

(3) Three Sons and a Bundle of Sticks

Once upon a time, an old man lived with his three sons in a village. All his three sons were hard workers. However, they could never agree with each other, they quarreled all the time. The old man tried very hard to keep his sons in unity but he failed. While the villagers were praising them for their hard work and efforts, they also made fun of their fights.

Months passed by and the old man fell sick. He called his sons to his bedside. “My dear sons,” his voice weak but determined, “I request you to set aside your differences and stay united. It is the only way to weather life’s storms.” However, none of them listened to him. He decided to teach them an important lesson so that they would put aside differences and stay united.

The old man gathered his sons once again and told them, “I will give ten sticks to each of you. You will have to break the sticks into two pieces one by one. The one who breaks the sticks faster will be rewarded more.” All the sons agreed. In a minute, they broke the sticks apart into fragments. “Piece of cake!” exclaimed the eldest son. “I am the fastest!” “No, I am!” the others yelled. And again, they started to quarrel with each other.

The old man shook his head and said, “Dear sons, the game is not over. Now I will give you a bundle of sticks. You will have to break the sticks as a bundle, not as separate sticks.” The sons exchanged glances, their competitive spirits ignited by the promise of reward again. They tried with all their strength, and they were not able to do it. The result was that they could not break the bundle. “We cannot do it,” all the sons admitted their failure. The old man nodded his head, and his eyes twinkled with amusement.

The old man said, “Dear sons, now you see! You could easily break a single stick into pieces, but you were not able to break them in a bundle! So, if you stay

united, nobody can harm you. If you quarrel with your brothers, anyone can easily defeat you. That's why I ask all of you to stay united." The three sons finally understood the power of unity. They promised their father that no matter what problem they might face; they would stay together as one.

Their unity was tested when a group of thieves attacked the village. Once again, the three brothers stood together, coming up with a plan to protect their home. When the thieves came, the villagers, led by the three brothers, fought bravely. The thieves were driven away and never came back again.

This victory showed that when people worked together, they could overcome all the problems. And the old man, he passed away peacefully, knowing that his sons had learned the lesson he had taught them.