

Charity begins at home

Meaning: Show kindness to your near and dear ones, first. Help them. Ensure their happiness.

Only then set out to wipe the tears from the eyes of others.

Alternative: Whom will he help that does not help his family.

Illustrative Story.

In an old town lived a merchant. He earned huge profits by fair means and foul.

With more profits flowing in, he became more and more greedy. He grumbled when his wife wanted money to run the home.

He criticised her when she prepared sweet dishes; or bought a costly sari on Diwali.

"Money doesn't grow on trees," he snapped at his children when they asked for money to buy books and new dresses.

When his sisters, brothers and cousins came to ask for help, he shooed them away.

As he grew richer, he became more miserly. He dismissed the cook, the maid and the gardener.

"No, who will pay them? All of us must share the work and thus avoid wastage," he told his wife and children.

"What will you do with all this money?" they asked. But he drove them away, screaming, "I will do what I like with my money.

I earn it. I will hoard it. I will become the richest man in the town. Wait and see."

It took him many years to become the richest man in town.

But none had a good word to say about him. The people sneered at him, "Money Bag."

They dubbed him, "King Miser."

How could he redeem his name? He went to an elder in the family and sought advice.

"Shall I open a charitable hospital? Establish a school for the children of the poor? Open a chain of poor homes?" he asked.

"Not a bad idea. In fact, I would normally have commended it.

But it will cost a lot of money," the elder pointed out.

"I am ready to spend some money to win name and fame," the merchant replied.

"How can you even think of helping strangers? Should you not attend to the needs of your near and dear ones,

first? Can't you see your wife and children going around in rags? How famished they look?

Do they get even one square meal every day? Listen. Do your duty to your family, first.

Help your brothers and sisters and other members of the family who are poor.

Opening hospitals for the poor or schools for the children of the poor must come later.

Charity begins at home," saying this, the wiseman sent the merchant away.

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