



The Hole-y Bucket, by Gopal Dada

A student approaches the teacher with the question, "Could you help me with a question I've been struggling with -- what is the purpose of my life?"

The wise teacher responds, "We'll get to that in time. Until then, why don't you first fill this drum with water from the river down below this valley."

He then hands him a dirty, greasy, mud wrapped bucket with lots of little holes in them to use as a medium of transfer.

The diligent student does as he's told. He walks all the way down the valley, fills up this "hole-y" bucket, walks all the way up to the drum that lays it beside their shack. Deeply immersed in the act of doing the task, he doesn't notice how much water leaks through the holes.

Days pass. Months pass. And the drum is yet to be filled.

Frustrated and tired, the student approaches the teacher: "I've been filling this bucket for the past so many months, and the drum is nowhere closer to filling up. I don't know how I will ever find an answer to my question!"

With a kind heart, the teacher takes the student's hand and walks him down to the valley. The same path that the student took every day to fulfill his impossible task. Pointing to the beauty on the path, the teacher then explains, "A few months ago, this was barren land. Now, see, it is a blooming garden. Every day that you carried water in your leaky bucket, you didn't realize it but you watered this land. Now you can see the spring of little bulbs of grass and flowers."

Then he holds up the bucket and adds, "When I first gave you this bucket, it was greasy, mud-covered, dirty inside and outside. Each time that you carried the water in it, a little of the dirt and grease got washed off."

Without any further explanation, the student understood. The answer to his original question sprung forth from within his heart, "I'm like that bucket, with a purpose of filling the drum. I may not be able to see how I'm being cleansed, or all the saplings I've accidentally watered, but someday, a kind hand will help me see the blooming garden. I'll understand that every leak has its own divine purpose. Then, I'll just act without regard for outcomes or purpose. I'll simply serve with joy."

