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### Abstract

The poor man had a wife. These two creatures were the poorest in the town. They under gone great task with struggle before they could cover their private worlds. They built their little hut with palm leaves and other leaves from the plants. Since God created man and woman, and the golden seed plus the golden garden, the poor man started to plant his golden seed. Due to the fertility of the soil, the woman was conceived and gave birth to a female child without helper, just like goat that delievers without approaching midwife. Because of the poverty that made them to stand on the boundary of living and nonliving, people looked them to be like the dirts on the ground.

# The Poor Man and His Vernacular Speaking Goat

RICHARD AYEBEREMO DERIBI FREEMANN

The poor man had a wife. These two creatures were the poorest in the town. They under gone great task with struggle before they could cover their private worlds. They built their little hut with palm leaves and other leaves from the plants. Since God created man and woman, and the golden seed plus the golden garden, the poor man started to plant his golden seed. Due to the fertility of the soil, the woman was conceived and gave birth to a female child without helper, just like goat that delievers without approaching midwife. Because of the poverty that made them to stand on the boundary of living and nonliving, people looked them to be like the dirt on the ground.

In some days, they went to the bush to pick palm nuts under the palm trees and cracked them to prepare food to eat. Some days they went out for begging to feed them selves. When the wife could not go out, the husband would go for begging or picking for feeding. If they saw that the breathing of the fresh air of their private worlds was due, they went to the dust bean to pick some rags to cover them as loin cloth for the period. If they picked two pence or three pence unexpectedly, that day would be December 25th to them, from there you would hear dancing and singing.

The poverty that made them to become useless, made the town's people not to count them among the town's population. Because they were poor all their sisters and brothers did not pay heed to them. 'My good readers, it is clear to every body that the four corners of this gloab receive the rich people and leave the poor, blessed are the poor, for their's is the kingdom of heaven!'

Let us burry these words in our heads:

Take the life as you see it and pray God, because He is the creator. Do not proud of the chair that you are sitting on, if you desend from it to sit down on the ground, you will be ashamed because God is the maker of that very chair. Do not proud of this world because the world is empty. Pinch the ground with your finger-nails when you walk else you will be tumbled and fall, because the ground is slippery. When you move out, look your back before move on or else you miss road, because there are uncountable roads in the world. Do not be proud of your white colour because the colour is as changeable as the clouds. Do not build your castle very high or else the storm will destroy it because the tempest is great and fierce.

The rich man's life is shorter than the poor man's life, that is, he is the victim to the world. Receive the poor man as you receive the rich man or else

you will regret because you do not know of what will happen tomorrow. I think you have agreed with me for the above wise sayings. The story is started again. These happy poor husband and wife were always praying God, 'fear God' they said, for God knew how He situated them. In the whole of the town, only one man loved them. Sometimes this man gave them food by helping them. This man did not take him as a poor man but took him as his best friend.

In one fine morning this poor man went out for picking. This man went to a certain big dust-bin and picked three shillings. He came to his house with singing and dancing. When he reached home, they were overcome with joyfulness. He wanted to go to market with the three shillings so he said to his wife: 'My wife, I want to go to market. If I go, I will buy a shilling worth of rice, a goat costing one shilling, three-pence worth of tomatoes, three-pence worth of pepper, three-pence worth of cooking oil and three-pence worth of salt'. After a short pause he continued: 'You will be the cook, today, I will call my friend to come and eat better food in my house. My wife, I think today is Christmas?'

The wife said: 'My husband, today is not Christmas day. We are in April, and there is still time, after eight months before Christmas'. The husband said: 'When I go to the market and buy the goat, I will kill it here and all will be cooked because my friend will come and eat.' 'My wife, if it turns to Christmas to us, will it be bad', he asked with happiness and confidence. The wife said: 'You can make any day as your christmas day, nothing is so bad, go to the market and buy the goat'. He then said: 'So my wife, let me go to the market and buy the goat, bye-bye'.

Immediately he left the house, he started to proclaim: 'I want to buy a shilling goat, all the goat sellers, bring your goats, I need a goat costing one shilling. Today is Christmas day, so I am going to market to buy a goat, if I can see any goat here to buy I would have been more grateful.' When the town's people heard his announcement, they started to laugh at him and said: 'Poverty has spoiled his head, he is mad, this type of poverty is bad, who will sell him a goat at the rate of a shilling, he is thinking that we are as poor as he is, don't mind him'. 'My friend,' they said, 'close your mouth, when you reach the market, you can then announce it with your foolishness. We never heard of a person selling a goat for only a shilling, go to the market and buy your shilling goat. This type of poverty is bad, you do not know what you are doing.' In spite of all these mockery from his town's people, he went to the market to buy his goat.

When he reached the market, he saw a goat seller fastening his goats with ropes to a stick. The poor man asked him of the prices: 'My friend goat seller, what is each one of your goats costs?' 'The cost of each of my goats are: the smallest one is two pounds, the biggest one is five pounds and the average ones are four pounds each' said the goat seller.

The poor man said: 'My friend, your goats are too costly, as are saying, when you finish selling them, how much will be the profit? Are you seeking to become

the richest man in this world in one day? Don't you know that little by little makes a mighty sea? Do you think that the rich people become rich in one day?' 'They picked little by little before they become rich,' he concluded. To this the goat seller replied: 'Do you know what you are talking of? Do you mean to say that I should sell you a goat at the rate of a shilling? I don't think that you are normal, go away from my sight, do not spoil my market'.

The poor man said: 'I don't come to spoil your market, when you finish selling them, you will become a millionaire. Do not be afraid, I will go away, bye-bye'. The poor man went away from the place and started to announce his shilling goat and said: 'Today is my Christmas day, so I want to buy a goat at a shilling, all the goat sellers in this market should listen to me'. By then people were laughing at him and said: 'Where does this man come from, we never saw such type of person before'. Some people said that he was a mad man. Others said that the man was not mad but a fool. They said: 'who will sell him a goat at a shilling'. His announcement caused a great laughter.

As he was doing so many people were parking their cargoes because the night was at hand. At last, he saw a certain goat seller. When he reached the place, the man asked him and said: 'What are you looking for? Don't you see that the people are going to their respective houses because of the approaching of the night?' The poor man said: 'I came to this market since the morning to buy a goat which can cost only a shilling, but I have not seen any'. The goat seller looked at him and laughed, then said: 'You are the poorest man among the poor people in your town. You want to make your own Christmas with the three shillings which you found from the dust-bin, hence you want to buy the shilling goat'. After a short pause he said again: 'Your wife is hungry in the house, so I will give you to buy'. Due to that reason, the goat seller sold him a goat at the rate of one shilling. The poor man gladly bought the goat and the other things he thought to buy, then went home.

When he reached home, the wife and the daughter were happy because they want to eat goat. My good brethren, listen to these words with me and be of good courage. What God has planted for you, you will harvest it with gladness, so praise God. Endurance is bitterness, but it is the way success. He who dived into the water doesn't know how the atmosphere is, that is how our lives are.

The husband said: 'I said that you would be the cook, so the time is up to you now. You will cook the rice at first before I will kill the goat for you to make the stew'. 'Business is Business,' said he. 'Oh!, today, my friend will come and eat good food in my house, what sort of poverty, today will be a tough day for us. My daughter, today you too will eat rice and stewed meat.' 'Do you understand?' he asked. 'Yes papa,' answered the daughter. Meanwhile, the wife washed the rice and started to cook it. When she had finished cooking the rice, the husband said: 'This is the high time for my killing the goat'. My good friends, wonders shall never end.

Immediately he said how he would kill the goat, the goat started to speak vernacular. The goat said: 'My man, what are you saying? Do you want to kill me? it may be another goat, not my very self'. The goat further said: 'I am hungry, so put my rice for me to eat. Do you think that I don't eat food?' After a short time, the goat continued: 'You are saying that you will kill me, since you brought me from the market, you never give me food to eat. Are you planning to kill your head? Divide the rice quickly and give me my share to eat. Am I the cause of your poverty? You have no sense because you are poor! You speak any how, you said you want to kill me, not my very self! You said that you were looking for a shilling goat, now do what you want with your foolishness.'

When the goat was saying that, the poor man whispered to his wife and said: 'This will kill us, what are we going to do? Shall we escape away from the house?' To this the wife, having being overcome with fear said: 'This matter is greater than what tongue can tell. It is better we escape from the house for the goat, if not so the goat will kill us'. When they were saying that, the goat cut in and said: 'My people, what are you saying? I said that I am hungry, I come to make this Christmas with you with joyfulness. I don't come to kill you, you should not fear me, I come to make you glad, give the rice to me to eat.'

When the goat stopped speaking, the poor man ran out from the bedroom and asked: 'Sir, what do you say?' The goat replied: 'Are you deaf?' The poor man said: 'I am not deaf, I don't understand what you said hence I am asking you, Sir'. Then the goat said: 'I said that I am hungry! Bring the rice for me to eat quickly!' The poor man answered him with a shaking voice and said: 'Yes, Sir, I am going'.

When the poor man ran to the kitchen, the wife was putting the rice. He said: 'Go away from the place, I do not want trouble'. The poor man put the rice and ran to the goat and said: 'Sir, I have brought the rice'. The goat said: don't you drink water when you eat? The poor man said: 'Oh! very sorry, I will bring water sir'. The poor man ran back to bring water for the goat. When the goat was eating the rice, the poor man asked for permission and said: 'Master, may I go to answer the nature call?' The goat said: am I greater than you, why are you calling me master? 'Go away from the place, I am eating, don't trouble me.'

The poor man ran to his friend to tell him and said: 'The goat which I bought wants to kill me in the house'. The friend asked him and said: what is the matter? The poor man said: 'The goat knows how to speak vernacular more than I can do'. The friend said: 'I never heard such thing before, I too will go and see the goat, I am very happy to hear this story'. The two friends went to the house. Immediately they reached the house, the goat said: 'You have called him come, my master's friend, welcome'. Have you come? Is your wife and your children well? 'Your friend is afraid of me.' 'I come for peace but not for fight.' The goat started to speak with his master's friend.

The friend said: 'My friend, you will be rich soon.' The poor man asked his friend and said: how shall I do before I will be rich? He said: 'If people hear that

you have vernacular speaking goat, they will come to look. If they come, they pay money before looking, all the money that they will pay will be your's. I will take bell and go for announcing'. The poor man's friend really took bell and went out to announce. When he was announcing, the people started to come to look the goat. The wife was with the goat and the husband became the gate man. These husband and wife started to demind money, some people one pound, some people ten shillings and the lowest was one shilling. These people became rich in that day.

When the spectators went to the house, the goat started to make covertation with them, sing, dancing, putting parables, riddles, telling stories and other jocks. Due to these wonders that the goat was performing, the people were rushing in and out every day and night to see. After three months, the man built up stair plus a mighty shop and started selling. Within a blink of eye, the man became one of the richest men in the town. He helped those who were in need of his help with his kindness, even his poverty period he made no enmity with anybody. All those who were driving him from their houses like a dog started to call him Sir, Sir or Master, Master.

He built up a mighty upstairs for his friend, and he too became a rich man. Due to the fame of the goat that was spreading the whole area, lookers were coming from the neighbouring towns and from other towns respectively every day and night. The man took care of the goat more than human creature. He would like the goat to eat the best food in the house. He would like to say good morning to the goat before saluting any other person every morning. He sewed costly dressing for the goat. He did not allow anything to touch the goat because his whole life was on the goat. He made very good sleeping room with fine well dressed bed for the goat.

If they need any play in the town, it was the goat that they always invite and paid heavy amount, mostly Christmas. There was an old woman in his compound whom he loved. He was feeding and clothing her, because of that she too was constanting his house. As have been told, during his poverty season they did not include his name in the town's population. By then he never knew that an old woman of that nature was in his compound. My dear readers, let the world to keep great enmity with you for God to receive you.

Poverty gives birth to foolishness and madness.

He who doesn't have any child is not counted among the family.

He who is without money is not among the town's people.

He who is not important is not known by the world — all is vanity!

One day the goat called his attention and said: 'My master, lend me your ears and listen to what I am going to tell you. Tell your daughter and your wife even your very self that nobody should show me mirrow'. 'If I see my face in the mirrow, I cannot speak vernacular but I will be just like an ordinary goat, therefore, listen to what I am telling you and no accordingly.'

The man said: 'I have heard what you have told me, don't be afraid, nothing of that sort will happen to you'. To this he replied: 'If supposing such a thing happens, will it be bad on my side or on your side?' He continued: 'We are not in the court to judge case, just take proper care of me, that's all. If anything of that nature occurs due to your foolishness, I will not be worried. What is my look-out? If you are sensible, take care of me'. The man said: 'Yes, I have heard you'.

In their area, there was a custom. It was that a king, in the first month of every year, should invite all the other kings plus some plays to perform before them to see the capability of the king in his kingdom. This was done by all kings — one after the other, just in a rotational way. In that very month of the year, it was their king's turn to do it. After three weeks of their conversation, the king's messenger brought a letter to him. the letter was read thus:

His Majesty

My dear servant,

The custom that the kings follow has come to me this month, so I will invite you when they come. Come with your goat and play to their satisfaction, don't make me to be ashamed before them.

If you play to their satisfaction, I will give you thirty thousand pounds, but if you make me to be ashamed, I will kill you. I prefer your goat's play to others hence I am inviting you, so play well for me to obtain the greatest title, therefore you make a limit preparation with your goat and appear before the congregation.

Thanks. I am,  
Yours faithfully,  
Crown-Head.

After the reading of the letter, he went and told his friend how the King wrote him a letter. His friend said: 'It is not so bad, you will receive much money, I think the goat will play his best'.

When the arranged date was accomplished, his friend too should accompany him but his ten-years old daughter died in that night without sickness, so he failed to go. The man prepared and went to the place with the goat. The field was fully populated, the inhabitants and people from the neighbouring towns. In no time at all the King's news reader brought out the agreement that the man made with the king and read it: 'I, the goat owner agreed with the king that if my goat doesn't play and speak vernacular, I am bound to be hanged, but if the goat does well, the king is bound to give me thirty thousand pounds'.

The king asked the man and said: 'Do you agree with me still?' The man answered and said: 'Oh! my king, what I have said is what I have said, I can't break my promise, my goat will play interestingly'. Immediately after the conclusion of the man's speech, the spectators cheered up three times: 'Hip! hip! hip! hurrah!, hip! hip! hip! hurrah!, hip! hip! hip! hurrah!' They continued: 'What are we expecting? We are expecting the play, hip! hip! hip! hurrah'. After the cheering up of the spectators, there was a great silence. Everybody was waiting on the man and the goat.



Presently the man started to address the congregation with speech, he said: 'Oh! kings, dear ladies and gentlemen, this our first day to play for the world to see'. He continued: 'Open your eyes to see wonders and open your ears to hear something'. He then started commanding: 'Oh! come, the four holy angels in the four corners of the globe. Oh! lord abide with me, Oh my father and my mother, come out from your graves to play with me for these people to see. Oh! Mushaasha come to me. Oh! Okilolo come to do your work. Oh! Kunkunfiyewei, this is your time for work'.

When he had finished all these words, he looked at the goat. He said: 'My goat, I have finished my part and the time is up to you now'. The goat shouted and said: 'Baaa baaa baaa'. The man said: 'Speak vernacular'. The [goat] repeated the same thing. Again the man started to pour more few words, he said: 'Oh! Ingbeduba, orudeikimidei, endurance is the key to success, this is your business time'. He made an attempt with all his efforts but the goat did not speak, all his commanding did not serve any good purpose for him.

The soldiers were in readiness for killing him because of the written document — [between] himself and the king. Some of the spectators have already shed tears because of the unfortunate death which would inevitably follow. The man became a victim to the king. The killers were in great joy to shed the innocent blood of the man. When the lookers on saw that the man's minutes were numbered, there was a great sorrowful murmuring and it caused a great noise.

After a short period, his friend who was dressed in black sitting in his house morning because of his daughter's death ran to the field with some leaves and said: 'Oh! king, never you kill him yet, I have something to say, so allow me. I will make the goat to speak, if he doesn't speak, kill me and leave that man'. At this stage the king said: 'The eyes will see you and the ears will hear you, so say on'. Then the friend said: 'Last night I dreamt that this man and his goat went for a play but the goat was unable to speak, so it was myself who treated him with some leaves similar with these ones. So the goat started to speak and played various types of plays to the satisfaction of the onlookers. This one too is the same as the one which happened in my dream land, and so I want to treat him.'

When this man was saying this thing before that mighty group of human creatures, there was a great silence. All the eyes and ears were set upon him. The man squeezed the leaves and put the liquid into the goat's eyes and mouth. Shortly after the treatment, the goat started to entertain the congregation:

Wélcó — me, oh! — gentle ménnnn,

Wélcó — me, oh! — lá- di — es,

Ah! áh! inashúnnn, we óften sáy — ,

Wé are here — to entertain you — ,

Wé wish you — all good evening — .

Hip! hip! hip! hurrah, hip! hip! hip! hurrah, hip! hip! hip! hurrah!!.

'My master and myself,' said the goat, 'would become useless before this

congregation hence I went to his friend in the dream land to show him and make him know all that would happen.' He continued: 'Now you should listen to what I am going to say, all men and women, young and old, great or small, rich or poor. One day I called my master and advised him how he would take proper care of me. I knew what would happen in future but he did not take to my advice. The old woman who is in his house showed me mirrow, when we were preparing to come. You should look for the old woman and kill her, she is in this field'.

They immediately found her out and killed her. After killing the woman the goat played greatly to the satisfaction of everybody. After the play, really the money was given to him. The story has been ended.