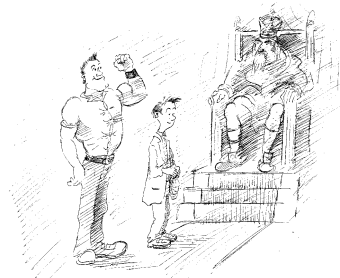


The Parable of the Water Carriers

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Illustrated by Malcolm Lee



Once there was a king who needed workers to carry water from the well to his garden. One day, two men came for the job. One was as big as a bear and had muscles on his muscles. The other was a little runt, thin as a stick.

The king had them both brought to the throne room and looked them over. Much to the surprise of the big man, who thought it should be obvious to the king who was the stronger, the king decided to test them both out. He gave the big man a large, 30-litre bucket and the little man a smaller, 15-litre bucket. He then told them to fill their buckets and meet him in the garden.

The two men went to the well. The small man filled his bucket to the brim. It was very heavy for him.

“Still,” he thought, “the king is known as a great judge of people, so he must think I can carry this.”

So, he staggered off to the garden, being careful not to spill any water.

The big man meanwhile, had waited to see how much his rival would take.

He thought, “His bucket is 15 litres. That means if I take 20 litres, I’ll be bringing more than him.” Accordingly, he filled his own bucket two thirds full and set off.

The two men arrived at the garden. The small man was sweating and panting from his efforts, but the strong one was as fresh as a daisy.



Who do you think the king chose, and why?



The Parable of the Water Carriers. Answer:

The king said to the strong man, “You have the strength to carry 30 litres, but only brought 20. You could have done great things, but didn’t. Go! For you are not worthy of this work.”

Then the king said to the small man, “Bravo! You have trusted my judgement and done your very best. Come and serve me!”

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: “The whole duty of man in this Day is to attain that share of the flood of grace which God poureth forth for him. Let none, therefore, consider the largeness or smallness of the receptacle. The portion of some might lie in the palm of a man’s hand, the portion of others might fill a cup, and of others even a gallon measure.”

(Gleanings V)