



# Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F38

**Adapted and modified by  
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

## **Contents**

- 1. The Travels of a Dervish: Part 4**
- 2. Grammar Page.**

# 1. The Travels of a Dervish

By Premchand

## Part 4

### 11

‘Traveller! Raja Randhir Singh bestowed his generosity liberally on his subjects. The aristocrats and the nobles were conferred honours—some were given horses while others received estates. He presented me a copy of the Bhagavadgita in a well-designed cover. Vidyadhari received a very expensive bracelet studded with priceless diamonds. Artful jewellers in Delhi had crafted it with all their magic skills. Vidyadhari had never shown any craving for jewellery. Simplicity was her jewellery and chastity her adornment. She was totally blown over by the bracelet.

‘The month of Asarh arrived. Clouds began to float in the skies. Pandit Sridhar was reminded of home. The cackling of peacocks and the plaintive notes of *papihas* ignited the fires of his passion. Vidyadhari had the house spring-cleaned and decked up like a bride. She also took care of her looks—the scent of sandalwood wafted from her clothes. She took out the bracelet from the box and mentally debated whether to wear it or not. Her heart decided against wearing it. She closed the box and put it away. Right at that moment the maid came in and announced that Panditji had arrived. Vidyadhari stood up with utmost attention. But her longing to see her husband did not make her rush to the door. She opened the box quickly, slipped the bracelet on to her wrist and began looking at herself in the mirror.

‘Panditji eagerly crossed the threshold, walked through the courtyard and entered the sitting room. He sat on a chair and was taking off his clothes. That was when Vidyadhari came and touched his feet. Panditji was amazed to see her so well turned out. All of a sudden, his eyes fell on her bracelet. His association with Raja Randhir Singh had made him an expert connoisseur of jewels. As he looked at it closely, he realized that each stone was worth more than a thousand. Overtaken by surprise, he asked, “Sweetheart, where have you got this?”

‘Vidyadhari was ready with the answer. “It’s a gift from my friend, Priyamvada.” This was the first occasion in her life when Vidyadhari had

deceived her husband. One cannot speak the simple truth when one's heart is polluted. This was not a bracelet but a poisonous snake.'

## 12

'A week passed by. Vidyadhari's happiness and good cheer had vanished. The words, "It's a gift from my friend, Priyamvada" echoed in her ears all the time. She cursed herself, "Why did I deceive my life partner?" She would often weep and wish that she could take back those words.

'One day she thought of making a clean breast of everything to her husband.

She was sure that he would forgive her. But when she went up to him, she couldn't utter a word. She returned to her room and cried her heart out. She had felt happy when she had worn the bracelet. It had once made her smile; now it made her cry.

'Vidyadhari stopped going for walks in the garden with the queen. She also stopped playing chess and *chopad*. She remained cooped up in her room throughout the day, wondering what she should do. A black stain on a black sheet remains invisible but one tiny dot of black on a white sheet draws people's attention.

'She felt that it was the bracelet that had destroyed her happiness and made her shed tears. The more beautiful a snake appears, the more poisonous it is. "The beautiful bracelet is a poisonous snake," she thought. "I'll smash its head." She closed the doors, lit a fire in her room, yanked off the bracelet that had made her life miserable, and threw it into the fire. There was a time when this bracelet seemed to her more precious than her own life and she had kept it in a velvet box. But now she ruthlessly flung it into the fire. Innocent Vidyadhari! What harm did this bracelet cause you? Have you ever peeped into your heart where a thorn pricked constantly? The bracelet will be burnt to ashes but the wound left by the thorn will remain there. You must pull out the thorn.

'Vidyadhari was sitting by the fire when Pandit Sridhar knocked on the door. The colour drained from Vidyadhari's face. She wished for the earth to swallow her up. She got up, opened the door and stood there with downcast eyes. Panditji looked about the room in great surprise but could not

understand what the matter was. He asked, "What are you doing, closing the doors?"

'Vidyadhari did not reply. Panditji picked up a stick and poked the fire with it. The bracelet appeared, but its shape had been completely distorted. He shouted, "Vidya, have you taken leave of your senses?"

"I have none."

"Was the bracelet causing you any harm?"

"Yes, it ruined my peace."

"Such a priceless thing has been reduced to ashes!" "It has spoiled something much more precious." "Have you lost your senses?"

"You are perhaps right."

'Panditji looked piercingly at her. Vidyadhari lowered her eyes; she could not meet his gaze. She felt that his sharp looks would pierce her heart. It was this fear that kept her from looking her husband in the eye.

'Panditji said harshly, "Vidyadhari, you'll now speak the plain truth."

'Vidyadhari could bear it no longer. She burst into tears and fell to the floor before Panditji.'

'By the time Vidyadhari regained consciousness, Panditji had disappeared. She went to the men's quarters in a nervous state but she didn't find him there. When she asked the servants, they told her that he had gone towards Gyan Sagar on a horse. Hearing this Vidyadhari felt somewhat relieved. Standing by the door she began to wait for him. The sun blazed overhead at noon; then came evening and the birds began to return to their nests. Then the night arrived and the stars began to shine in the sky. All this while, Vidyadhari kept standing like a wooden puppet, waiting for her husband. The night deepened and silence reigned all around. The watchman's uncanny calls began to echo when, all of sudden, the sounds of horses' hooves were heard. Her heart began pounding and her hair stood on end in sheer excitement. Happiness sometimes causes our mind to act like this. She leapt towards the door but there was no horseman in sight. Vidyadhari was now sure that she wouldn't see her dear husband again. A cold sigh escaped her. She sank to the ground and shed tears through the night. As the first light of dawn appeared and the birds began to sing happy notes, this wretched woman took a deep breath, got up and entered her room to stretch herself on the bed.

'Just as the heat of the sun dries up a pond, the depth of her sorrow made Vidyadhari listless. She breathed deep sighs and shed warm tears. She could hardly eat anything or sleep a wink. She lost any interest in food and couldn't sleep well. When she was going through this, one day Raja Randhir Singh came to show his sympathy. As soon as she saw him, her eyes began to blaze and her lips began to flutter. Like an infuriated viper, she hissed in rage, "Wicked fellow, it's you who has ignited this fire. If my curses have any effect, you will face consequences for your mischief." These words pierced the king's heart like an arrow, as a hunter's arrow strikes a deer. He could not utter a single word. A Rajput warrior cringed before the fiery gaze of a woman.

'A full year passed by. The mountain ranges were covered with lush green vegetation and flowers danced deliriously in the valley. Then a white sheet of snow lay over the mountains and the rivers. The flamingoes began to fly to more pleasant climes, twittering plaintively.

'This season also passed by. Milky white waters began to flow in rivers and streams and the clear, pleasant and rejuvenating moonlight danced on the crystal clear waters of the Gyan Sagar. But there was no sign of Pandit Sridhar. Vidyadhari left the royal palace and began to lead her life as an

austere yogi in an old and desolate temple. The plight of this feckless woman evoked pity.

Seeing her condition my eyes filled with tears. She had been a close friend with whom I had shared the happy days of my life. I forgot my own sorrow in the face of her deep agony. There was a time when she could transform a man into a beast by the strength of her spiritual power, and now her own husband harboured suspicion about her chastity. No wound can be more painful, overwhelming or shameful for a woman. Her suffering had once again restored her to the honourable place she had in my heart. My faith in her chastity was strengthened. But I could not muster the courage to go and speak to her. I was ready to be branded as heartless and unkind but could not be indifferent to her. Her willingness to undergo such sufferings for her husband made me realize that she was the same Vidyadhari who was ready to sacrifice her life for her husband.

Several months later, when Vidyadhari recounted the story behind the misunderstanding between the husband and wife, it became clear that it was Raja Randhir Singh who was responsible for it. It was at his instance that the queen had stopped her from accompanying her husband in his travels. The change in Vidyadhari's demeanour was due to the queen's companionship. That was how Vidyadhari became accustomed to dressing herself up. It was the queen who had forbidden her to tell the truth about the bracelet to Panditji. Such occurrences are common in the lives of ordinary women. They do not feel that it would affect their loyalty to their husbands in any way. Since Vidyadhari's notion of pativrata was of a lofty order, these concealments pricked her conscience badly. It is not my view that Vidyadhari hadn't strayed from the path of her duty. Whether it was due to another's bad influence or her own naïveté, she had certainly strayed from the path of her duty. However, her heart was untouched by the thought of sin. People with low morals do not bother about such trivial failings but for those with a high sense of morality, such failings assume the dimension of sin. What for a crow is the final point of its flight is the starting point for the swan.'

‘Traveller! I began to search for Pandit Sridhar. I was aware of his inclinations. He was a devotee of Sri Ramachandra. He dreamt of the sacred land of Kaushalpuri and the beautiful banks of the river Sarayu. It occurred to me that he might have gone to Ayodhya. I wished I knew where exactly he was so that I could bring him back. It would have been an auspicious day in my life. This Brahmin had to undergo so much sorrow in his life. Wouldn’t the gods have pity on him now? One day, Sher Singh and I, along with five trusted men, left for Ayodhya. As we came down from the hills, we boarded a train which made our travel easier. On the twentieth day we reached the land of Awadh. I spent the night in a dharamshala. Then I took a dip in the Sarayu and went for a darshan of Sri Ramchandra in the temple. I had barely stepped into the temple courtyard when I saw the serene face of Pandit Sridhar. Sitting on a mat, he was reading the Ramayana and thousands of men were listening to him with rapt attention.

‘As Panditji’s gaze fell on me, he got up from his place, came towards me and received me most cordially. He showed me around the temple, which took more than two hours. I saw basements where the soil had been purified by the prostration of devotees. Later I climbed the temple’s terrace from where the city looked like a chessboard spread under my feet. The breeze was creating ripples in the waters of the Sarayu. It seemed as though the river, like a kind mother, had folded the entire city in her lap. As I left for my guest house, Panditji came with me. When he sat down comfortably, I said, “You’ve severed all ties with us.”

“This was God’s will,” replied Pandit in a sad tone, “I had no control over things. Now I’ve taken shelter in Sri Ramchandra’s feet. I will devote the remaining days of my life in his service.”

“You’ve taken shelter at Sri Ramchandra’s feet! But what about Vidyadhari?

Who’s there to look after her?”

“I didn’t expect you to speak in her favour,” retorted Panditji, annoyed.

“Vidyadhari does not need my favour. If you’ve doubted her faithfulness to you, you have committed a grave sin. You can’t atone for it even in several



births. All your piety cannot erase this sin of yours. Do you know how this wretched woman is living in your absence? It's regrettable that you have not valued her worth."

'Panditji's demeanour suggested that he had already uttered the last word in this matter and was unwilling to hear or say another word in this regard. But I was not ready to let him off so easily. I recounted the entire story to him, from beginning to end, stressing how Raja Sahib deceived her. This helped Pandit Sridhar open his eyes to the truth. I am not very fluent in my expression, but at that moment, my words had great impact as they stemmed from my faith in truth and justice. It seemed as if the goddess Saraswati was speaking through me.

When I remember these things now, I'm filled with a sense of awe. Finally, Panditji agreed to go back with me. That day, I experienced real happiness.'

## 15

'It was a pleasant morning. The sunshine played hide and seek with the ripples of the Gyan Sagar. I left Sher Singh there and left for Arjun Nagar with Panditji. Both of us were quiet; our thoughts had sealed our lips. Panditji's head hung in embarrassment. He was not walking like a man who was annoyed with his wife; rather, he went like one who was going to win her over. Today, the garden of love, overtaken by autumn, would spring to life once again. The parched stream of love would gather steam. Even the gods in the heavens were eager to watch this scene. What a strange attraction love has—a sulking husband was now going to make a clean breast to his wife, all misunderstanding removed.

'The day had come when we reached Vidyadhari's abode. Panditji stood outside. I went in and saw Vidyadhari engaged in her prayers. But she was not praying to any god. In the place of idols were Panditji's *kharaoons*, the wooden footwear. Seeing this deep devotion to her husband, I was overjoyed. I rushed and kissed Vidyadhari's feet. Her body had shrivelled up, there were dark circles under her eyes and sorrows had weighed her down. She had sacrificed herself for her husband.

'Vidyadhari helped me to my feet and hugged me. She said, "Sister,

don't embarrass me. I must touch my forehead with the soil beneath your feet. It is good you've come; I have been longing to see you."

"I'd gone to Ayodhya," I replied.

'When we lived together in our homeland, if ever I travelled somewhere, I would always bring Vidyadhari a gift. She was reminded of this. She asked with tearful eyes, "Have you brought me a gift?"

"Yes, something very attractive."

"What is it? Let me see."

"Try to guess."

"A box of sindoor?"

"No, something much better than that."

"An image of Thakurji."

"No, something even better than that."

"News of my dear husband?"

"No, something still better than that."

"Is he waiting outside?"

'Saying this, she rushed to the door in a flurry to welcome Panditji. Her old age came in the way and she stumbled three times. That is when I held her head in my lap and began to fan her with the end of my sari. Her heart was pounding in excitement and her desire to kiss his feet found expression in the form of tears. As she recovered a little, she said, "Call him in. His darshan will act as panacea for me."

'And that is exactly what happened. As soon as Panditji stepped in, she fell at his feet. This goddess caught a glimpse of her husband after a long time. She washed his feet with her tears.

'Just as raindrops fall from the petals of roses after a shower, tears flowed

from Panditji's eyes. Their hearts were filled with ecstasy. Sometimes human beings shed tears even on occasions of joy just as the sun shines through a drizzle. I did not think it proper to stay on there—they had so much to talk about. I stood up and said, "Sister, I'm leaving now and will see you in the evening."

'Vidyadhari looked up at me with eyes of deep gratitude. Raising both her hands to the heavens, she said, "May God bless you for this.'"

## 16

'Traveller, Vidyadhari's prayers brought my miseries to an end. As I walked towards Gyan Sagar, my heart was filled with spiritual joy. I had rescued Pandit Shridhar from the jaws of death twice, but I had never felt the deep joy that I experienced that day.

'It was noon when I reached Gyan Sagar. Vidyadhari's prayers had had their effect. I saw a man coming out of the cave and going towards Gyan Sagar. I wondered who could be coming there at this hour. As the man came closer, waves of joy washed over me. It seemed as though my heart would burst. This was the lord of my life, my beloved husband, Narsingh Dev. Before I could kiss his feet, his arms held me in a tight embrace. I saw this day after ten long years. At that moment I felt as though the lotuses in Gyan Sagar bloomed only for me, that the hills had spread out a gift of flowers only for me, that the breeze blew gently only for me and that the sun shone only for me. After ten years, these captivating sights filled my heart with a joy akin to love.

'After ten long years, my ruined family was restored. The old days returned.

No one could imagine how happy I felt. The happiness of that one day obliterated years of sorrow. The flood of joy swept away those long days and nights that I had passed crying, and the fire that had raged in my heart.

'My husband gazed at me with tearful eyes and simply said, "Priyamvada!"

'He could not say anything more.'

## 2. Grammar Page

### The Simple Future Tense

#### Structures:

**Affirmative:** *sub + shall/will + v<sup>1</sup> + obj*

**Negative:** *sub + shall/will + not + v<sup>1</sup> + obj*

**Questions:** *Shall/will + sub + v<sup>1</sup> + obj + ?*  
*WH + shall/will + sub + v<sup>1</sup> + obj + ?*

**Active:** *sub + shall/will + v<sup>1</sup> + obj*

**Passive:** *obj + shall be/will be + v<sup>3</sup> + by + sub*

He will write a letter.

He will not write a letter.

Will he write a letter?

When will he write a letter?

He will write a poem.

A poem will be written by him.

#### Uses:

⇒ *The simple future tense is used to talk about our hopes, expectations, intentions, predictions and forecasts.*

You'll enjoy the movie. I'm sure you'll.

I hope it won't rain.

I shall miss you when I leave Kathmandu.

The weather will be sunny tomorrow.

They will find the place worth visiting.

Hurry up, or you'll miss the bus.

I expect that it will rain this afternoon.

I'm tired. I think I'll take a rest.

⇒ *The simple future tense often suggests that a speaker will do something voluntarily.*

I will send you the information when I get it.

Will you help me move this heavy table?

Will you make dinner?

I will not do your homework for you.

I'm really hungry. I'll make some sandwiches.

Look, here is a book stall. I'll buy some books for my brother.

He said to the teacher, "To make sure the classroom is clean, I will go and check it."

⇒ *"Will" for expressing promising, offering and requesting*

I will call you when I arrive.

I promise I will not tell him about the surprise party.

I won't tell anyone your secret.

Will you buy me an ice-cream?

Will you help me, please?

#### Adverbs of time:

*We use the simple future tense with 'tomorrow, in a few days, next week, in 2020, soon, tonight, until/unless/if + simple present, etc.'*

Soniya will go to Illam next year.

We will be home after seven.

We'll be glad to see you.

It will be dark soon.

I think he'll return next week.

I will probably see him in a few days.

He will not tell her about it.

She won't go to the party with us.

We will come back to Kathmandu again in 2010.

They won't be able to help us tonight.

She'll call him when he arrives.

I'll visit her if I have time.

They will wait until he returns.