The Art of Living



Shreevalli Rai Martell

Once upon a time, there lived a king who had a strange obsession: he loved to say something in the royal court to hear himself being praised. One day, he brought a large pumpkin to the court and declared, "Look at this pumpkin! It is a magnificent vegetable. It contains all the vitamins, iron, and fiber essential for the human body. Therefore, its seeds must be distributed throughout the kingdom, and everyone must grow them in their backyards."

Immediately, all the ministers, scholars, and sycophants in the court nodded in unison and said, "Yes, Your Majesty! What you have said is a hundred percent true. This is the ultimate truth."

A few days later, the same king brought a basket and a bag full of brinjal (eggplant) seeds to the court and announced, "There is no vegetable as useless as the pumpkin. Therefore, no one in our kingdom should grow it anymore. From today onwards, everyone must grow only brinjals."

Even then, the ministers bowed their heads and shouted, "Yes, Great King! Our Maharaja is speaking the absolute truth!" They cheered loudly in his praise.

Hearing this, the Maharaja grew angry. He questioned the ministers, "Listen, when I said the pumpkin was superior the other day, you all agreed. Today, when I say the pumpkin is like trash and the brinjal is superior, you still agree. What is the meaning of this behavior?"

The ministers stood up respectfully and replied, "Your Majesty, it is neither the pumpkin nor the brinjal that pays our monthly salary. It is you! Therefore, accepting whatever you say as right and true is the secret to survival. Please do not be upset."

Moral of the Story: "In today's world, the height of wisdom is to simply nod along to whatever the master who pays your salary says."