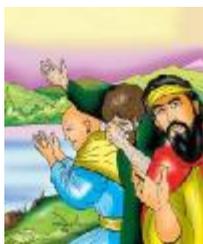


## The Three Lucky Men

A long time ago in a land far away, there lived three friends. One was blind, the other bald and the third so spotty that it spoiled his looks. The bald man was married; a situation he felt was as bad as being bald, because his wife exceeded him twice in weight.



The spotty man was married to a lady who made up in warts for what he lacked in spots. The blind man's wife was ill tempered but lovely. As he couldn't see her, he had to bear the sharpness of her tongue without similarly taking joy in her beauty. At any rate, the three weren't too happy with their situations.

One day, all three were walking through the souq (market). The blind man said, "Oh, how I wish I could see like everyone else. If only I had eyes I could see people, places, birds and trees. How great it would be. I'd give everything for a pair of eyes."

The bald one chimed in, "Why can't I be like the other fellows here. They look so handsome with their heads full of shiny hair and I have to face everyone with just a shiny skin. I've tried everything but to no avail. I'd give anything for a new crop of hair."

The spotty man piped in, "These spots really spoil my looks. If I were cured of them, I'd win the title of Mr. Good-Looking quite easily. I would give anything for a spotless face."

As the men were ruminating upon these thoughts, the angels heard their wishes and took them up to heaven. Allah decided to grant the wishes of the three men in order to test them. An angel appears to each of them in the form of a man.

"As salaam alaikum. I say, Baldy, if Allah were to grant you a wish, what would you wish for, says the angel.

"Can't you see my head, a new crop of hair, of course!" says the bald man. Quoth the angel, "Well, I've come to tell you that Allah has listened to your secret desire and has decided to grant you your wish. When you wake up tomorrow morning you shall have what you've been wishing for." "Well, well. I'll only believe it when I see for myself," thought Baldy.

"And what's more, your Lord has decided to give you a flock of sheep so that you don't have to worry about food and income." The bald man rushes off in anticipation.



The angel then goes to the blind man. "As salaamu alaikum. I've been sent by your Lord to grant you any wish that you may make."

"Wa alaikumssalam. Oh this is wonderful if true. I would dearly love to be able to see." "In that case, let me tell you that your Lord has decided to give you the gift of sight and furthermore, go home and find a flock of sheep. The blind man also rushes home excitedly.

Then the angel goes to the spotty man. "As salaam alaikum, O spotted one. I say, Spotty, if your Lord were to grant you a wish, what would it be?" "Wa alaikumssalam. Well, it would be nice to have a clear complexion without spots so that no one could ridicule me, of course."

"Your wish is granted, and what's more, find a flock of sheep waiting for you at your home. The spotty man also hurries home.

The next morning, the bald man wakes up and looks in the mirror. There is a luxurious growth of hair sprouting on his head and curling all over his cherubic face. He shouts, "Aah! Wife, come quickly and have a look at me!"

The wife puts a pillow over her ears and says, "Have you gone mad or something? I've been looking at you for the last 25 years, what do I want to see you for?" The man shakes her awake, and the wife screams, "Oh Allah! What's happened to you? Have you bought another one of those infernal wigs?"

"No, no. It's real hair. Ouch, don't pull so hard! I prayed to Allah and my wish was granted. What's more, I've been blessed with a flock of sheep." The wife says, "Alhamdulillah!"

Much of the same thing happens in the houses of the other two men. Many years pass by each of the men continues to enjoy their gifts by Allah. Each of them also becomes exceedingly wealthy by trading of sheep. One day, an elderly looking man in tattered clothes is walking around in the neighborhood of the three friends.

He knocks at the door of a big and posh villa. "Excuse me, sir, but could you spare some cash for a hungry traveler?" The erstwhile spotty man looks down on the beggar and says, "Oh, do go away. Why don't you work and earn your money? I don't have time to waste on a tramp like you."

"Hold on Mr. Spotty, aren't you the same man whom Allah had blessed years ago, when you so dearly wished for a spotless face?" Spotty turns pale and then red in his flawless complexion.



"What, I can't remember all that way back! How do you know? Who are you?" "If you are the same spotty man whom Allah had blessed, then may Allah take all His blessings away." The next moment the man's house falls down and his face gets covered in spots again.

The beggar then goes to the house of the bald man. "Please, sir, can you spare some food and drink for a poor and tired traveler?"

"Look, I would love to help you, but you see, I have so many expenses that I don't have anything left. I've got bills and taxes to pay. My wife just returned from a trip to America where she

had liposuction done. Do you know the cost of cosmetic surgery these days? I've got kids to send to Europe for education. I've daughters to marry off, and they weigh more than their mother did in her day. I'm also building a second house, so I hope you understand..." The former bald man trails off at the thunderous look on the vagabond's face.

"Understand? Oh yeah, I sure do! Aren't you the same useless Baldy who had nothing all those years back, and then Allah blessed you with hair, and a flock of sheep? Now that you've become rich you cannot spare a few morsels of food for a hungry traveler, you ungrateful wretch. May Allah take all your blessings away."

In an instant all the wealth of the bald man disappears along with his crowning glory, and is nowhere to be seen.

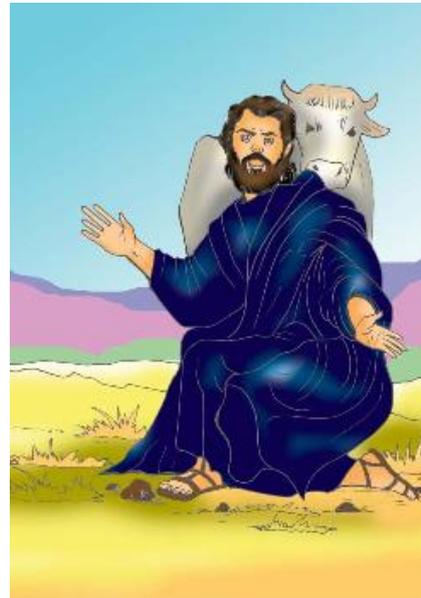
The vagabond then trudges off towards the former blind man's house, wondering what reception he will get there.

"Oh sir, can you spare some money and help a poor traveler in need?" The man courteously replies, "Please, first come in and sit down." Setting a tray of snacks and milk in front of his guest, the man asks, "Now, how can I help you?"

The hobo says, "I'm far from home and have lost my baggage in your city. I need some cash to get back."

"Whatever you desire, please take. For all this wealth before you is only through the blessings of Allah," says the man.

Answers the angel, "I'm glad to tell you that I'm the same person who came to announce the blessings of Allah upon you all those years back. I was sent again to test your gratitude to your Lord. Well done. May Allah increase your blessings manifold and a handsome reward await you in the Hereafter."



Source; Islamweb