

Bilal's Bedtime Stories

Part 3



ZISHANE FATIMA

Chapter 1

FOREWORD

It seems a long time since the Mission published the first two collections of its Bedtime Stories. We were, therefore, glad when Haji Mohamedtaki N. Rajwani brought to us these nine stories written by his (then unmarried) daughter, Zishaane Fatima. However, what with one snag or the other, further four years have passed before this third collection could be sent to the press, in this year of Al-Ghadir's 14th century.

In the last ten to fifteen years, an appreciable literary taste has developed in the youths of the community. Boys and girls are trying their hands at pen-manship, as is evident from various regular and not-so-regular youths' magazines like the Knowledge, the Scholar, and the Awaited (all from Dar es Salaam) and Al-Qa'im (from Nairobi). We hope that from among them some talented writers will come up to sincerely serve the cause of religion.

Sayid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
Dar es Salaam
5th July, 1990

Chapter 2

SHE LEARNT HER LESSON

For the last few days, mother was getting worried about Shyrose. Shyrose was a beautiful young girl. She was good in many ways. But she was a tell tale. Often in the evening she would be playing with the children of her own age and suddenly she would come into the house screaming "I will never play with you again. You are horrid children." She would go and cry in her mother's lap and her mother would pamper her.

One day her mother wondered. Why is she always crying? Are the kids really horrid? No. It can't be. All of them cannot be bad, she complains about all so something must be wrong with her. I should not pamper her anymore.

The next day when Shyrose had gone out, her mother called in all the girls and boys of the neighbourhood and made them sit. She gave them some sweets and was very nice to them. She wanted to show them that Shyrose's complaints had not affected her. Then she said, "do you like Shyrose? She is your friend, Isn't she?" One of the girls said; "Well we like her, yes, we do." But there was something in her voice which showed that mother wanted to say more, so she said, "Go on, speak up" and the girl said, "It is only that if she wasn't a tell tale, we would have liked her more. The moment we tell her something she runs into the house saying; 'I WILL TELL MY MUM'".

Then Shyrose's mother said softly, "That is why I have called you all. Let us do something to change her. I have got a good plan and I am sure it will work. Here, come closer. Let me tell you". She told them the plan and it was put into action the same afternoon.

All the children were happily playing in the lane when Shyrose came with her red ball in her hands. She was full of energy and wanted all the children to play with her. As she came down, she saw her friend Sarah and shouted, "Sarah! Sarah! Look at my new red ball. Isn't it just super?"

She was shocked to see Sarah turning herself away from Shyrose instead of commenting on the ball.

She went to another of her friends and happily told her, how she got the ball and she found that the friend turned her face away from Shyrose. She felt that they were being horrid to her and that they were jealous because she had a new ball. Clinching her teeth together she said. "Let them be jealous. They can't have my new ball." She went to another girl and she found that the same was the case. One by one, all turned away their faces and the last one said out loudly, "Have you all heard what she had told us yesterday? She said;we are all horrid and she would tell her mum all about us. Let her do It then." And all the children Shouted In a chorus "Tell-Tale, Tell-Tale, Tell-Ta!e," and off ran Shyrose, with a bucketful of tears flowing from her eyes.

She entered the door and saw her mum sitting on the chair with some knitting. Her mother would usually come running to the door when she saw Shyrose crying and would pamper her and make her quiet. But today Shyrose had a different mum. She had no smile on her face. She was sad and ashamed to have a telltale daughter. Shyrose saw that her mother did not welcome her and thought that may be she hadn't heard her coming in, so she screamed louder. Yet, her mother took no notice. Shyrose went over to her mother saying "Mummy! Mummy!" But she was shocked to hear her mother's stern voice, a voice which she rarely used, saying; "Don't disturb me, Shyrose, I am busy." "But mummy, the children always make me cry and they are horrid to me. They wouldn't even listen about my beautiful red ball," .

Her mother said sternly,"Shyrose do you ever try to look at your faults? Would all of them be horrid and bad to you? What do they have against you?" "Mummy they were bad to me. They all turned their backs to me", said Shyrose."Yes, Shyrose," said her mother, now in a softer and kinder tone. "I was talking to them and they told me that they all liked you, and would like you much better, if you weren't a tell tale. You have to admit it. You always come in running and bring up new tales. You call them horrid, when they are not, and so today, they were giving you a lesson by showing you what is horridness in the true sense. Do you understand, my dear?"Shyrose remained silent for a while and then spoke; "Yes, mummy. It is true. They are nice. They love me but I call them by unkind names. Let me go to them and apologize." She ran out, having a beautiful smile on her face. It was a new Shyrose, a happy and kind Shyrose, who would never tell tales again.

Chapter 3

VENOM

Once upon a time there was a boarding school where lived teenaged girls. Some of the girls were from well off families while others were from poor families and had joined the school by getting scholarships. There were among them two girls who were the best of friends. One was called Sarah while the other, Shelina.

Sarah's father was a millionaire and Shelina's an ordinary clerk; yet for them difference in wealth did not matter.

Once Shelina, while talking to one of her friends, was saying "After all, people make friends for some purpose or the other, there is no friendship without any aim. For instance, I have made a strong friendship with Sarah because... ." before she could finish, a third girl called Shahin standing at a hearing distance from them, went away. No one missed her as she was not very near.

Shahin thought for a while, "Well, who was to know that of all the people Shelina would be after something from Sarah?"

She met Sarah just round the corridor and stopped to talk to her. She told her what she had just overhead and in addition, she said, "She must be after your wealth as you are so rich and she has nothing to spare. So beware, Sarah, do not give her too much."

This report destroyed the well built friendship between Sarah and Shelina because Sarah could not bring herself to talk to Shelina. She came to believe that Shelina was a deceitful girl. But Shahin was worried. She had not meant to break the friendship. She just wanted to warn Sarah as Sarah was her friend too.

Shahin's self accusing soul constantly nagged her, and she felt guilty. She tried to shake off her guilty feelings by saying that she had not meant to do it and after all, she had said what she had heard and so it was the plain truth. But then something happened which increased Shahin's guilty feeling.

A girl came into her room. It was the same girl to whom Shelina was talking the other day. She told Shahin how quickly such a well founded friendship had broken. "It was so surprising." She said, "That just before the breakage of friendship, Shelina was telling me that she had made friendship with Sarah for no other purpose but her good moral values. Shelina wanted to improve herself and that is why she had chosen Sarah as her friend. She said that no friendship is without a purpose and this was her purpose. Strangely enough the very next day it had all blown away. I wonder why?"

This talk made Shahin sit up. She had not heard the full conversation, but just jumped at conclusions. She had not only done gheebat (backbiting) but put a tohmat (false allegation) on someone, which was even worse than gheebat. She was worried all day long and could not decide what to do. In the evening she was reciting the Qur'an. She came across the 12th Verse of Sura-e-al-Hujurat which says:

"O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it;and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful." (49:12)

Shahin was deeply worried and felt that the only remedy was to ask for forgiveness from both Sarah and Shelina as Allah would not forgive her unless they did. At first she thought she would do it in the morning. By then she would pluck enough courage. "But," she thought, "What if I die tonight? A man's life is not in his hand and if I died tonight, I would never be forgiven." She immediately went to find the two girls and bringing them together asked for their forgiveness. Both Sarah and Shelina became extremely happy to learn the truth which had restored their friendship, they also promised not to let anyone know what she, Shahin had done. Shahin felt very pleased to see her bad deed put right again.

The next morning she started reciting Sura Hujarat again and she came across the 10th Verse of Sura-eHujarat:

"The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to)Allah that mercy may be had on you." (49:10)

Shahin felt a sense of relief and happiness that she had done a right thing. She made a promise to Allah,never to speak ill of others, be it a fact or a made up story.

Chapter 4

MARY'S GOLDEN RING

Mary was a young girl of about ten years. On her ninth birthday, her mummy and daddy had bought her a beautiful ring made of gold. It had three small rubies set in it. Mary loved it and put it on her finger. How beautiful it looked on her little finger!

Her Mummy said; "Mary, do not put this ring on when going to school. You know it is against the school's rules and regulations to wear any ornaments at school. You can put it on when you go out in the afternoons."

Mary willingly agreed to this and kept the ring in her drawer. Days passed and Mary would always have a look at her ring and be tempted to put it on and go to school but she would quickly put it back in its place.

Now it so happened that once she got carried away and put the ring on and went to school.

At school, the Head mistress announced at the assembly that all the pupils' uniforms would be checked. Mary was frightened. She had the ring on her finger! What should she do? She quickly removed it and put it in her handkerchief, and placed the neatly folded handkerchief in her pocket. Then she completely forgot about it.

During recess she went to have a drink of water. Then she took out her handkerchief and wiped her hands.

Neither she nor her friends noticed the ring falling from the handkerchief. She folded the handkerchief and put it back into her pocket. After sometime, she remembered the ring. She quickly searched for it but it wasn't there. She told her friends and they all looked everywhere for the ring but it was nowhere to be seen.

She was frightened and burst into tears when she came back home. She told her mother all about it and mother said: "Mary, you should have been obedient in the first place. Now let us pray to Allah to give it back to you."

Mary quickly prostrated and weeping, she said, "Oh Allah! O Master of all! O Helper of those who seek assistance! Help me find my ring, O Lord! I promise you, if I find it I will NEVER NEVER disobey my parents."

She lifted her head with total confidence in God.

For a few days she kept looking for it but in vain. A week later, one of her friends came with a ring in her hand. Yes. Mary's ring, and asked her, "Is this yours?" Mary screamed with delight and then asked, "Where did you get it from?" The girl said: "I was sitting in that corner over there, stamping the grass with my foot when suddenly I noticed that there was something glittering and well, It was your ring. I am sure that the Good Lord has answered your prayer." I also feel that Allah has helped her, don't you?

Chapter 5

NEEDED YOUR HELP

"Mummy! Mummy!" cried Sabira as she came jumping down the stairs from her bedroom to the living room.

"Mummy! I have at last saved enough money to buy the doll I had always wanted. You remember, the one I showed you a few days back?"

"The one with curly hair and deep green eyes, with a nice frilly pink dress and smart shoes?" Mummy asked.

"Yes, yes. Mummy, that is the one, can I have it? Isn't It lovely?"

"Yes, you may have It now my dear. When do you want to buy it?" Mummy asked again.

"As soon as possible" was the reply.

"Well, we'll go tomorrow, morning then," Mum said.

"Marvellous thank you, Mummy", cried Sabira.

Sabira could hardly wait for the time they were to go shopping. The day dragged on wearily and so excited was she that she couldn't sleep a wink at night. Early in the morning she get up and at last, it was 10.00.

Time for going out. "Hurray."As they were walking down the street, Sabira saw a picture of a thin and pale boy of about her age. On the top of the picture it was printed in bold letters "HELP THE YOUNG ONES LIVE IN THIS WORLD."

She asked her mother what it was. Her mother stood near the picture and read out to her the description printed in small letters.

It read: This is a boy who has lived in this world for seven years but alas, who knows for how long he will survive. He has a heart disease, and might die of it because he has nobody to help him. Your help will save his life, and not only his life, there are thousands of them all over the world. Give generously and help them live a happy life.

Mother looked down at Sabira and Sabira looked back with a blank look in her eyes. Her mother took Sabira's hand and on they went. They entered the shop and there, ahead of her, in the glass case, Sabira could see her beloved doll. Her green eyes to seemed to gleam and Sabira

stared at it. Above the glass case, there was the picture of that pale boy on the wall. Sabira's looks went from the doll to the picture and back from the picture to the doll.

She went over to the doll. A woman took out the doll and showed it to her. She held the beautiful doll in her hands. Her eyes closed for a while as she held it in her hands, she opened them again and gave the doll back to the assistant, shaking her head. She then went over to the woman standing near the picture of the pale boy. She asked the woman, "Are there many boys and girls who have a right to live but cannot live?"

"Yes, thousands of them", said the kind lady. "Thousands of them. Many of them your age. All they need is generous donation from all and remembrance in your prayers and they will be happy."

Sabira turned to her mother, with tears in her eyes, "Mummy, may I have my purse." Mummy gave it to her and she took out all her savings and gave them to the lady saying. "I do not need the doll as much as the boys and girls need their lives. I shall save up again for the doll."

The lady said: "May God bless you, dear child." Her mother was very pleased with Sabira and she at once took her into her arms and said, "What a nice daughter I have."

Chapter 6

SHABBIR'S BICYCLE

Shabbir longed for a bicycle. Oh, how he wished he had one. He could see all his friends going to school riding bicycle and he had none. He always told his parents to get him one but they wouldn't listen to him and his mother would tell him, "My dear, you are young, you will fall down and hurt yourself. It is not easy for young boys to learn how to ride," but nothing could convince Shabbir.

After sometime his parents decided to buy a bicycle for him. One morning when Shabbir came down for breakfast he found a bicycle in the dining room. He could not help screaming with pleasure. At last, he had wanted for all these days. He was so pleased and happy that he ran towards his father and hugged him.

However, it was a weekday and he had to go to school. The whole day he dreamt about his bicycle and as soon as the bell rang for classes getting over, he grabbed his bag and off he ran towards home.

He hurriedly had his tea and went out into the garden to ride his bicycle.

He looked at it, as he took it out from the shed. It was beautifully painted with a bright green colour. He mounted his bicycle but no sooner was he up then he fell down crash. He hurt his leg. Up he got again.

BANG down he went again. This time he hurt his head and the bicycle landed on him. Ooh! It hurt.

Father heard the crash as he was having his tea and he came out running. He heard Shabbir shouting. "I wish I had never asked for a bicycle." Father gave Shabbir a warm smile and asked him, "what happened?"

"I can't", said Shabbir. Father said: "These are the words that one should never utter except when committing of sins is concerned. Everything in this world is possible and we are told by Imam Ali (a.s.), The Great Leader of Islam, "O people! Put yourself into a thing that you are afraid of or that you find difficult." Riding a bicycle is a small thing but in the future you will have big things to do, so dear, put yourself in

this small thing today and tomorrow you will be able to do big things. Come on. I will hold the bicycle for you and help you learn to ride."

Gradually, Shabbir learnt how to ride and today, at this moment, he is on his way to school with four of his friends, all riding on their bicycles. How he enjoys himself now. He is grateful to his father for giving him a good piece of advise and for all his help In learning how to ride.

MEND IT IN TIME

There was Mummy again in Habiba's room drawing the curtains and shouting: "Habiba! get up. You will belate for school." Habiba as usual, did not feel like getting up. She wanted to sleep a bit more. But her mother would not let her. She came to her bed and dragged off the bed-clothes and blankets and shivering Habiba,had to get up.

She lazed around and was very slow in getting ready for school. She took out her uniform from the wardrobe.

While putting it on, she noticed a hole in the pocket. "O bother! Just when I am getting late I find this hole.Doesn't matter. I will mend it in the afternoon when I come back from school."

The hole was there for a week and she would always say in the morning, "I will mend it in the afternoon." And in the afternoon, she would forget all about it and go to play. This was Habiba's habit. She would not do her work in time. Always it would be "later on." And it would never happen until her mummy would scream her head off. Her mummy had not noticed that there was a hole in the pocket and so Habiba felt she was safe.

One day she came down to the dining table. There was no time for breakfast. She hurriedly drank half a cup of milk, grabbed her school bag and rushed out for school. Her Mummy came running after her. "Habiba,take this money. Use it during breaktime, to have something to eat. You have had nothing for breakfast."

Habiba took the money and without thinking twice, put it into her pocket. Yes. The same pocket which had a hole in it.

She went to school running all the way in order to reach in time and dropped all her money on the way.

She was very hungry and could not concentrate in the class. She was eagerly waiting for it to be 10.00 so that she could get something to eat. The clock ticked away very slowly and minutes seemed like hours.

Finally, it was breaktime, Habiba quickly put her hand in the pocket and well, no money was there. "Where did it go? I am sure, I had put it in here." She put her hand in again and her fingers came out-through the hole. "O God. I wish I had mended the hole in time. Now I will have to remain hungry all morning because of this stupid and silly act of mine. Why did I not stitch it at once. Oh, why?"

Habiba learnt through her bitter experience and made a resolution to do her duties as soon as possible. As for this hole, she promised herself to mend it as soon as she reached home. Would she do it? Let's see.

THE TWO FOR ONE

Jenny woke up in the morning. Her room was warm and bright. It was a nice day. Holidays had begun. She thought of enjoying herself. She got up, drew the beautiful white curtains, made her bed and cleaned up her room. Then she went down to have her breakfast.

The breakfast was delicious. On top of that Jenny got a nice surprise. She opened a new packet of cornflakes and from it she got a glittering silver coin wrapped well in a pink tissue paper. This added to her joy. As she ate the breakfast she thought over how she would use the money. Many thoughts came to her mind. Should she buy some sweets? No. They would get over very quickly. What about the nice pencil-case that she had seen few days back? Or the pink handkerchief with an embroidery work done at the corners? Well. She couldn't decide so she waited to see the things and then she would choose the best.

At 10.00 she dressed up, said goodbye to her Mummy and went out to enjoy herself.

She went to the area where there were many shops. She had a look at many beautiful things and was thinking about what to buy. Just then she saw an old lady crossing the road. This lady was very kind and loved children. Now here she was finding it difficult to cross the road because of the traffic. Quickly Jenny made her way towards the lady and greeted her. Then she took her hand to help her cross the road. They were in the middle of the road when down went Jenny's Silver Coin. She could see it roll away from her and oops! into the gutter it went. All her dreams about buying beautiful things collapsed but she did not show her feelings to the old lady. As soon as they had crossed the road the lady said "Dear Jenny, you are very kind.

Can you be kind enough to accompany me to my house?" Jenny thought the old lady must be feeling ill so she said yes, When they reached home, the lady invited Jenny in. She gave her a glass of cold orangeade, few delicious biscuits and a huge slice of iced cake. Then she

gave her some sweets. When Jenny was ready to leave, the lady said: "Wait for a moment, I am just coming." She went into her room and brought something and put it into Jenny's hand. Jenny was surprised. Guess what it was. **THE GLITTERING SILVER COINS.**

Chapter 9

ARIF DISAPPEARED?

Arif's mother was getting worried. It was 3.00 O'clock in the afternoon. Arif's school closed at 2.00 p.m. So Arif was late one hour. The clock ticked away slowly 3.30,4.00,4.30 yet no Arif. His mother rang up his father and told him that Arif had not come back from school.

Then she put on her hijab and out she went to look for Arif. She went all the way to school but school was closed. She could not think where Arif could be. She returned hoping that by the time she reached home, Arif would be back.

His father took his car and drove around the town to look for Arif but he could not find him anywhere. He came back at 5.30.

His father found his mother with tears in her eyes, really worried about her dear son. His father was worried too. He decided to ring the police to inform them of their missing son.

Nervously he picked up the receiver and no sooner had he dialled 999 then there was a knock on the Door. His father put the receiver back to see who it was and in walked Arif. He was as dirty as a boy could ever be and he looked very tired. "Where in the wide world were you?" Cried father. "Nowhere" said Arif with an unconcerned look in his eyes.

His father looked carefully at Arif and he noticed something bulging from his right pocket. He said: "What is in your pocket? Take it out" "It Is Just... just marbles," stammered Arif.

Now the game was up. His father and mother understood where Arif had been. He had been playing marbles while both his parents were worried and had nearly rung up the Police.

His father said,"Arif. You are a naughty boy. How many times should you be told that you should never go anywhere without asking permission. Your punishment for disobeying us and making us worried is that, for a whole month, at 7.00 in the evening, you should go to bed and no playing games for you for that period of time."

What happened after a month? Well. In that month, Arif changed a lot. He is now a good and obedient boy who never goes anywhere without his parent's permission.

Chapter 10

THE GIRL WHO SULKED

There were many young girls studying in a certain school. Among them was a girl called Seymina. She was a beautiful girl, always smart and prim and the clothes she wore at school were always simple. She did not mix with the girls of her school and was always alone sitting in one corner of the room.

All the girls had noticed this odd behaviour and so they took advantage of it. They started teasing her by standing few feet away from her and shouting, "Sulku Seymina, Sulkey Seymina!" and Seymina would scowland sulk back. Then the girls would form a group and would chatter loudly and laugh at her.

Seymina looked at the girls and oh! how she envied them. How she wished she could be one of them but well! she could not be. Why did Seymina feel as such? This was because she was an orphan and had a poor mother who looked after her. She did not have as much to spend as the girls had and did not have costly dresses to dress herself up in. Because of it she felt as if she was inferior to the other girls and so she never dared to mix with them.

How cruel of the girls to talk about and laugh at her instead of talking kindly to her!

One day one of the girls from the group thought. "Why is Seymina always sulking? There must be something wrong with her. Why should we laugh at her and make fun of her? Why not be friends with her and try to solve her problems? "Let me talk to her," this girl, called Fatima, went over to Seymina and gave her a warm smile, a smile which usually brings about a new friendship. Instead of scowling back Seymina returned a smile. What a charming smile she had. Her eyes twinkled when she smiled and it was simply beautiful.

Fatima sat beside Seymina and talked to her. Gradually, this became the usual process and Fatima and Seymina became the best of friends. Fatima brought Seymina out of her shell and Seymina no longer

scowled. Now Fatima felt it was her duty to talk to the other girls. She went over to the girls and told them calmly and softly that Seymina was an orphan and by not treating her kindly they had committed a great sin

Then she said: "Allah says In His Holy Book. AL-QUR'AN: Do you see him who denies the judgement? He is the one who treats orphan with harshness." Because of making fun of her we have given Seymina an inferior feeling and we have sinned against her." She paused for a while and all the girls had serious looks on their faces. Then one of the girl said: "I think it is our duty to go and seek forgiveness from Seymina and be friends with her." "Yes, it is," said Fatima.

What happened after that, I do not know: But I can see Seymina now, one of the group, laughing and playing with the girls. So I assume, the girls must have been forgiven by her.

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IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION

IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)