

SORATH - RAI - DIYACH

Once upon a time in King Rai Diyach used to rule in Junagadh. He had one sister who had no child. She prayed to all the saints and holy men for a child. At last one saint blessed her and said, "A son will be born to you, but he is destined to kill your illustrious brother." She was very disappointed. She thought that what use would a son be if he was to cause death of her brother? However, she gave birth to a son. She was reminded of the prophecy by the saint. She steeled her heart, got the child put in basket and set it afloat in the river. The basket, swimming on the river, reached in the Kingdom of King Annirai. One shepherd named Dami used to live on the bank of the river. He and his wife went to river early in the morning to fetch water. There they found this basket which contained a very sweet newly born child. As they had no child of their own their joy knew no bounds and they raised him as their own son. He was named Beejal (water's gift). When he grew up, as per tradition he would go to forest to graze animals of the family. As is wont with such children, he was adapt at playing the musical instrument also.

Once someone hunted a deer and flung its intestines on the branch of a tree. After some time when wind would strike against them melodious notes would emanate from it. This would attract all the birds and animals. Soon Beejal realized that this was due to those intestines which had dried with the passage of time. He removed them and made strings from them for his instrument. On his touching those strings with his bow the music would ensue by which bird and animals all would be attracted. In this way he would catch some deer and bring the same to his home to feed his parents. He became quite famous due to his musical abilities. As he grew up his parents got him married, as per custom.

Near Junagadh, in a principality Annirai used to rule. When Beejal was born at that same time a baby girl was also born to Annirai. He had already sixty daughters and as unwanted child she too was put in a basket and set afloat on the river. The basket reached at the place where Rai Diyach used to rule. One potter by name Ratno came on the banks of the river to collect the clay. He found that basket and brought up that girl as his own. The girl was named Sorath. When girl grew up the fame of her beauty spread far and wide. When Annirai heard about unmatched beauty of Sorath he approached Ratno the potter for her hand in marriage to which he readily agreed. After consulting astrologer on an auspicious moment he carried Sorath in a marriage procession and took a road to kingdom of Annirai. As the procession was moving in Junagadh the ruler came to know about it. On enquiring about it he was told that Ratno the potter was taking this procession to get his daughter married to Annirai. Hearing this he felt insulted and belittled, he asked for the hand of Sorath from Ratno potter who was his subject and forcibly married Sorath.

All this humiliation was more than enough reason for Annirai to attack Junagadh. His attack was repulsed by armies of Rai Diyach. Smarting under humiliation heaped one upon another, he issued a proclamation with the huge plate filled with Jewels and precious stones "Whosoever

would bring the head of Rai Diyach would be entitled to that plate full of Jewels and Gems". Hearing this proclamation, Beejal's wife accepted the plate being confident that her husband, being an unsurpassed and accomplished artist, would be able to get the head of Rai Diyach who was renowned as great lover of music. When Beejal came to know of this he refused to carry out such an ignoble deed and demean his art. He soon realized that he was in an unenviable situation. On the one hand if he was to refuse to do the bidding of Annirai, who was a ruler and all powerful, his entire family would be wiped off. On the other hand he will have to perform the most despicable deed and have blood of such a generous, music lover and true to his word King Rai Diyach. He found no option but to follow the inevitable. Reluctantly he went to Junagadh. At the gate of the Fort he started playing his instrument for full night.

To the palace has come seeker, with his instrument,
Would ask for the boon of the head by his enchanting music. (Shah Latif)

When Rai Diyach heard the musical notes from the strings of the instrument he was quite impressed. From the window of his palace he told Beejal to ask anything. Beejal replied, "I have to reveal a secret to you, allow me to come to you and meet you personally." King sent the palanquin to bring him up to the palace. When Beejal reached in a palace and was face to face with the King he did not utter a word. He simply played his instrument. The king was so pleased with his music and offered him gems, jewels, wealth but Beejal refused everything and continued to play his instrument. The music was so uplifting that King felt transcended into a state where he could have spiritual and soulful experience, he was in a trance and enthralled to be one with the Divine. In this state Beejal told him that;

I have left all the door and sought yours,
Oh Gracious husband of Sorath, help me,
Fill the empty bag of this seeker. (Shah Latif)

King was so enamored of his divine music and instrument that he told him your wish will be granted that is my promise. On this Beejal told him that I would be satisfied only by having your head in my bag. On hearing this strange demand king tried to reason with him. His courtiers and even his wife Sorath pleaded tearfully with him to desist from this demand but Beejal remained unmoved and insisted that king should fulfill his promise. King also kept his word and gave his head to Beejal. Before giving his head he told him:

If I had millions of heads on my shoulder,
I would behead my self millions of times over,
That also be not measure to the ecstasy of your string! (Shah Latif)

Would sacrifice thousands of heads
At your feet,

O seeker! The sacrifice of entire country is
Also not sufficient. (Shah Latif)

When king cut his head there every one at Junagadh was horrified and cried out in anguish.

The flower of Girnar is plucked; curse is heaped upon curse,
Hundreds of women like Sorath are ready to die in raging pyre,
Behead their heads with hair and face well made up,
Offer willingly to shepherd,
Women wail loudly that yesterday night king died! (Shah Latif)

This news spread like fire. As per order of Annirai, Beejal went with the head of Rai Diyach to him. On seeing this spectacle Annirai instead of being happy was horrified and scolded him with the word; "You mean fellow! You did not desist from killing the generosity personified. For you avarice if you could do to Rai Diyach I am afraid what fate awaits me at your hands? I order you to immediately leave my kingdom." Hearing this Beejal was overcome by remorse at his dastardly deed. He rushed back to Junagadh like a man possessed. As Sorath was committing sati at the burning pyre of Rai Diyach and entire Junagadh was in mourning, he also as a repentance flung himself in pyre with the severed head of Rai Diyach and thus he also paid with his life.

After the death of Sorath stillness reigned,
Khangar's pitched their tents,
Music started and strings wailed,
This way they would sing mourning songs,
To make their king happy. (Shah Latif)

This way Rai Diyach, Sorath and Beejal all perished. Beejal's wife who was attracted at the riches of jewels on being widowed left everything and led a life of a beggar. Annirai who had assigned this work to Beejal out of jealousy was distraught at the passing away of such a magnimous king who remained true to his word.

This story tells of generosity of Rai Diyach, the power of Beejal's art , sacrifice of Sorath and avarice of a woman who wanted to possess jewels without consideration of the price to be paid. This also speaks of popularity of Rai Diyach and love of the people of Junagadh that they showered him with.
