

Three Questions

Soul of the Chapter

The King's Mission

Once there was a king who thought that to be a successful ruler he must know the answer of three questions. The questions were

- What is the right time to begin something?
- Which people should he listen to?
- What is the most important thing for him to do?

The Wise Men and their Solutions

The king sent messengers in all directions to find people who could answer these questions. Many wise men came, but their answers were all different. For the first question some of them felt that the king should follow a timetable, while there were others who felt that it is not possible to decide the right time for doing something in advance.

Similarly, for the second question, some wise men said that the king should follow his councillors while others thought it was the priest whom the king should listen to. Then there were those who felt that it was the doctor the king should obey while there were many in favour of soldiers. For the third question some wise men said science should be of highest priority for the king while others said religion.

The Hermit

The king was not satisfied with these answers as they were so different from each other. He didn't give any reward to anyone and thought to seek consultation of a wise hermit who lived in the jungle. The hermit will see only ordinary people so the king dressed up like a normal man, leaving behind his horse and bodyguards and went to the hermit's hut. The hermit was an old man and was busy digging the ground in front of his house. The king told the hermit that he has come in search of answers for his three questions and repeated them.

The hermit didn't respond and continued digging the ground. Sometime passed and the king seeing the hermit to be tired offered his help. The king continued digging the ground till evening. In the evening the king again requested the

hermit to answer his questions, but at that moment someone came running towards the hermit's hut.

The King Sighed a Relief

The king then went to look for the hermit who was sowing seeds in the beds that they have dug the day before. He requested the hermit for the last time to answer his questions. To this the hermit replied that the king has already found the answers. If he would not have pitied hermit's condition the day before then the man would have attacked him on his way and he might have lost his life. So, the most important time was when he was digging the bed and the hermit was the most important man.

The Wounded Man

A man came running towards them with a hand on his wounded stomach. The king cleaned the wound and dressed the wound controlling the flow of blood. The man felt better and asked for some water. Hermit and the king took the man inside the house. The man was lying quiet inside the house and the tired king too fell asleep on the ground.

In the morning when the king opened his eyes he saw the wounded man asking for forgiveness. The man told the king that he had come to take revenge from him because the king had killed his brother and had taken away all his property. He wanted to kill the king while returning from the hermit's place.

But the king's bodyguards found him and wounded him. He would have died if the king would not have helped him. He regretted his thoughts of killing the king and promised to be his faithful servant. The king was pleased to turn his enemy into a friend. He forgave him and returned all his property. When the wounded man arrived, the most important time was when he was caring for him else he would have died of his wounds without the two of them reconciling for their acts. So at that moment, the wounded man was the most important man and nursing him was the most important business. The hermit said to the man that the most important time is now because it is the only time when we have the power to act. The most important person at a particular moment is we ourselves because future is unknown to all of us and there is always an uncertainty about meeting anyone else. The most important job is to do good to others because we have been sent to this world for this noble cause.