

## CHAPTER FIVE

### IF NOT HIGHER

#### LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Once a Litvak wants to know where the rabbi of Nemeroc went at the time of penitential prayers Every Friday morning. He did not believe that the rabbi went to the heaven as supposed by other people. In order to check the rabbi, he went to the rabbi's room secretly on Thursday evening and passed the night lying laying under his bed. In the morning the rabbi woke up and went to the nearby forest disguising (e]if abn]/) himself as a farmer. The litvak followed him and watch every thing. The Rabbi cut down a tree and carrying the wood on his back, he went to a poor sick woman's house. He sold her the wood on credit. And put it in to the oven. Then he resisted (kf7 ug' {) the first portion of the prayer. As he kindle (afNg') the fire he resisted the second portion more happily. When the fire was ready he resisted the third portion. Seeing all this the litvak become the Rabbi's discipule (r]nf}). And later when people asked him where the Rabbi went at the tine of prayer, he would reply quickly that he went to the heaven certainly although he did not go higher than that.

#### INTERPRETATION

This story might be trying to tell us that to worship humanity is to worship god. So the Rabbi went to the sick woman's house in order to help her instead of going to the praying house. By serving her the Rabbi worship god. This story may also be interpreted to mean that the best way to give advice is to set a good example. Instead of telling people to serve the poor and the helpless, the, Rabbi first served and then he resisted the prayer.

#### CRITIAL THINKING

An orthodox (k/Dk/fjfbL) may ask so many questions about this beautiful story. Can a man go to heaven in his lifetime? Will a Rabbi work at the time of prayer? Should he not go to the praying house? A man feels satisfy if he can help the people in trouble and dissatisfaction is heavenly pleasure.

#### ASSIMILATION

When I read this story I remember devkota's poem "Yatri". In the poem the speaker request the traveler to go to the poor and the suffering people. If their wounds (3fp) are healed, the traveler will be happy. We can't see god on earth but we can see him in the form to man. Therefore those who serve human beings in trouble serve god best.