Bilal's Bedtime Stories

Bilal's Bedtime Stories

A. H. Sheriff, A. S. Alloo

Al-Islam.org

Author(s):

A. H. Sheriff [1]
A. S. Alloo [2]

Publisher(s):

Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya [3]

Bedtime (or anytime!) stories on Bilal, the companion of the Prophet (s), and other events from the lives of the Prophets, Imams and companions.

Get PDF [4] Get EPUB [5] Get MOBI [6]

Bilal the Great African Muslim

Bilal is very lovingly remembered by all Muslims of the world as one of the earliest great African Muslim.

He was born in a village in a mountainous place in Western Arabia. Bilal's father was called Rebah and his mother was known as Hamama1. They had come to Arabia as slaves from Ethiopia. The father and mother were slaves of Ummayya bin Khalaf, a rich man from the tribe of Quraish. Bilal was therefore born in slavery and served as a housekeeper. His master Ummayya bin Khalaf was not a Muslim.

When Bilal was about the age of 40, it was the time when Prophet Muhammad started teaching the new religion of Islam, Bilal was attracted by the teaching of Prophet Muhammad. He accepted the religion of Islam and became a Muslim.

When Ummayya bin Khalaf and his family went to worship idols, Bilal would pray to Allah as taught by Islam.

In the early days of Islam the tribe of Quraish who were strong and many and lived in and around Makkah, disliked Islam.

They also disliked Prophet Muhammad and his new teachings. If any person accepted the new religion, they oppressed and harassed him.

One day Ummayya bin Khalaf came to know of Bilal's secret prayers. He called Bilal and asked,

“Oh Bilal, do you worship and bow down to the God of Muhammad?”

Bilal was not afraid. He replied,

'Yes Master, I do worship Allah, the only God."

The reply angered Ummayya greatly. He began to torture Bilal. He was tied with ropes and made to lie on the burning hot desert sand at mid-noon. He was then asked to forget the God of Islam and worship the 'great' idols known as LAT and UZZA. But Bilal was strong in his new belief. He refused to worship idols and kept crying "AHAD-AHAD", meaning "One God, One God." The tortures continued and were increased. Hot iron rod were stamped on his pained body. Yet Bilal would not yield.

On one hot day Bilal lay on the burning hot sand tied to the ground. A very heavy stone was placed over his chest. Bilal could no longer bear the heat and the load so great. He had also grown weak. In that tied condition even water was denied to him. In the condition he lay and lost his senses. As the day neared its end, it became cooler; he regained his conscious (senses). He found that the heavy stone was no more on his chest. He wondered who had come to free him from pain. His heavy eyes slowly opened only to look at the bright smiling face of Prophet Muhammad.

Prophet Muhammad had heard of and seen the torture of Bilal. It pained him extremely to learn that a true believer should suffer in such a manner. He also felt pity for the poor man He told Abu Bakr to purchase Bilal from Ummayya and set him free. This was done. In similar ways the Prophet had many slaves set free. He insisted that slaves be treated fairly and kindly. By his own conduct he also set such examples.

When Bilal first came before the Holy Prophet, he praised the Holy Prophet in two poetic lines of his native language. The Prophet asked Hassan bin Thabit to translate it in Arabic. He translated it in words which means:

"When in the world, the virtues are described, thou art mentioned as the model of virtues in our midst."

Among the slaves from Africa, Bilal was the first to accept Islam. He had a strong faith in Allah and a great love for the Prophet. He had a pure character. Soon he earned high respect of the Prophet and other great Muslims of the time. The Prophet liked Bilal's sweet voice and made him the first Muazzin – The Caller To The Prayers.

All through his life Bilal remained a close companion of Prophet Muhammad and was with him at every occasion. When the Prophet died he was very saddened. Thereafter all his life he looked grieved and very solemn. He had gone to Madina when the Prophet had migrated. After the death of the Prophet he did not feel happy to stay in Madina. He sadly discontinued giving 'adhan' and migrated to Damascus, Syria. He died there after about eight (or ten) years. His grave is still existing in the famous Muslim graveyard in Damascus. People still go to his grave to pay respect and salute him.

1. In some books the name of his father is given as "Riyah" and of his mother as "Jumana".

Who has seen God?

Who has seen God?

Neither I nor you;

But when I look at sky

And see birds fly;

When I see rivers flow AND trees grow

I know somebody made them so;

With care and love

None but God above.

Who made first seed?

Said the little tree

Me, do you see

I was a little seed

Hidden deep

In the earth away

Not known to the night or day

As I drank dew

Inside I grew

I put the root

Grew up a tiny shoot

In the sun I play

In the wind I sway

I bathe in the rain

And in strength I gain

But as I grow and grow

I must know

Who made my seed

And from it got me freed

Tell me my little kid

Who made the first seed?

Laughed the little kid

And said with all the speed

You little pod!

Don't you know God?

He made me

And you little tree.

Is there a God?

Once upon a time there was a king and he was a wise man too. In his kingdom used to live many other wise men. Now some of these would not agree to believe that God did exist, while others not only agreed but argued to the satisfaction of the King that there was 'God'. The King, being a wise man, arranged for a discussion.

The date and time for discussion was fixed. The king held his court at the appointed time on the appointed date. The non-believers assembled in his presence but the believing wise man did not come at the appointed time

The people waited and waited till they lost their patience and uttered the words: “He has no arguments to advance in support of his conviction, so he will not come. He has lost, we have won.”

At last, the wise man arrived and there was an uproar in the court of the king. The people cried: “Why are you late? You have lost”.

The king asked him to explain the cause of his delay. The believing wise man explained, saying: “I started from my home in time, but when I came by the side of the river which I had to cross before reaching here, I did not find a single boat, by which I could cross and reach the opposite bank”.

Upto this point the disbelieving men heard him patiently and did not say a single word. The believing man then continued:

“I waited and waited till at last I saw some planks of wood coming out of the river”.

And the unbelieving men began to shout “O, It is a lie. It is unbelievable. It is unthinkable”.

Continued the believing wise man: “Plank by plank came out of the river and then I saw the planks were cut to proper size and shape and joined to each other with nails by themselves until they formed a boat. And then I took my seat in it and came over to the other bank. I am late because of the delay in the availability of the boat”.

Amid a roar of the non-believing men, the believing wise man tried to convince them of the cause of the delay; but the opponents would not believe him. Then he said:

“You do not believe what I say. It appears the story of the boat forming by itself is something impossible for you to believe. Now in the name of justice, I ask you. Do you see the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and the skies? Every thing is set according to a plan. But you say it came into existence without a Creator. In other words you deny the existence of God. How far is your statement reasonable and justified?

This silenced them all and there was no answer to this. So the non-believers lost and the believer won.

Creation Of Adam

One day Shamim asked her grandmother, “Tell me Grandma, who made us? How did we come on this earth?”

Grandmother smiled sweetly and said, “Yes, my child, I will tell you. Listen to me carefully and patiently.”

She began:

“Many, many years ago, in fact thousands of years ago. There were water, trees, mountains, birds and animals on this earth. But there was no man or woman.

At this time Allah created one human form. It was man's body. Then Allah made the body alive. He was

called Adam. Having created Adam, Allah commanded all his angels to bow down to it. All the angels obeyed and bowed down. But one Jinn (who used to pray with the angels) and who was called Azazil, did not do so. He stood erect against the order of his Master and Creator.

God asked him:

'Why did you disobey my order and did not bow down as commanded?'

Azazil proudly replied: 'Oh God, You made me from fire. Now you ask me to bow down to a body made from clay and earth. I cannot belittle myself. That is why I will not bow down to Adam.'

The reply displeased Allah. For, all who are created by him are to obey His orders.

Azazil was sent out of heaven onto the earth. And from then on he was called Iblis and Satan.

Iblis before coming onto the earth begged Allah to look at his many years of prayers and obedience.

Allah asked him to ask for reward.

Iblis thought deeply. He felt that it was because of Adam that he was sent out of Heaven. (In fact it was not Adam but the pride which had caused the downfall of Satan). So he thought that Adam was his enemy. He decided to ask for life upto the Day of Resurrection. Allah granted him life upto a certain day. It is the day of the Reappearance of our 12th Imam (a).

Having got such a long life, he vowed to misguide Adam and all his progeny on every possible way.

Hearing his determination, Allah told him that his scheme would be successful for only those men who would be of evil thoughts and deeds. But he would never succeed against good people."

"Oh, how bad of Iblis", cried Shamim, "to think in such an evil way".

"Can Iblis hurt us?", asked Shamim.

"Yes," replied Grandmother. "He can harm us by making bad things appear tempting to us. We must always be careful".

How Adam and Hawwa Came on to the Earth

Shamim begged her Grandmother to answer the second part of her question. How did we come onto this earth?

“Yes my child” said Grandmother, “then today listen to the story of Adam and Hawwa”.

She began: “Adam was created. All angels bowed down to him as commanded by Allah, but Satan did not do so.

But Adam was all alone, and he felt like having a companion. So Hawwa was created for Adam.

Adam and Hawwa were sent to heaven and there they lived happily for some time.

Now, Allah had already declared to the angels that Adam was created to act as Vicegerant of Allah on this earth. But for the time being, Adam and Hawwa were sent to heaven and there they lived happily for some time. They loved each other and they had everything they wanted.

When Allah had sent them into heaven, He had told them clearly not to go near a certain tree. It was the Will of Allah that Adam and Hawwa would remain in heaven so long as they did not eat from that tree.

But there was Satan who was the sworn enemy of Adam. He was now more jealous of Adam, because now Adam had also a companion. And they were both happy in heaven.

Satan was at all times trying to think of some trick to make Adam unhappy.

Once Satan thought of a trick. He went to Hawwa, and told her that the forbidden tree was a tree of life and if she will eat its fruits she will live forever. Hawwa at first refused to believe him. But then Satan took oath in the name of Allah that he was telling truth.

Now Adam and Hawwa had never heard anybody taking wrong oath in the name of Allah, and, therefore, they were deceived.

Thereafter, Hawwa took a fruit from that tree, ate herself, and made Adam eat it.

Anyhow, as they had now eaten from that tree, the time had come to send them on the earth, which was to be their abode. As a result Adam and Hawwa were both at once sent to live on the earth.

Shamim asked, “Grandma, are we the children of Adam and Hawwa”?

“Yes, we are and so are all the human beings, black, white, red and yellows, all”.

“Is that how we came on this earth?” questioned Shamim.

'Yes”, said Grandmother.

Leadership By Example

Man is a living creature. To live he must have food. Without food man cannot live long or make himself stronger.

Once, many, many years ago there was a great Imam living in the city of Madina. Madina was the main city of Arabia. The Imam was a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. His name was Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. He was the most learned and most pious of all people.

One day he learned that there was wheat shortage in Madina. As a result citizens of Madina were overtaken by fear that wheat may no longer be available. Heads of the families flocked to the bazaar and bought as much wheat as their money would allow. Those people who had enough wheat in the house, they took good care of it. Many poor people could not buy food and stock. They did not have that much money. They bought their wheat from the bazaar on a daily basis and in little quantities that their little money would allow. And the price was going up every day.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq called the in-charge of his house, named Muattab and asked him: "How much wheat do we have at present?"

Muattab replied: "Sir, we have enough to last us for several months."

"Take it to the bazaar and offer all for sale to the people", instructed the Imam.

"Oh! son of the Prophet! Wheat is very scarce in Madina. (If we sell our stock, perhaps it would be impossible to purchase later)" advised the care-taker.

"Do as I have said (Sell all our stock to the people).", replied Imam.

Muattab, did as he was told and sold all the wheat. He reported the result to his master.

Thereafter, the Imam gave instructions to buy the requirement of his house on day to day basis like other people of Madina. He intended his house to be no different than the poorer citizens of Madina.

The Imam further told Muattab to use, from then on, half wheat and half barley for the bread of his household. Then he said:

"By the grace of Almighty I have the strength to provide my house with bread made from pure wheat. But I want Allah to see me living economically (just like other people around me)."

The Imam set a noble example of good leadership.

Sayings:

“The best man is he who is of most service to others”.

“By knowledge thou art saved; by ignorance thou art lost”.

“Ignorance is the most hateful enemy”. – Imam Ali (a)

Hazrat Ibrahim and The Old Man

In the Middle East there is a land known as Palestine. Long before, in this land there lived a very great prophet. Prophet is a messenger of Allah. He has been chosen by Allah Himself to teach people religion, good thoughts and good deeds. The name of this great prophet was Hazrat Ibrahim. (He is also known as Abraham in the Bible). He had come to Palestine from Iraq.

Hazrat Ibrahim was very fond of guests. He liked to invite guests to his house. He was good to travellers. He took them to his house and gave them food to eat and bed to sleep. This good quality of his is described in the Qur'an.

Every morning Hazrat Ibrahim stood by the main road near his house and waited for travellers to pass. As soon he saw them he invited them to his house to be his guests. Hazrat Ibrahim liked this good deed very much. It pleased him to make other people happy and comfortable. Thus, Hazrat Ibrahim would everyday bring home one guest at least. If he came across no traveller even for a day he would become unhappy. Without having a guest, he would not touch food himself.

Once it so happened that no traveller passed that way for three days running. This, naturally, upset Hazrat Ibrahim. It made him sad. Without having a guest on his table he would not eat. Each morning Hazrat Ibrahim went to the main road hopefully. He would strain his eyes far away to the horizon. Yet no traveller was to be seen. Each evening he would return to his home disappointed.

Three days passed. One morning an old man appeared on a camel. Hazrat Ibrahim was happy. He invited the old man to his home to eat with him The old man accepted the invitation.

In the house they set to eat. Hazrat Ibrahim recited “Bismillah” before taking the food, but the old man did not say anything. Hazrat Ibrahim asked why he did not remember Allah before taking his meal. Was not Allah our Creator, our Nourisher and our Master? Was it not proper to remember Him before partaking of the food provided by Him?

The old man said that it was not the custom in his religion. Hazrat Ibrahim asked him what his religion was. He said that he was one of those who worship fire.

Hazrat Ibrahim was very much annoyed and turned the old man out.

As soon as the old man went away, the angel Jibrail came to Hazrat Ibrahim, from Allah. Jibrail told Hazrat Ibrahim that Allah had been feeding this unbeliever person for seventy years. Could not Hazrat Ibrahim tolerate him for even one meal! Hazrat Ibrahim felt very sorry for this. He immediately ran after the old man. Finally he reached him and persuaded him to return to his house to have food together. He finally succeeded in getting the old man to his home.

Moral:

1. However good you may be, it does not give you right to judge other persons.

2. You should always seek the forgiveness and pleasure of God.

3. Always entertain and please a guest.

An Example Of Forget and Forgive

Malik al-Ashtar was a great soldier and general. He is very well remembered in the history of Islam. He later became the Governor of Egypt. Malik al-Ashtar served under the great caliph and Imam Ali.

Once at the time when he was commander-in-chief in Kufa, Iraq, he was walking on foot in the streets. His head was shaven. As he was passing on the way a man seeing his shaven head slapped him on head as a joke to make people laugh. He did not know that it was the Commander-in-chief whom he had slapped. The Commander did not even raise his eyes to see who the offender was. He continued to walk as nothing had happened.

People in the street and the shops saw this. They at first were surprised and expected him to get angry. But soon they began to talk of the great general's humbleness.

The loafer came to know of the identity of his victim. He was greatly shaken with fear. He thought the Commander-in-Chief would punish him for the insult.

He immediately went running after Malik al-Ashtar to beg his forgiveness. He went first to Malik al-Ashtar's house but could not find him. After some search he found him sitting in Masjid al-Kufa (the Kufa Mosque) praying. He waited patiently until the General finished his prayers. Then politely he approached the General, bowed his head and humbly begged for the forgiveness.

Malik al-Ashtar lifted the man and said, “But, my sole purpose to come here was to pray to Allah to forgive you.”

There is a lesson to be learnt in this example. Let us keep away from pride and enmity. Let us forget and forgive the wrong done to us. Malik was a follower of Ali.

Imam Ali said:

“Hurry not to punish a man for fault committed.”

“Leave room for pardon between the two acts.”

“The best deeds of a great man are to forgive and forget.”

Noah and the Ugly Dog

You may have read the story of Noah and the Ark. The story you will now read is also about Noah. But, it is long, long before he built the Ark. Perhaps you also know that Noah lived a very long life. Ordinary man's life is not more than 100 years. Noah was no ordinary man. He was a Prophet. Noah lived for two thousand five hundred years.

One day Noah was passing by a lonely road. He saw a dog. The dog was not good to look at. In fact, it was very, very ugly. The dog was so ugly that Noah did not even like to look at it again. Noah felt disgusted at the sight of the ugly dog. He said to himself, “Ya Allah! What an ugly dog”!

Immediately, by the will of Allah, the dog began to speak. The dog said to Noah, “Oh Noah, I am ugly. It is sad, no doubt. But, if you have power, create one even as ugly as myself. Can you?”

Noah was a good man. He was humble and sincere. He realised that he should not have said what he had said. He began to cry with tears of repentance. He cried begging forgiveness of Allah.

Moral:

1. Never hate any creature however bad looking it may be.

To Bring A Fool to His Senses

Hazrat Isa, (known in English as Jesus) was once seen running away from a man. People were surprised to see him running away. Hazrat Isa did not run away from anything or anybody. He was

known for his goodness, humbleness and friendliness.

They asked him: “Isa, why are you running away from that man?”

Hazrat Isa replied: “I am running away from a fool”.

People were still more surprised They knew that Hazrat Isa was a prophet. He had cured the sick. He had even brought the dead to life. So they said: “But Isa, you have power to bring dead to life.”

Hazrat Isa smiled and said: “True, I have brought dead to life. But I find it difficult to bring a fool to his senses.”

Moral:

1. It is necessary to understand who is wise and who is a fool.

2. It is indeed difficult to bring a fool to his senses.

Safari To Makkah

The way is long

But he is young and strong

The road to Makkah

From Africa

Are many miles

But they will be crossed

with smiles they will be crossed

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

with cries

I come O' Master

I come O' Lord

On your chosen road

In the village

Relatives and friends gather of all age

To wish Haji well

To bid him farewell

The sister wept

The mother cried

Oh, My child

You are travelling through Jungles wild

Who will cook for you

Who will look after you

What if you lose way

What if you go astray

Smiles Haji brave

'Mother confidence have'

Said he, 'as I have'

In Allah – My God

My Master and My Lord

He created you and me

He will protect me

Gaze upon him all sad eyes

Safari starts and Haji cries

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

as he walked and walked

To himself he talked

Said the inner voice

There is but one choice

The way to Makkah

(even if it is) Far from Africa

I know not the road

I will carry my load

However painfully slow

I must go

In his voice strong and gay

This he spoke all the way

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

in the scorching sun

Haji goes on and on

On Safari to Makkah

Far from Africa

Clad in two pieces garment

And faith as his armament

Under the starry sky

Answering cry

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

in the sun and shade

Mighty river he made

He crossed the high mountain

With that strength and fountain

In the heart that lies

On and on he goes and cries

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik call

days pass

The stars shine and moon

and night fall

Haji sleeps alone

On sand or stone

He prays in the desert

And says

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

he meets

Jingling bells sweet

Of camel caravan

Under the burning sun

they are his friends

On safari to Makkah

On the desert of Africa

With them he is not shy

They don't ask him why

They all have a common cry

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

Passed full moon five

The Haji is still alive

A little alim But he will go

Even it is slow slow

On his way to Makkah

Far from Africa

Silently he prays

he says

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

On evening about his cooking fire

Death he desire for Journey had him tire

Far from Africa

He goes to sleep

His eyes silently weep

Knows he not Right

under his feet

Lies holy land sweet

In his dream

He screams

Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik

When dawn broke

And muezzin spoke

He saw magnificent sight

Through the golden light

He was in Makkah

Not far from Ka'aba

With silent sighs, With silent sighs

Tears of pleasure flow from his eyes

He does not know what to say

So he bows down and prays

Labbaik Allahumma Labaik

I come O' Master

I come O' Lord

On your chosen road

Ali and The Killer

Ali was a great man. He was brave and wise, kind and good. He was a famous soldier. He fought and won many battles for Islam. He was Caliph of the Muslim world. His rule was just and kind. People loved him because he was always helpful and kind to the poor.

When Ali became Caliph he went to live in Kufa. Kufa is a city in Iraq. Before he had lived in Madina. Madina is a city in Hejaz which is nowadays a part of Saudi Arabia.

One early morning Ali went to Mosque of Kufa for prayers. There were some people in the mosque. One man was sleeping with his face downward. He had a hidden sword under him. His sword was poisoned. The man pretended to be sleeping. His name was Ibn Muljim.

Ali entered the mosque and began his prayers. While praying he bowed his head to Allah. From the back came Ibn Muljim and with his poisoned sword struck a deadly blow on Ali. Ali fell down bleeding. Ibn Muljim ran away.

The other people saw this tragedy; they found Ali wounded and bleeding. He was bandaged.

Meanwhile, people outside the mosque saw Ibn Muljim running with a blood red sword in his hand. They ran after him. After much pursuing they caught him. Ibn Muljim was brought before Ali when Ali was still in the mosque.

Frightened, Ibn Muljim stood before Ali. His breathing was heavy because of the running. He was also thirsty, that Ali could see. Then Ali was taken to his house. There was much crying and weeping in whole Kufa. At this time milk was brought for Ali. He looked at the milk, and said, “Give a glass like this one to Ibn Muljim also, he is very thirsty.”

The milk was given to the culprit. He gratefully drank and quenched his thirst.

Ali died two days after because of the wound given by Ibn Muljim.

Moral:

To have mercy upon even your worst enemy is a great noble act.

Sayings:

“The best truth is keeping promises.”

“Better to be dumb than to lie.” – Ali (a)

Kindness and Forgiveness

More than 1400 years ago in Arabia the people were living very much in fear. They feared their neighbours. They feared other tribes. They even feared their idols. For this was the time before Islam. The Arabs were worshipping idols. In their ignorance they would bury their newly born daughters alive. As Islam began to spread among Arabs such cruel practices stopped. For Islam taught love and peace. It taught kindness and respect.

Prophet Muhammad himself was a very kind and loving person. He treated every one, young and old, with kindness and respect.

Because Prophet Muhammad was spreading the word of God. Because he was changing, for better, the lives of many Arabs and because some Arabs felt that by the teachings of Muhammad their old idols were losing power they disliked Muhammad and planned to kill him. Every time they tried to kill him, they failed. This angered the enemies of Islam even more. So they began to harass him in every way they knew.

One old woman made a habit of throwing rubbish on Prophet Muhammad whenever he passed from her house. Muhammad had to pass that house daily on the way to the mosque. Even when the old woman threw rubbish on him, he would pass silently without showing any anger or annoyance. This was a

regular, daily event.

One day when the Prophet was passing by, the woman was not there to throw the rubbish. He stopped and asked the neighbour about her well–being. The neighbour informed the Prophet that the woman was sick on bed. The Prophet politely asked permission to visit the woman.

When allowed he entered the house, the woman thought that he had come there to take his revenge when she was unable to defend herself because of sickness. But the Prophet assured her that he had come to her, not to take any revenge, but to see her and to look after her needs, as it was the command of Allah that if any one is sick, a Muslim should visit him and should help him if his help is needed

The old woman was greatly moved by this kindness and love of the Prophet. By the example of greatness of Muhammad, she understood that he was truly the Prophet of God and Islam was the true religion. She accepted Islam at once.

On another occasion, Prophet Muhammad was on a journey. One day, at noon, Prophet Muhammad chose the shade of a small tree and rested.

One of the enemies seeing that Muhammad was alone thought it a good time to kill him quickly and quietly. He went towards him with a drawn sword and asked the Prophet:

“Tell me who can help you now?”

“Allah”, replied the Prophet calmly with manifest confidence.

Seeing this calm assurance, the enemy was frightened, and the sword fell away from his hands. With the same calm, the Prophet took that sword in his own hand and asked: “Now, you tell me who is there to save you?”

“No one” replied the enemy.

“No, you are wrong, the same Allah will help you also,” said the generous Prophet and let the enemy go free.

Seeing this noble example the man accepted the Islam then and there.

Respect for Work

Prophet Muhammad and his companions went on a journey. They travelled by camels. After much travelling they got tired. On the way they stopped to rest. They decided to make a small camp and cook

their food. So they put their camels comfortably to rest and gave them grass to eat. After that his companions decided to divide the work among themselves.

One companion said, “I will go and kill the lamb for meat.”

Another companion said, “I will clean the ground around the camp.”

The third companion said, “I will do the cooking.”

Prophet Muhammad said, “I will bring wood for the fire.”

All the companions said with one voice, “No, Sir, we will do that for you.”

The Prophet replied, “I very well know that you all will do that for me. But it is not good for me to sit idle while you work. I am your companion. I must work as much as you do. Allah does not like any one to enjoy any superiority over his companions.”

So saying the Prophet went to gather fire wood.

Moral:

It is not good to sit idle while others work; you should always share the work with your companions.

Whose pleasure shall we seek?

Many, many years ago there lived a man called Luqman. He was not a Prophet. But he was very wise. He was an African who was caught as a slave and sold in another country.

Luqman was so wise and respected that a Surah in the Qur'an also is called by his name (Chapter 31). He gave good advice to his children. His advice is equally good for all the children of the world even today.

Once Luqman said to his son, “Oh son! Do not tie your heart in seeking the pleasure of people. You are not likely to succeed. Do not pay attention to what people say. Instead tell yourself always to seek the pleasure of God.”

Luqman wanted this lesson to be always remembered. Never to be forgotten. He thought of a way. He then told his son to ride a donkey. The son obeyed. The father followed behind on foot. They travelled in this way for some distance. After some distance they came across a group of people. Seeing the son on the donkey, one of them said, “What an impolite and bad boy. The old father is walking on foot. The

young son is comfortably riding on the donkey. This is no manner to show respect to one's father".

Father and son heard this. The son came down from the donkey. Luqman rode on the animal. After sometime they came across another group of people. On seeing the father riding the donkey, the elder of the group said, "Oh you old man! This is not the way to bring up a son. You make him walk in the hot sun, while you sit comfortably on the donkey."

Luqman paid attention to what the people said. He came down from the donkey. Both father and son walked on foot. The donkey walked in front. They went a little further. People seeing them, said, "How foolish you are? You walk behind a donkey. Why don't you ride it?"

Luqman and his son once again accepted what the people said. They both rode the donkey and went further. They came across a river. There was a bridge to be crossed. Some people were sitting there. They saw Luqman and his son riding the donkey. One of them said, "It is very unkind and cruel of you two to ride on the poor donkey. The little animal can hardly take all your burden."

So taking this advice Luqman and his son dismounted from the donkey. They travelled a little distance further. Looking very lovingly Luqman said to his son, "You have heard and seen what the people said. It must have assured you, by now, that whatever you do or whichever way you move, one is not able to please the people of the world." He pointed at the flowing river and added,

"A person can build a wall across the river. It will stop the flow of the water. But it is not possible to shut the mouth of the people from criticism."

Very clearly, similar is the case in our world today. The tongue has no bone. It can speak even without thought. There are as many opinions as there are people in the world. It is very bad to find fault with the other person. Especially when he is doing something good.

A person can feel very hurt when he listens to all the tongues that talk loose. To avoid getting hurt by loose talk, a person can train himself. He can discipline himself to think. By thinking he can know what is wrong and void. When a person is sure that what he is doing will please his Master, the Almighty Allah, then he must never worry what others speak.

How can you have two loves in your heart!

Zainab was the daughter of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib. She was a sister of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein She was present at the battle of Karbala. When her brother Imam Hussein was killed, she was taken prisoner. She was the spokesman for all the prisoners. She gave an excellent speech. Her speech is very famous upto now. So is Zainab famous, for her divine virtues which are a beacon of light for all

muslim women.

Once when Zainab was a very young girl she went to her father Ali and said: “Oh father, do you love me?”

“Certainly, my darling, I do love you”, replied the father.

Again Zainab asked: “Do you also love Allah?”

“Of course, I do love Allah, my child”, replied the father.

Zainab was puzzled with the reply. She asked again:

“Oh father, how it is possible to have two loves in one heart?”

Ali was pleased with the question. He smiled and replied:

“Dear child, I love you because it is Allah's command to love one's children. In loving you I love God.”

Moral:

Love others for the sake of the command of God.

Make Me A Moon Make Me A Sun

Mother give me two rings

I will make two things

Moon I will from one

From another sun

Give me a glass

In it I will grow grass

Basin small I will take

To make a little lake

With much joy

Said little boy

He thought, but

I must be nut

How can I make

Sun, moon, lake

I must be mad

The boy said

Some water he got to drink

And sat aside to think

Who makes sunlight

The moon so bright

Who can dig

Lakes so big

In thought So seriously he sat

Blank looking at

Asked worried mother

What is the matter

Replied little boy

I am thinking of my Creator.

Imam Hussein And The Beggars

Imam Hussein, son of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib, was a famous Imam (Leader) of Islam. He was a grandson of Prophet Muhammad. Hussein's mother was Lady Fatima, daughter of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on them all.)

Hussein had great love for honesty, truth and justice. He was a man of great courage. He proved his courage and love of Allah at Karbala. In Karbala he made the greatest sacrifice. His sacrifice for the sake of Islam at Karbala is world famous. You will learn more about it later on.

Hussein was also very well known for his kindness, charity and love for the poor. He lived in Madina. Madina is a city in Hijaz (now in Saudi Arabia). One day riding a horse, he passed through one of the streets of Madina. On one side of the street some beggars had gathered in a circle. They were eating food that they had begged during the day. The beggars saw Hussein passing. They saluted him. Hussein replied cheerfully. The beggars invited Hussein to join them and eat with them. Hussein came down from his horse and sat with them. He very politely explained to the beggars that he was from the house of Muhammad, the Prophet. Therefore, it was forbidden to him to take anything that has been given in alms (sadqah). Had not alms been forbidden to him he would most willingly have shared their food.

As an alternative, so that they all could sit and eat together, Hussein invited all of them to his house and eat with him there. All the beggars agreed. They went along with Hussein to his house and took food with him.

Moral:

1. One should always behave with kindness and love for others – particularly the poor.

2. Not to hurt but always try to respect the lawful wishes of others is a sign of noble character.

Keeping One's Dignity

Mufazzal Ibn Quais was a good and pious man. He was very poor. He had borrowed some money from friends. He could not repay them. Therefore he always remained worried. He wanted to find a way that he could be free from debts.

Once he went to the great Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. In the presence of the Imam he complained about his creditors and began telling a list of his problems. In the end he said he was poor. He did not know how to overcome poverty. He requested Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq to pray for his welfare.

On hearing the sad story of a worried man the Imam promptly ordered his servant to bring a purse of money. When the servant brought the money it was given to Mufazzal. Imam said that the purse contained four hundred dinars which would help him to solve his problem of poverty.

Mufazzal was ashamed to accept the generosity. He said that he has not come with the aim of seeking

assistance from the Imam, but only for his blessings and prayer.

Imam Ja'far al–Sadiq replied, “Mufazzal, I shall also pray for you. More than that, I will ask you never to speak out your hardship to others. If you do so, the first impression people get of you is that you are not good enough to earn bread for yourself and your family. Thus you lower your position in the eyes of others and also loose your dignity.”

Mufazzal went away from the Imam grateful for the help and good advice.

Saying:

A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise man's tongue is under control of his mind”. – Imam Ali (a)

Try and Try Again and Again

Timur! Amir Timur was a great Mongolian King. He was one of the bravest and greatest warriors. He had conquered nearly half of the world known at that time. His courage was great. He learnt from an ant not to loose courage. He tells his own story.

Once he was fighting a battle. He was defeated. He had to run away to the mountains to save his life. He hid himself in a safe place. Tired and hungry he sat at one place quietly watching little things around him. He noticed an ant working. The ant was carrying a grain of rice much bigger than itself. With this load the ant tried to climb up a wall. The grain fell down. The ant came down and lifted the grain once again. It started to climb the wall. Again the grain fell down and again it went down to try. The ant did not loose courage. It tried again and again. The King tells us that the ant tried thirty three times until it succeeded in taking the grain up the wall. The King learnt a lesson. Man looses courage. He was weak. He must grow strong.

So heartened, he went about collecting his run–away soldiers and officers. He rebuilt his army. He fought yet another battle. He won. Thereafter, one success after another came to him. He had learnt not to loose courage. He continued to battle until he became a great King.

Constant effort is the key to success. Ants know their lesson. Men have to learn. Never loose courage. Islam teaches true values of life. It teaches human beings not to despair. Each one must try harder and achieve greater results in life.

The Qur'an teaches:

“And that there is nothing for man except what he tried,

His efforts shall be seen. And rewarded to fullest extent.”

(Sura An–Najm 53:39–41)

Noble and Good To Be Or Not To Be

To be humble. To be good. To be fair. To be just. To be noble. These are necessary human qualities. Without these man can be reduced to be an animal in the shape of a human being. The desire to be true and fair is the first quality of a noble character. Because of noble character around, men live in peace.

Often men are surrounded by their selfish desires. These desires are blind. At times because of greed they do harm to their fellow–men, if only they would stop and think. He should think: if a similar bad act was done to him, how much would he feel hurt. Before doing any act which is bad or could bring sadness, one must wait and think. There is a law of Nature, There is a law of “tit–for–tat.” There is justice of God.

In the Holy Qur'an God repeatedly calls for high quality of justice and fair play. Human character must be so developed. He says in the Book:

“O ye, who believe

Be always upright for God,

Bear witness with justice

Let not hatred of a people

Make you act unfairly.

Act fairly,

That is nearer to piety –

Fear God,

Truly God knows what you do.”

(Surah Al–Maidah, Verse 8)

Islam demands of a Muslim to be very impartial. Any love or enmity or gain must not come between him

and justice.

Ali (a), the great Caliph of Islam, during all his life was the noblest example of justice and fair–play. He said, “Treat another as you would yourself.”

Before Islam, in the land of Arabia, there was ignorance. The Arabs were divided. One tribe fighting against the other. People always supported their tribe. Whether the tribe was on the right or on the wrong, this they never looked into. If the tribe was oppressed they oppressed. If they were being oppressed they fought back. This was the law of the jungle.

During these early days before Islam, Zubair, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, called a meeting of 5 clans of Makkah. Zubair asked the leader of each tribe to bring an end to the unfair practices. To support the just. To fight the unjust. That justice be first and not tribal loyalty. The clans accepted Zubair's suggestion. But it was afterwards, when Muhammad (s) came as Prophet that the whole Arabia accepted the good words of justice in full. They re–made their character to be humble, fair, just and noble. These qualities made Muslims great people.

Sayings:

“Books are the gardens of the learned”.

“By knowledge thou art saved; by ignorance thou art lost”. – Imam Ali (a)

The Little Doctor

A Little girl

With godly curl

To her mummy said she

Doctor I want to be

Let me see

If doctor I want to be

What must I have

Thought the little brave

A long white coat

And a thing with knot

On a dangling rope

They call a stethoscope

For action

I must have injection

A syringe with a needle

In the middle

A thermometer to measure

Patient's temperature

Some spirit cool

And some cotton–wool

Syrups, ointments and tabs

Scissors, bandages and caps

In my bag all there

Ready to serve without fees

To all I must be good

Their pains I must soothe

I do not care for fee

To poor I will serve free

Pains are bad

And sufferings sad

To the old I will care

Mother's suffering I will share

To the sick

I will be meek

Unhappiness I shall cure

Doctor I will be for sure

In my little heart

There is this restless fire

You may call it my desire

That doctor be I must

That in God I trust

That to serve God

And to please my Lord

I must serve mankind

Without looking behind

Mother dear that day

Will be my happy day

WHEN DOCTOR I WILL BE

To cure for the pleasure of God

To serve mankind for my Lord

All Prayers and No Work

A caravan of Hajis came from Makkah to Madina. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq [a] lived in the city of Madina. The Hajis decided to go to the Imam to pay their respects. They went to him and saluted him. They were most welcomed. The Imam asked them to tell him about their journey.

One of the travellers praised one of companions very much. He said that his companion was very pious.

He was sincere. He did not abuse anybody. He spent all his time praying.

The Imam asked:-

“What is he doing for his living? What work does he do?”

The traveller replied:-

“Sir, he does no work. He only prays.”

Again the Imam asked:

“Who was feeding his camel?”

The traveller replied:

“We used to do that Sir”

The Imam said: “He is not good. He must work. He should not put his burden upon others. All you, those who worked for him, are more pious than him.”

Moral:

One should work to earn his living.

Source URL: https://www.al-islam.org/bilals-bedtime-stories-h-sheriff-s-alloo

Links
[1] https://www.al-islam.org/person/h-sheriff
[2] https://www.al-islam.org/person/s-alloo
[3] https://www.al-islam.org/organization/bilal-muslim-mission-kenya
[4] https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/13903
[5] https://www.al-islam.org/printepub/book/export/html/13903
[6] https://www.al-islam.org/printmobi/book/export/html/13903