



It is Better to Give

A fifteen year old boy lived in Ambejogai, a fairly large town in India. He and his family lived in a great mansion. It was so beautiful that you could nearly call it a palace. His family was one of the richest in India. The boy's name was Faiyaz which means artistic. He was not artistic himself, though. This was just the meaning of his name. He wore beautiful clothes and expensive shoes. He was very spoiled because apart from going to school he did not really have much to do. There were many servants in this family's household who made his bed for him and made sure his room was clean and tidy. Because they were so well off he grew up to be quite selfish and never thought of people who were worse off than him.

Because he did not have enough to do he was always bored. He often wandered around the town. His parents insisted that he was never allowed to go on his own. He always had to be accompanied by one of the servants. That's what some rich people do in India, but Faiyaz did not like this at all. He would rather be left alone for a while. But his parents were very strict and insisted on obedience. So everywhere he went he was accompanied by a servant. That always annoyed him very much for it made him feel like a prisoner.



He lived in such a beautiful house surrounded by all that he needed and even more than that. But do you think he was happy? Do you think he was content or even thankful? No way! He was hardly ever in a happy mood and was often



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grumbling. He did not want to go to town always in the company of one of the servants. He would rather explore the town by himself. That would be much more fun. One day when he was in town he saw a beautiful building. He asked the servant who was with him what type of building that was. The servant told him that it was a Christian church and that he had to keep far away from it.

“Why do I have to keep far away from it?” he asked the servant.

The servant did not really know what to say to that so he simply said:

“Because your parents have told me to keep away from it and to keep you away from it as well”.

“We pray to Buddha and not to the God of the Christians”, he added.

Understandably this made Faiyaz curious and from that moment on he was determined to check it out for himself. He dearly wanted to find that Christian church again. But how could he do that when he always had to have a servant with him. The next day it was Sunday and some of the servants had a day off. So he was hoping he could use that as an opportunity to leave the house without any of the servants noticing it. As he was waiting for his chance he heard a commotion in the kitchen and some of the servants ran to the kitchen to see what was going on. Perhaps something was broken. But Faiyaz did not care what the reason was because this was probably his best chance to escape from the house unnoticed. So he ran towards the back door leading out to the garden. He swiftly ran across the lawn and quickly disappeared out of sight. When it was obvious that he was not being followed he slowed down and tried to find his way to that Christian church, the one he had seen the previous day.



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From a distance he could already see what a magnificent building it was. When he came closer he heard music through the open door. He quietly went inside with his heart beating twice as fast. He found an empty seat somewhere at the back of the church and sat down. The music was absolutely beautiful. All the people were singing and it sounded so good that it made some of the bitterness, which was always in his heart, disappear. It felt so good to be there and it was so peaceful. When the singing was finished a man at the front of the church started reading from a big book and then he talked for a while. He spoke about a man called Jesus, someone he had never heard about. But it sounded as if this Jesus was a very good man. He healed many sick people and even made the lame people walk again and the blind to see. This was truly amazing. Apparently Jesus had also said that it is better to give than to receive. When the man at the front finished talking there was more singing and then it was all over. Too soon, he thought. He had much to think about on his way home. The words he had heard in church had softened his heart somewhat and kind thoughts entered his heart and the bitter feelings disappeared into the background. Fortunately he managed to quietly walk back into the home. Apparently nobody had noticed that he had been away without a servant. So that was good.



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Faiyaz had much to think about and wished he could talk to someone about it. But if he did he would be in trouble for then they would know he had been to town without a servant accompanying him. And worse still, then they would probably also find out that he had been into a Christian church. But the Lord in heaven was watching over him and the Holy Spirit continued to soften his heart. What he had heard in that beautiful church had stirred his interest and had awakened a desire to know more. The next Sunday he managed to escape again without anyone noticing it. He entered the church building and sat on the same seat as the previous time. Again the singing was wonderful and it gave him joy in his heart. The message also was very encouraging. Again he heard about Jesus and the man at the front spoke much about love. He had not experienced much love at home. Even though his parents were rich and he lived in that beautiful house there was no real love in the home.



On his way home he saw a young boy staring into a window. He stood very still and was there for quite a while. So Faiyaz watched him from a distance to see what this boy found so interesting. It looked as if he was looking into the window of a restaurant and he was watching a man who had just been served the meal he had ordered. This boy looked as if he was very hungry and he kept on staring at the man's plate through the open window. The man had only taken one bite when he suddenly noticed the poor hungry boy who looked so longingly at the food on his plate. The man at the table suddenly felt sorry for the hungry boy. He pushed his chair back and walked outside and invited the



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boy to join him at the table. The boy sat down and the man, who was well dressed in a business suit and tie, offered him all the food on the plate. The boy was so hungry that he immediately started eating what the man had offered. He was so hungry that he even forgot to say thank you to the man. After a while when his stomach was quite full he remembered to thank the man. In the meantime Faiyaz stood outside watching from a safe distance how the boy was devouring the food. He must have been so hungry. He thought back to that first time when he visited that Christian church where he heard the words that it is better to give than to receive. He tried to imagine how happy that boy must have been. Later he saw the boy in the street with a big happy smile on his face. After a while he saw the generous man also leave the restaurant. He too was very happy, perhaps because he had made that poor hungry boy so happy.

A few days later Faiyaz escaped again and this time he decided to go for a ride on the train. He did not want to go too far. He just wanted to try and see what it was like for he had never been on a train before.



He found his way to the station, sat down on a bench and waited for the train to arrive. After a few minutes a young boy sat down on the other end of the bench. He was obviously very poor for his clothes were torn and dirty and he did not even have shoes on his feet. The boy obviously wanted to start a conversation with him but the servants had always kept him away from poor boys like that. He felt a bit guilty, though, especially when he thought about what he had heard in church about love and compassion.



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After a while the train arrived. The barefooted boy was very quick and was first to jump on the train. Faiyaz was a bit slower because of his fancy shoes. Then just as he was about to step into the train one of his shoes got caught in a crack on the step of the train and it fell down right in between the platform and the train. What to do now? The train started to move already and then suddenly the poor boy jumped out of the train and when the train had moved a little he was able to pick up the rich boy's shoe and ran after the train. First the train was only moving quite slowly and he managed to catch up with it. Faiyaz became excited and encouraged the poor boy to run faster. But, unfortunately he couldn't. The train started to gather speed and therefore he tried to throw the shoe to the rich boy hoping he would be able to catch it. He nearly caught it but then it slipped from his fingers and it fell on the ground. The poor boy ran as fast as he could, picked up the shoe again and threw it at the rich boy, who was getting quite excited about this as he was leaning out of the train's window. But again he missed it. By that time the train was moving too fast for the poor boy to keep up with the train. Now both boys had one shoe each. Faiyaz thought that one shoe was no use to him now and a beautiful idea entered his mind. So much to the poor boy's surprise Faiyaz quickly threw his other shoe out of the window towards him. The poor boy quickly picked it up and now he had a complete pair of nice shoes. Faiyaz was very happy when he saw the big smile on the poor boy's face. He waved to the boy who waved back with a very thankful expression on his face. Now Faiyaz understood the full meaning of the words *it is better to give than to receive*.



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The next Sunday he went to the Christian church again and there he heard the good news of Jesus again. Now he also understood what the Lord Jesus Christ had done. He had not come into the world to receive but to give. He had given himself. He even gave His life for boys like him. What a blessing! Joy, peace and thankfulness filled his heart.

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