

Jalebis

I

Temptation for Jalebis

Munna was a student of fifth class at the Government School, Kambelpur. He was going to school with four rupees in his pocket to pay his fees. But his teacher, Master Ghulam Mohammed, was on leave. So the fees could not be paid that day. On his way back, the sight of Jalebis tempted him. The coins in his pocket began to jingle.

Coins Spoke

Coins do not talk. But that day they actually spoke. One rupiya said, "What are you thinking about?" It drew his attention to the fresh, hot jalebis. It told Munna that they were meant to be eaten. Only those with money in their pocket can eat them. And money is meant to be spent.

Reasons for not following Advice

He didn't follow the coin's advice. It was the money for the fees. How could he spend it on jalebis? He won't show his face to his teacher and God. Besides this, he was a good boy. He got so much to eat at home. So he considered even looking at something in the bazaar a sin. If Master Ghulam Mohammed got angry, he would keep him standing on the bench. Moreover, he belonged to a well-to-do family. So he enjoyed great prestige. Therefore, it was not proper for him to eat jalebis standing in the bazaar.

Behaviour of the Rupiyas

The rupiyas did not like what Munna had said. They began to speak at the same time. They made such a loud noise that the passers by stared at him with surprise. So he held them tight in his fist. They were now silent. The oldest rupiya told him they were trying to tell him something for his own good. He asked Munna if he didn't like eating those jalebies. If he spent the money that day, he would get the scholarship the next day. Then he can pay his fees.

The Temptation

Munna could not overcome his temptation. The rupiyas went on persuading him to eat jalebis. So he rushed out of the house barefoot to eat jalebis. He ran towards the bazaar. He told the halwai to give him a rupee worth of jalebis. Those were not expensive days. One rupee could fetch more than Rs. 20 nowadays. The halwai heaped a pile of jalebis on a newspaper. He took the jalebis and ran into a street. He ate many jalebis.

II

Neighbourhood Boys

The boys from the neighbourhood assembled in the street. Munna began to give jalebis to the children around. When other children heard about it, they also came there. Munna ran to the halwai. He bought one more rupee's worth of Jalebis. He distributed these jalebis among the children. A huge crowd of children gathered round him. Beggars too came there. The children were so happy that they could have done anything for him. Munna bought jalebis for the remaining two rupees. He distributed them also.

Munna's Problem

Munna returned home. Digesting the jalebis was now a problem for him. A burp came with every breath. There was the danger of every burp bringing out a jalebi or two. He had to take his dinner also. Otherwise he would have been asked why he did not want any food. If he had pretended illness, a doctor would have been called. The result was that he lay coiled up like a jalebi during the night. But he was able to digest the jalebis.

Another Problem

Munna faced another problem. He went to school the next day. He found out that he won't get his scholarship that day. It would be paid next month. Master Ghulam Mohammed had announced that he would take the fees during the recess. But when the recess bell rang, Munna left the school. On the way, he prayed to God to arrange four rupees for him. He reached the Kambelpur Railway Station. The elders had given him two warnings. First, he should not cross railway tracks. Second, he must never eat sweets with his fees money.

III

Munna's Absence from School

Munna sat under a tree near the railway tracks. He started thinking about his miserable condition. The matter had looked simple and straightforward. This was because he could pay the fees with the scholarship money. If he had known that he would get the scholarship next month, he would not have bought jalebis. Now he was absent from school for the first time because of the jalebis. He felt like crying. He started thinking about his fees and his teacher's cane. He closed his eyes and began to pray.

His Prayer to God

Munna prayed to God to help him. He said that he was a very good boy. He has

memorized the entire namaaz. He even knows the last ten surats of the Quran by heart. He can recite the entire ayat-al-kursi. He needed money for his school fees. He made a mistake. But he was not alone to eat jalebis. He fed them to a large number of children. He prayed to God to put only four rupees in his bag. There was no shortage of anything in God's treasury. He was asking only for four rupees.

Munna's Disappointment

After the prayer, he offered namaaz. He also recited ten surats, ayat-al-kursi, etc. Then he blew over his bag saying choo. But he was disappointed when he didn't find even four paise in his bag. He felt like crying as loudly as he could. He was very tired. He got up from there and walked to the bazaar. He waited for the school bell to ring. He would go home with other children. He wanted to show that he had come straight from school. The next day also he did the same thing. He again prayed to God to give him four rupees.

Munna's Game with God

Munna suggested the God to play a game. He will go from here to the signal. God should secretly place four rupees under that big rock. He will touch the signal and come back. It will be a great fun if he could find four rupees under the rock. He went to the signal and came back. He said 'bismillah' and lifted the rock. He found a big hairy worm under it. He screamed and ran away. Once again he touched the signal. He was about to leave. He once again looked at the rock. He saw the worm sitting on it and staring at him.

His next day's Programme

While going, he was thinking of doing wazu the next day. He will wear clean clothes and come here. He will keep reading the namaaz till noon. Even then if God does not give four rupees, he will make a deal. The report of his absence from school had reached home. Later on he kept on thinking if there could be any harm if God had sent him four rupees. He realized if God gave everything for asking, man will be no better than birds. He will not learn to do anything. This is because he will get everything without effort.