

Many, many years ago on a spot where the city of Jerusalem now stands, there lived two brothers. Both were farmers. One lived with his wife and children on one side of the hill, and the other was unmarried and lived in a little hut on the other side of the hill.

One year the brothers had a particularly good harvest. The married brother stood on his side of the hill looking at his tall sheaves and exclaimed: "How good God is! Why does he bless me with more than my brother? I have a wife and children, but my brother is alone. I am so much better off than he. I do not need all these crops. When my brother is asleep tonight, I shall carry some of my sheaves over the hill to his fields. Tomorrow when he awakens he will never notice what I have done.

While the married brother stood thinking thus, the unmarried brother on the other side of the hill sat in meditation: "God be praised for his loving-kindness! But I wish He had done less for me and more for my brother, for my brother has greater needs than I. I have as much fruit and grain as my brother although my brother must share his harvest with his wife and children. They will share mine too. Tonight, when they are all asleep, I shall place some of my sheaves on my brother's fields. Tomorrow he will never know that he has more or that I have less."

So both brothers waited happily and toward midnight each went to his own fields, loaded his shoulders high with grain, and turned toward the top of the hill. It was exactly midnight when on the summit of the hill the brothers met. Realizing that each had thought only of the other, their hearts overflowed with joy and they warmly embraced one another with tears of happiness in their eyes.

Charity

A lady of high rank went out begging on a miserably cold day. She wore ragged clothes, put a shawl on her head, and carried a basket. She wanted to test the charity of her neighbors. At some houses she was given things of absolutely no value; at others she was spurned with harsh words. Only in one place was she received with kindness, and that was at the cottage of a poor man. Here she was taken into a warm room and fed a warm meal.

The next day all the people the lady had visited were unexpectedly invited to the castle, where they were led by servants to the spacious dining hall. Place cards showed each guest where to sit at the table. On the plate before each person was the same thing that person had given the disguised lady the day before. Some plates were completely empty. Only the poor man was served a heaping plate of appetizing food.

Then the countess entered the dining room and explained to the guests, "Yesterday, to test your charity, I went about the village dressed as a beggar. Today I am serving you the same thing you gave me yesterday."

“Shall we make a new rule of life from tonight: always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary?”

J.M. Barrie
(1860-1937)
The Little White Bird

“To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead.”

Bertrand Russell
(1872-1970)
“Sex and Individual Well-Being”

