

Confectioner

HIKAYAAT SERIES

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There was a wise man who had young sons. Some were intelligent and some were stupid and ignorant. One day the brothers looked in some of their father's cabinets, and found one full of candy of various tastes, colors, smells, and shapes. They contemplated the candy and thought about it, and it fell into their minds to say: "I wonder who made these marvels and formed these shapes and created these colors?"

Those who were smart and understanding knew that it was the creation of a wise creator, and those who were dumb found this obscure. Then those who knew it was the work of the wise man thought, "I wonder what he made them from and with what he shaped them."

Those who were even smarter knew that they were made with something else. This was not evident to those who were of less understanding and intelligence. Then those who knew what he made it with thought, "I wonder how he made it and why he formed it thus?"

Those who were more intelligent and more understanding comprehended this and imagined it; were convinced and had no need to ask why and how. This was not evident to him who was less than them in rank, he was not able to understand, and he stopped to think about that.

Then they asked some of their adult brothers about this candy, and the older brothers responded that a confectioner made them. They said, "Who is a confectioner?"

They responded, "A wise craftsman." Some of them understood and believed them, and to some this was obscure because of their stupidity, so they denied this because they had not seen the confectioner before, and had not heard of him.

Then the young brothers asked their older, adult brothers: "I wonder what the confectioner made these marvels from." They responded that he made them from sugar, fat, and starch.

Some of them believed the older brothers because they were successful, calm, supported and guided. Some of them denied it because they had never seen these things and could not know them rationally.

They said, "Show us some of them."

They said, "None of it remains. The maker used it all up."

Some of them were successful and believed them, and some denied and were not guided. Then they asked the older brothers, "How did the confectioner make these?"

They said, "He built a stove, lit a fire, set up the pot, poured in the oil, threw in the sugar, stirred it, and mixed in the starch."

He who was more intelligent imagined the confectioner with his superior intelligence and excellent mind, the ingenious gift of his heart, the purity of the substance of his soul, and the light of his intellect. And some of them were blinded to the news, for they did not have intelligence, and their hearts were not pure, and their intellects had no light.

Then the brothers disagreed among themselves, and were divided into factions arguing over this matter, and the fires of discord and hatred were ignited between them.

Their compassionate father felt sorry for them and had mercy on them when he saw their ordeal and distress. He commanded some of their sensible and insightful brothers to serve as judges

between them, and to execute their verdict as gently as they could. He said to them, "If your brothers asked you and came to you to serve as judges over their dispute, guide them." In response, these judging brothers, if they were asked about the making of the candies, told their brothers that their father made them. The souls of the young brothers calmed down, because their knowledge of their father is closer to their understanding than their understanding of the confectioner.

If they asked them, "What were they made of?" They said, "Nothing you know." Their souls calmed down more than they would to the response that they were made of sugar, fat, and starch, because the boys understood that there were many things they had not seen or known yet.

If they asked them, "How did he make it and how did he shape it?" They said, "As he wished and how he wished." And these answers were more calming for their souls than long speeches.

This is like the disagreement of the scientists over the creation of the world or its eternity, and those who ask them and their brothers who answer. The world with its marvels and the different species of existents and the strange kinds of created things is like the cabinet full of candy. And those who ask about the creation of the world and how it was created and its hyllic matter and its creations, are like those young and weak-minded brothers of little understanding. And those sensible brothers who were asked and responded with a long answer, thus creating disagreement among the brothers, are like the philosophers in their answers about the creation of the world and matter and form, element and nature, and similar strange terms of meanings hard to imagine. And those judging brothers in their answers are like the prophets, may peace be upon them, and their deputies. And that merciful compassionate father is like the creator who sent the prophets, may peace be upon them, so they may serve as judges among his creation in what they disagree on of matters and they respond to them according to what suits their minds and their abilities to understand.