

## “I Preferred the Dog to Myself”

*This story is taken from Gems and Jewels, compiled by Abdul-Malik Mujahid.*

‘Abdullah ibn Ja’far (may Allah be pleased with him), who was famous for his generosity, one day passed by a garden. He saw a slave gathering dates in it. He witnessed that the son of the owner came to him with two loaves of bread, after which the slave sat down to eat. A dog approached the slave, wagging its tail. The slave threw one of the two loaves of bread in the direction of the dog; it came in a hurry and ate it, but it continued to wag its tail. And so the slave threw it the second loaf of bread as well, after which he stood and continued his work.

‘Abdullah ibn Ja’far was so amazed at what he saw from the slave that he approached him and asked, “O young man, how much nourishment is provided to you each day?”

He said, “The amount you just witnessed.”

‘Abdullah said, “Then why did you give it all to the dog?”

The young man replied, “Dogs do not live in our land, and so I knew that the only thing that led him here was hunger. That is why I preferred it to myself.”

‘Abdullah asked, “What will you do for yourself today?”

He replied, “I will spend the night in hunger.”

‘Abdullah was impressed by this young man who he felt was even more generous than he was. He went to the slave of the owner, asking to buy him.

“Why do you want to buy him?” the owner asked.



'Abdullah told the owner what he had seen the slave do; he wanted to buy him to set him free. He also wanted to buy the garden and gift it to the young man.

The owner said, "You want to do all of this for him because of that one good deed? Indeed, we see such wonderful deeds from him everyday! I bear witness that he is free for the sake of Allah and that the garden is a gift from me to him!"

