

**\*\*\*\*\* A GIFT \*\*\*\*\***

**Author: Roozi Talab**

**Translator: Pasargadi**

**\*\*\*\*\* IN THE NAME OF GOD \*\*\*\*\***

Reza finished his prayer. His glance fell upon a prize, which had been given to him much ado that same morning at school. His were filled with tears? He smiled and remembered the whole thing.

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One day, two or three months ago at the beginning of cold winter father took him to the market and bought him a pair of boots which he likes very much. Next morning when he wanted to put on the boots his father told him that he could wear them only on rainy and snowy days. His father was right since only a few games of football were enough to tear the boots to pieces. Form then on as soon as the weather became a little cloudy, Reza hoped that it would rain, but the other children did not know the reason behind this.

One day the children were getting ready for group prayer, when the weather suddenly became cloudy.

Reza asked his friend:

“Muhammad, do you think it will rain tomorrow?”

Muhammad answered:

“I hope not, why do you want to know whether it will rain or not?”

Reza said:

You don’t know. I have been waiting for rain for the last two or three weeks.

Muhammad said:

“I don’t understand at all why you are waiting for rain. I don’t like walking in the rain and getting muddy and wet”.

Reza wished to tell him that he had bought new boots but felt shy and said nothing.

When they went to the prayer hall. They took off their shoes. Reza noticed Muhammad's shoes, and turned to him and said:

"Haven't you bought any shoes for winter?"

But before Muhammad could answer, Reza regretted his own question since he remembered that Muhammad's father had died a few years ago. Then both of them finished their prayers and set out for home. Reza walked quietly the whole way thinking. By the time he got home he had reached a decision. He waited the whole afternoon for his father to come home. He said to himself. "I had better tell father when he comes. But, no, I tell him when we come back from the mosque."

Reza said his evening and night prayers at the mosque, and they set out together for home. When they reached home, after resting a while he said to his father:

"Father, I have a request to make."

His father said:

"Well, son, what is do you want?"

Reza explained the situation to his father saying:

"Please allow me to give my boots to Muhammad."

Tears filled his father's eyes and looking at Reza he said:

"But my dear Reza I can't but you another pair of boots."

Reza answered:

"It doesn't matter.

The plastic boots that you bought me last year are good and they still fit me. I can wear them this year too."

His father said:

"I have nothing to say. But how are you going to give him your boots. He may not accept them."

Reza, who had not thought about this at all, said, "I don't know".

Both Reza and his father remained silent, thinking of a solution. Suddenly his father had an idea and said:

"Look, son, Muhammad is a sayed, a descendant of the Holy prophet. (peace be upon him) and this month is the month of Rebi-el-Awal. And in three days time is the birthday anniversary of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

What better day is there than that, to take the boots to him and give them to him as a gift? You should, of course, make sure that no one knows about it. Don't you think it a good idea, Reza?"

His father noticed the light of joy in Reza's eyes that said:

"There's nothing better. Thank you for your advice. I am sure that Muhammad will accept this gift."

On the day of the festival Reza took the boots to Muhammad's house. At first Muhammad would not accept them, but as Reza insisted the finally was willing to accept them as a festival gift.

A few weeks later the teacher of religious in Reza's school said to the children:

"I wish to choose the most beneficent of you all. Write down any good deed that you have and give it to me."

There was much excitement among the boys and each one tried to remember his own good deeds. They had done many good deeds. One of them had written:

"One day I took home an old woman and her daughter who were lost after the Friday prayer. They spend the night at our house, and in the morning after searching around I found their house and took them there."

Another boy had written:

Some time ago a new family had come to our area. They had a son who lames and could not walk properly. After I got to know him, I found him a good boy, so I visited him often, and during these visits I found that he didn't go to school. When I asked him the reason, he said:

"I am afraid of being laughed at by the children."

I felt so sorry for him. I almost wept, and said warmly to him:

"I don't think this will happen, if anyone does so, it only shows his foolishness. You should not leave aside your studies only because others might laugh at you."

I promised to help him with his lessons if he came to school and kept on encouraging him until he agreed to go to school.

At first school officials were not willing to enroll him, but after he brought the medical certificate, they registered his name. He was able to complete the first grade in three months, and the second grade in the rest of the year. He completed the third grade in the summer, and sat on the same bench with me in the fourth grade, he was very intelligent and only needed encouragement. Now it is his turn to help me with my lessons, but he always says:

"Your friendship opened a new dimension in my life."

Other children spent their leisure time talking about their own works, and used the break-time for writing them down and re-writing their works neatly.

To-day when the children stood up in line, the teacher religion who teaches came and said:

"Boys, today I want to introduce to you the most beneficent of you all. Of course you are all fine and always do good deeds."

The children's hearts began to beat hard, waiting to hear the name of the kindest boy. The school had never such silence. There was a big gift on the table; no one paid any attention to the table. Each of them was hoping to hear his name mentioned by the teacher, not for the sake of the prize of course, but for the worth that the most beneficent pupil got.

At last the teacher said Reza's name, but Reza could not believe it, for, he had not handed a written account to the teacher. He had not thought his deed was worth mentioning. The teacher called his name again.

The boys around him said:

“Reza, the teacher is calling you. Hurry up, he is speaking to you.”

“Reza said in surprise:

“But, sir I...”

Reza stepped forward with wonder and joy, and the boys sang out the song about God’s greatness.

Reza walked as though he was a victorious army commander. He was indeed a true winner. When Reza got near the teacher, he said:

“Boys! Reza has done a very fine deed and had given the new boots his father had bought him to one of his friends. I won’t mention his name, though this deed of Reza has been a fine and worthy act, his even finer act has been to say nothing about it to any one. I heard about it from the very brother who had received the boots. Boys! Let us now sing out together the hymn about God’s greatness once more.”

Then the teacher offered the prize to Reza. Reza was so happy that he could say nothing. He only looked at Muhammad who was standing in a corner of the courtyard, and both of them smiled.

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Reza came to himself upon hearing his mother’s voice, which said:

“Dinner is getting cold. Haven’t you finished your prayer?”

Reza answered:

“Yes. Mother, I am coming”

When he sat at the table, his mother said:

“You haven’t told us what your prize was for?”

Reza said nothing, but his mother continued:

“Why don’t you open it? Do you know what it is? Reza said:

“I don’t know. But I don’t feel like opening it.”

His little sister, swallowing her food said:

“Please open it, and let us see what is in this big parcel.”

From the other side of the table his brother got up and said:

“She is right. Open it quickly.”

At last Reza said:

“Let us have dinner, and then the three of us will go and open it.”

**THE END**