to tell them of their future. The hermit declined politely, telling them that it was not wise to know their future and sometime even the future may change. Both friends did not move and at last the hermit told them their future. He looked at Vipul and told him he would become a king in a year time, while Vijan would die at the hands of an assassin at the same time.

Outside the forest, Vipul could not contain his joy, while Vijan was very gloomy. It was only natural. Back in the town, Vipul behaved arrogantly, telling everyone that he would chop off their heads when he would become a king if they misbehaved toward him. Everyone in the village was afraid of him. Meanwhile, Vijan, a teacher, went around his work with great devotion and spent a lot of his time in the prayers. He was humble to all and eventually came out of his sadness. No longer did he fear death, instead, he surrendered himself to God.

Six months later, Vipul asked Vijan to accompany him to select the site of his future palace. Both were surveying a deserted region when Vipul stumbled across a pot full of gold coins. He was joyful and told Vijan that he was going to use this money to buy a crown. At that time, a robber jumped out of a bush and tried to snatch the pot. Vijan came to his friend's rescue and the robber attacked him with a dagger. Vijan was experienced in the defense tactics and drove off the robber although he received a cut on the shoulder. The grateful Vipul offered his friend half the gold, but Vijan politely refused, saying that he was going to die soon and would have no use of the gold. Vipul spent the money whimsically, eating, drinking, and being merry in many ways. A full year passed but Vipul did not become king, nor did Vijan die.

Both friends went to the hermit in search for explanation. The hermit sat in meditation. He said to Vipul, "Your destiny changed because of your stupid actions over the months. The crown that was meant to come to you reduced to a simple pot of gold which you found in the field." He said to Vijan, "Your prayers, humility, and trust in the Divine changed your destiny too. Death by the hands of the assassin was changed to a mere wound by him." The two friends returned silently, thoughtful of actions, results and the meaning of life.