

The Thirsty Dog

Mahdi told his father when he came home, “Dear father, while Soheila was washing her hands today, she suddenly slipped and fell in the pool. Her mother was not at home, but their neighbor, an old woman, jumped into the pool and brought her out.”

His father said, “Do you think their neighbour did a good thing?”

Mahdi replied, “Yes, she did. But the water was cold, and now she is ill.”

His father said, “My dear son, on such occasion’s one must not worry about the inconvenience one may experience or what the outcome may be. In this case, it seems as though something was drawing the lady towards helping.

People do not always calculate and act according to that which benefits them only; they sometimes put their own life in danger. It often happens that someone going through hardship may have food and is hungry, but nevertheless they give it to a poor person or a hungry animal.

They does not immediately benefit from such an act, but their affinity to good works encourages them to act in this way.”

Mahdi’s father said that once, his own father had listened to one of the great men that had travelled to Qom with some companions. The weather was hot, the time was about noon and they were a few miles from their destination. One of his servants, who was a butler, lagged behind the caravan. He noticed that a dog was following him, exhausted due to heat and thirst.

He thought he could quench the dog’s thirst with his water.

He pitied the dog and decided to give it some water, but he noticed that he had nothing but his master’s cup to feed it with. If he quenched the dog’s thirst with this cup, he would be punished severely, and would be at risk of imprisonment or exile.

Nevertheless, he could not tolerate depriving it of water, so he fed the dog and hurried ahead to catch up

with the caravan. This butler said that since then, his worldly condition had changed for the better, and all his difficulties have been resolved. Everything became easy for him, and it looked like something or someone was helping him. Of course, I had no doubt that it was God's reward for him treating that animal with kindness. Since then, he has progressed from being a butler to attaining a high level in the ministry.

Mahdi's father continued, "If someone acts righteously, it may benefit them in this world too, but we must act righteously only for God's satisfaction and happiness, and must not expect a reward."

One day, a man came across a tired, thirsty dog. He wanted to help the dog, and so tied his turban like a rope to his hat, and lowered the hat into the well. He retrieved some water and fed it to the thirsty dog. The Prophet informed us that all of the man's sins were then forgiven.

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