

THE RABBI'S TWINS. (Rabbinic Story)

From: Stories, Parables and Fables of life of P. Ribes, s.j.

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Intent of the Story

- ✓ *Acceptance of God's will. Let your will be done!*
- ✓ *Surrendering to God what belongs to God*
- ✓ *Parents, your children belong to God; they are only entrusted to you.*
- ✓ *We have to love persons, yet be detached from them.*

The Story

Rabi Moshed-Leib lived in his little cozy house in a forest clearance not far away from the village Synagogue. It was a peaceful and lovely spot. There, he lived with his loving wife and his twin sons. The boys were, indeed, two jewels; loving, healthy and charming.

One day, in fulfillment of his religious duties, the Rabbi left his home for a long journey. His twin boys, his greatest treasure, stayed behind with their mother. Rabbi's parting words to his wife were, "Darling, look after the boys as my dearest and most precious. Jewels"

Mrs. Moshed-Leib took utmost care of her young sons whom she worshipped. Just on the eve of Rabbi Moshed-Leib's return, while the twins were playing in the forest, a violent storm broke up. Tragically, a lightning struck them dead. The Rabbi's wife was shattered and broken with grief; yet, in her great faith, like the holy Job, she prayed: "Oh God, you gave these jewels to me; now, you have taken them away Let your will be done! You lent them to me for some time to enjoy. Now, you have taken them away from me. They were yours. Lord. I thank you for the days I had them"

However, now her great anxiety was how to break the news of the twins' death to her husband, the Rabbi, soon to return from his journey. She prayed and prayed till she found the way. She kept the lifeless bodies of the twins in her room, drew a coverlet over them and in prayer kept waiting for her husband's arrival.

As expected, her husband arrived next morning. He embraced his wife and with great longing asked for his jewels

"Where are boys" he said." Why are they not here with you?"

She replied: "My darling, in your absence, a great anxiety has overtaken me. I need your advice immediately, even before you see the twins. After you calm my anxiety, which is killing me, we shall meet the boys"

"What's your anxiety, me dear? Tell me" asked the Rabbi,

She said: "Some one in your absence entrusted me .with two precious jewels. They are of such beauty that I fell in love with them. To tell the truth, I have no courage to return them to the owner. Please, help me; tell me what have I to do?"

The Rabbi firmly replied. "Just now, you will have to return them to the owner, no delay! You cannot keep what is not yours!"

"But it is so painful to me" she said:" to part with these two jewels".

“Nothing doing, return them just now to the owner”, the Rabbi replied.

“Are you so sure that I should return them to the owner?” She insisted.

“Of course, I am”, he said.

‘Then, come and I’ll show you those two jewels before we return them to the owner’ and saying this, she took her husband to their room and pulling suddenly the coverlet showed the Rabbi his beloved twins. In sobs and tears she said, “Here are the jewels, my dear, the Master wants them back”

There was a long silence...Tears rolled down the cheeks of the faithful Rabbi and of her wife, then sighing and sobbing he prayed for a long time.... Finally, he said aloud: “Lord, you gave these jewels to us, rather you entrusted them to us for some years to enjoy. Now, you want them back... Yes, Lord, take them back. They have been always yours. They never belonged to us.

POINTS FOR REFLECTIO AND DISCUSSION.

1. How did the story of the Rabbi’s Twins impact you? Share.
2. What is the main lesson to take home from the story?
3. Are we the owners of whatever we “have” even our own children and families? Then whose are they, and what are we?
4. Why does God give us, - rather entrust us - so many things in our lives? How should we use them?
5. Can we sincere love people and yet be true detached from them? How?
6. Can you distinguish between love, attachment, detachment and indifference to all created things even towards our loved ones? Explain.
7. Does a detached attitude from created things imply a non-caring attitude towards them? How?
8. Should faithful believers and true God lovers, withdraw from the world and the joys of human life? Why?
9. Can we truly love things? What’s the difference between loving and liking things?
10. What’s the difference between loving and liking people?
11. Should we love people? Will not that love for people detach us from the love we owe to God? Then, how to love people?
12. Can we love people and at the same time love God with an undivided heart? How?
13. Did Jesus love God his father and at the same time loved real people with true affection and personal love? How? Can you, in this connection, remember some incidents in his life? Mention them.
14. Could you share some experiences in your life when you lost a dear one? How did you feel? Or when you lost something to which you were very emotionally attached?
15. Should Parents love their children? Should they be attached to them? To what extent?
16. Explain the sentence: “Parents however much love their children, should never deprive them from their freedom”
17. Can you quote some Bible Texts on how to love God and created things at the same time?

APPENDIX**CHILDREN**

From THE PROPHET of Kahlil Gibrain.

Read, reflect, share, discuss and pray on the Beautiful Text of Kahlil Gibrain,

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, "Speak to us of Children."

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you,

Yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love

But not your thoughts.

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies

But not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,

But seek not to make them like you

For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.