There were three (men) from the Children of Israel: a leper, a bald-headed, and a blind. Allah wanted to test them, so He sent to them an angel

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) say: ''There were three (men) from the Children of Israel: a leper, a bald-headed, and a blind. Allah wanted to test them, so He sent to them an angel. The angel went to the leper and said: 'Which thing do you like most?' He said: 'A good color, fine skin, and to get rid of what makes me disgusting in the eyes of people.' He wiped over his body, so his illness went away and he was given a good color and fine skin. He (the angel) said: 'Which wealth do you like most?' He said: 'Camels, or cows (the sub-narrator Is'hāq was in doubt).' So he was given a she-camel in an advanced stage of pregnancy, and he (the angel) said: 'May Allah bless it for you.' Then he went to the bald-headed man and said: 'Which thing do you like most?' He said: 'Good hair, and to get rid of what makes me disgusting in the eyes of people.' He wiped over his head, so his condition went away and he was given good hair. Then the angel said: 'Which wealth do you like most?' He said: 'Cows or camels.' So, he was given a pregnant cow and the angel said: 'May Allah bless it for you.' Then he went to the blind man and said: 'Which thing do you like most?' He said: 'That Allah restores to me my eyesight so that I can see people.' He wiped over his eyes, so Allah restored to him his eyesight. Then the angel said: 'Which wealth do you like most?' He said: 'Sheep.' So he was given a pregnant ewe. The three then had offspring from the ones given to them: one had a valley of camels, the second a valley of cows, and the third a valley of sheep. Later, the angel went to the leper in his (past) appearance and said: 'I am a poor person, and I am running out of provision in my journey, so I cannot reach my destination except with the help of Allah and then your favor. I ask you by the One Who gave you good color, fine skin and wealth to give me one camel to carry me in my journey.' He said: 'I have many rights to fulfill.' Thereupon, he (the angel) said: 'It seems to me that I know you. Were you not a leper whom people found disgusting, and a poor man then Allah gave you wealth?' He said: 'I have inherited this wealth from my forefathers.' Thereupon, the angel said: 'If you are lying, may Allah change you to your past condition.' He then went in his (past) appearance to the bald-headed man and said to him the same as what he had said to the leper, and he replied to him in the same way the leper did. So, the angel said: 'If you are lying, may Allah change you to your past condition.' Then he went in his (past) appearance to the blind man and said: 'I am a poor man and a wayfarer. My provisions have run short in my journey, and today there is no way to reach my destination except with the help of Allah and then with your help. So, I ask you by the One Who restored to you your eyesight to give me one sheep by which I should be able to make provisions for the journey.' The man said: 'I was blind and Allah restored to me my eyesight. You may take whatever you like and leave whatever you like. By Allah, I

shall not stand in your way today for what you take in the name of Allah.' Thereupon, the angel said: 'Keep your property. The fact is that the three of you were put to test. Now, Allah is pleased with you and is displeased with your two companions.'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) tells the story of three men from the Children of Israel. They were poor and each had a physical defect: one was a leper with bad skin and abnormal skin color, the second was bald-headed with all or most of the hair on his head gone, and the third was blind. Allah, the Almighty, wanted to test their faith and gratitude so He sent to them an angel in the form of a man. The angel went to the leper first, for his condition was the most loathsome, repulsive, and serious. He asked him which thing he liked most. The leper said: good color and good skin and to be rid of what made people avoid me. He did not only ask for good color but wanted his leprosy to be gone completely, for with this disease one has very rough and wrinkled skin, which makes it uglier and makes him feel more ashamed of it. Then, the angel asked him which wealth he liked most. The leper said: camels or cows. The sub-narrator was uncertain if he had heard it 'camels' or 'cows'. However, it is most probable that it was 'camels,' for the text later mentions that the leper was given a she-camel that was ten-months pregnant. A gift like this was very precious. The angel prayed that Allah bless the she-camel for the leper. The prayer was answered, as shown later in the Hadīth. Then the angel went to the bald man and asked him what thing he liked most. The bald man said that he liked to have good hair and that his baldness be cured, for people detested him because of it. The angel wiped over his head or his whole body (the first is more likely), so the baldness was gone. The man was given good hair. The angel then asked him which wealth he liked most, and he said that it was cows. So, he was given a pregnant cow. The angel prayed that the cow be blessed for him. The prayer was answered, as shown later in the Hadīth. Then the angel went to the blind man and asked him which thing he liked most. The blind man said: it is that Allah would restore to me my eyesight. So, the angel passed his hand over the man's eyes or over his whole body (the first is more likely). So, Allah restored to the man his eyesight. Then the angel asked him which wealth he liked most, and he said that it was sheep. So he was given a ewe with a little lamb, or a pregnant ewe (as per another narration). The three men took care of their animal gifts, which produced many offspring. The first had a valley filled with camels, the second had a valley filled with cows, and the third had a valley filled with sheep. Later on, the angel came to the leper in his past image, wearing worn-out clothes. He told him that he was a poor man who ran out of provision in his travel, and that he could not reach his destination except with the help of Allah, then with the man's favor. The angel was implicitly referring to the man's wealth, as it was apparent that he was rich. He asked him by Allah who gave him a good color, fine skin, and wealth after his past miserable condition of poverty and illness, for a he-camel to ride in his travel. The leper said: I have many debts to settle, and I do not have anything extra to give you, so go ask someone else. The angel said: It seems to me that I know you. Were you not a leper whom people found detestable but Allah granted you recovery, and you were poor but Allah gave you wealth? The man said that he inherited his wealth from his father and grandfather. In other words, he denied his miserable past and claimed that he grew up in good conditions, which is absolute denial of Allah's favors upon Him and ungratefulness to Him, prompted by his miserliness. Thereupon, the angel prayed that if the man was lying that Allah restores him to his former condition. Then the angel went

to the bald man in the image in which people used to detest him for. The bald man responded to the angel in the same way the leper had done. Although the angel went to him looking like him before recovery and wealth, and although he received such recovery and wealth at his hands, he denied knowing him and even boasted that he inherited the wealth from his father. So, in addition to being a liar, he reached an extent of wickedness and foolishness that others have not reached. Therefore, the angel prayed that if the man was lying that Allah restores him to his former condition. Then the angel went to the blind man in the form of a blind man. He told him that he was a poor man and a wayfarer who was on a journey and ran out of provision. He also told him that he could not reach his destination except with the help of Allah then with his help. He asked him by Allah Who restored to him his eyesight to give him one sheep as a provision for his journey. The man, aware of Allah's favor upon him and his transformation from misery to a good life, said: Indeed I was blind and Allah restored my eyesight. So, take from his sheep whatever you wish to take and leave whatever you wish to leave, and I will not ask you to return anything that you take. The angel told him: Keep your property. The three of you were being tested. Allah, the All-Knowing of all matters, was testing you so that you would be rewarded based on what you did, not based on His foreknowledge of your actions and fate. Verily, you have earned Allah's pleasure, while your companions; the leper and the bald man, have incurred His wrath.

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