

How Much Land Does a Man Need: A Moral Lesson

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How Much Land Does a Man Need is a story in the moral fable. The theme of the human greed and temptation is very conventional, but Leo Tolstoy treated it with artistic restraint freshness of approach and subtle irony. The narrative method, which is used in this story is extremely effective than carrying any ethical message.

The sister in the village was married to a peasant named Pahom. Her another sister was came from town to meet her. They started to talk about their life and Evil. Pahom wife stood for village life. She said that Card, Wine and Women are the three things that could make one's life worst. The characteristics of village life as suggested by the two sisters are:- for the village: they live roughly, they have no fear of future with safer way of life, they have enough to eat and long life but they are poor with the same living condition; whereas for the town life: they live in style having more income, change in the fortunes with possibility of complete loss and elegance of manner with full of temptation. They have also a habit of having well dressed, promenades

and entertainment. Pahom was also hearing their conversations.

On the other side, Pahom was not satisfied with his riches without sufficient land. He is very greed for land and containing with his fate he became the victim of pride. He challenged the Devil and thought that if he had plenty of land he would not fear the Devil himself. The Devil accepted his challenge by saying that he would give him enough land and by means of it he would get Pahom into his power.

The steward imposed a fine on the peasants because their cattle strayed into his woman's estate. But for coming winter Pahom would be glad because the cattle has to be stabled during this time. When the innkeeper on the high road was to bargain for the old woman's land, peasants were afraid of innkeeper because they thought that he would worry them by charging more fine than the woman's steward. Then the peasants succeed in organizing for the commune to buy the land. When the Evil created difference among the peasants in order to punish Pahom, Pahom decided to buy 40 acres of land from the woman. In this

way, the Devil made him owner of much land and encourage him to purchase more land so he was not satisfied.

When the neighboring peasants, because of jealousy, trouble Pahom trespassing on his cornfield and meadows and stealing his wood at night, he complained to the District Court. But not being any evidence against Simon, a peasant, Simon was acquitted. When Pahom went to Simon's house to find the culprit and to have a look round, and he found nothing then he started to quarrel with Elder and Judges because they let a thief go. The home was three times larger compared to the earlier one. Pahom could not sow wheat each time because he had not enough communal land. The land was sown for one-two years and then the land follow till it was again over grown with prairie grass. The visiting peasants told him about the land beyond the Volga that many people were settling there joining themselves in the commune. One man could be granted 25 acres good farming land. Besides these he could buy or have in rent the land as much as he wanted.

After that Pahom decided migrate to the village away from Volga and purchase 125 acres of land. Then he again decided to take his money to the land of

Bishkirs because he could buy as much as ten times of land with his 1,000 rubble. He took 7 days to reach the land of Bishkirs. The Bishkirs lived on the steeps near by a river in tents. They were fond of drinking Kumiss, taking tea, eating mutton and playing on their pipes. Though they were well mannered and good-natured, they did not know how to speak Russian. The dealers pleased the Bishkirs by giving him silk robes carpets, a case of tea and wine as present.

Then the Bishkirs greeted Pahom by talking him into one of the best tents and making him sit on some down cushions placed on a carpet giving him some tea and Kumiss. Bishkirs pleased their guests by asking Pahom to tell them, which of the things they possessed to please them that they might present him. The plenty of land of the Bishkirs, which Pahom had never seen, pleased him most. Later, when Pahom asked for land, the Bishkirs argued that they ought to ask their chief about the land and not to do anything in his absence, whereas, other thought that there was no need to wait for his return.

Pahom wanted to deed for the land to make it secure, or else they might say that it was theirs and afterwards might

take it away again. The price of the land was 1,000 rubble a day or 1,000 rubble per 13,000 acres. According to the chief, the condition was that the land as much as he could go round on his feet in a day was his and if Pahom did not return on the same day to the post from where he had started, his money was lost then. He saw a strange dream that he was lying in that same tent and heard someone chuckling outside, it was the chief who was rolling with laughter but later he became the same dealer. Then after some time he saw a dead man and it was himself.

Next day, Pahom hoped to cover 35 miles a day. He thought the proverb 'an hour to suffer, a life to live'. It means that a man gets happiness only after doing struggle in his life and there is no pleasure without risk. Applying this proverb, he came into his fact that if he tried hard or grab much land, he would lead a happy life afterwards. He also planned if he had this land, he would sell the poorer land, or hire peasants, and he would pick out the best to farm buying two ox-team and hiring labors. He put the money on the fur cap when the chief put the cap on the ground to tell Pahom that it

would be the mark and ask him to start from there to return.

Pahom remembered that part of the dream in which he saw as the last thing that a dead man, who was lying, was became himself when he saw him. While he was racing for more land, he thought that he had made the sides too long. He must make that are shorter. He wanted to cover the land of all sides because all the land was tempting him and he went on running and tracking in order to cover much land as he could do. But when the sun was about to set he thought that he would not be able to achieve his goal before the sunset and he atoned because the goal was still 10 miles far. He thought that there was plenty of land, but if God would let him live on it and he had lost his life and he would not reach the spot.

On reaching his goal, he uttered a cry, his physical condition became very miserable, his legs gave way beneath him and he fell forward and reached the cap with his lands. The blood was flowing from his mouth and he lay dead. Then the Bishkirs showed their sense of pity by clinging their tongues. At the last, Pahom's dead body really needed only six feet of land in the end. In this way, Pahom who led the 20-acres land with wife and

happy life, his greed generate temptation
and led him to death ruining himself.