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Riwayat- The Three Heads

It is always hard to know who is a wise person. Is it some one who is very learned? Is it someone who is very kind? Is it someone who is very experienced? Perhaps. But there is more to the wise man, as you will see in this riwayat about Syedi Hasan Pir Shahid and the three heads.

Once upon a time in the kingdom of Patan lived a king who received three statues as a gift from the king of Rome. These three statues had identical faces, and came with a message from the Roman king. "Tell us, O King of Patan, if you can, which of these three heads is the most worthy and distinguished?".

The King and his courtiers were mystified- after all, all three heads looked exactly the same! As the court pondered over this question, one nobleman said that he knew of a wise and learned person who would be able to help them solve this unusual puzzle. "Bring him to our court," said the king. And accordingly, Syedi Hasan Pir Shahid was invited to the darbar.

When Syedi Hasan Pir Shahid was told of the poser, he thought a little. Then he requested for a pail of water. When the water was brought to him, he went to the first head and poured some into its ear. All of the water came out from the other ear. "This," he said "is the head of a jahil, an ignorant man. He has no value and thus makes no use of the knowledge he has been given- it goes in through one ear and out of the other."

Moving towards the second head he again poured water into its ear. This time the water gushed out of the mouth. He shook his head. "This one is the face of a bewakuf, a fool. He cannot keep anything to himself!"

When he came to the third head, once again he poured water into the ear and this time the water went down the throat. Pointing to this statue, Syedi Hasan Pir Shahid said, "This is the most worthy, the most distinguished face. It is that of a man who takes in the knowledge he is given, absorbs it and acts upon it."

So, obviously, the wisest man is one who listens to the knowledge given to him, thinks about it, absorbs it and makes it part of his daily behaviour

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