



Learn English Through Stories

Panchtantra Tales

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26. The Birds and the Shivering Monkeys



Once upon a time, there was a huge tree on the banks of a river. The tree made a comfortable home for the family of birds who had built their nests on its branch. The birds were living there happily as the tree with its widespread branches sheltered them from scorching sun and heavy rains.

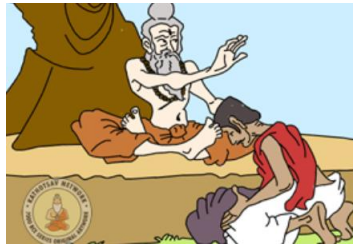
One day, when the sky was overcast with dark clouds, it rained very heavily. Some monkeys who were playing nearby the tree got drenched and ran for shelter under the tree. All of them were shivering with cold. When the birds saw the monkeys in the pitiable condition, one of the birds said, “ O Monkeys, you would not have to shiver like this, if you had built a home like us. You would not have to suffer like this. If we can build our nest with small beaks, then why can’t you. By God’s grace, you have two hands and two legs. Why don’t you make a nice shelter for yourselves?”

On hearing this, the monkeys got annoyed and swore to teach a lesson to the birds. They said to themselves, “These birds are not afraid of the rain or of cold wind. They are living comfortably that is why they are criticizing us like this. Let the rain stops, we’ll show them how to build home”. As soon as the rain stopped, the monkeys climbed up the tree and destroyed the nests of the birds. They also broke the birds’ eggs and threw the young ones down.

The poor birds flew here and there in misery. They were full of regret for their words and realized that they should not have given advice that was not asked. Advice should only be given to learned, wise and to those who ask for it.

Moral: Never give advice to fools.

27. The Foolish Sage



Once upon a time, there was a sage called Deva Sharma who lived in a temple in the outskirts of a town.

He was widely known and respected. People would visit him, and offer him with gifts, food, money and garments to seek his blessings. The gifts that he did not need for himself, he would sell off, and got rich on the proceeds.

And by nature, he trusted nobody.

He never trusted anybody. So, he kept all his money in a bag which he carried under his arm all the time. He would not part with the bag for a single moment.

One day, a swindler came across the sage, and he became sure that the bag this holy man was so possessive of, must surely contain a lot of treasure.

He planned on stealing the bag from the sage, but could not think of a way to do so. He thought, "I cannot make a hole in the temple wall, or jump over the high gates. But I can charm him with sweet words to accept me as his disciple."

He wondered, "If I can stay with him as a disciple, I can win his confidence. When I get an opportunity, I will rob him, and leave this place."

Having planned so, the swindler approached the holy man with reverence, "Om Namah Shivaya! (I bow before Lord Shiva, the God of Destruction)."

With these words, he fell on the sage's feet and said, "O Guruji, Please guide me to the right path of life. I am fed up with life, and want to seek peace."

The sage kindly replied, "My son, I will surely guide you. You are blessed because you have come to me to seek peace at this young age."

This was the opportunity the swindler was seeking, and he at once touched the feet of the sage for blessings, "O Guruji, please accept me as your disciple. I will do whatever you ask me to do."

The sage accepted the swindler as his disciple, but only on a condition. He said, "A holy man as me is recommended to spend the night alone without company. This helps me to meditate also. So, you will not be allowed to enter the temple at night. You will sleep in a hut at the gate of the temple."

The swindler agreed, "I shall willingly serve your wishes in every way that you ask me to."

In the evening, the sage initiated the rituals and formally took the swindler as his disciple.

The swindler in return proved himself an obedient disciple. He massaged his hands and feet, washed his feet, and helped him with all the rituals along with cleaning the temple. Although the sage was happy with his disciple, the swindler could not gain enough confidence for the sage to part with his bag when he was around.

As days passed by, the swindler started getting frustrated, "He does not trust me enough to leave the bag with me. I can gain access to the bag if I kill him with a knife or feed him with poison."

When he was thinking all this, the swindler saw a young boy visit the sage. He was the son of one of the sage's followers. He invited the sage, "O Guruji, I have come here personally to invite you to our house for the ceremony of sacred thread. Please accept the invitation to sanctify the ceremony with your kind presence."

The sage accepted the invitation, and after some time started off for the town with the swindler. On the way, they came across a river, where the sage thought of relieving himself. He folded the bagful of money in his robe. He asked his disciple to look after it, "My child, Look after the robe until I return".

This was the opportunity that the swindler was seeking all the while. As soon as the sage went behind the bushes, the swindler ran away with the bagful of money.

When the sage returned, he did not find the disciple around but found his robe

lying on the ground. Shocked and anxious, he peered inside only to find his bag of money was gone.

At once he knew what had happened, and began to shout, "Oh. Where are you, you rascal. You have robbed me."

The sage then started trailing the swindler's footsteps, but he reached town. He knew he will not be able to catch hold of him. He stayed the night in town to return empty-handed to his temple next morning.

The wise indeed say:

Do not be taken in by the sweet words of a swindler.

28. The Lion and the Farmer



Once there lived a farmer Chetu with his wife Anupa. They owned a large cattle: five cows, three buffaloes, seven goats, and 21 pigs. One day, a lion entered a farmyard and started prowling around for food. The farmer saw him and locked the gate.

Angry at being locked up, the lion started killing all the cattle in mad rage. The farmer was now scared for his life. He quietly went up and opened the gate, and the lion escaped. The farmer was relieved, but he soon started lamenting over the huge damage to his property.

His wife, who had watched everything from a distance, came up and tried to console him.

She said, "Do not cry, my dear, loving husband. You were very lucky. And I was lucky too. If you had died, I would have been a widow. My Karva Chauth Varat saved you. Moreover, it was your mistake that caused all the chaos. What made you think you could punish a lion by locking him up? If you had come across a lion in an open field, you would have run away."

29. The Stupid Lion



A lion once fell in love with a farmer's daughter! The farmer probably thought what you're thinking - that all the lion really wanted was a good meal. So the farmer went to bed to think it over. By the morning he'd thought of a clever plan. "You are certainly a very handsome fellow," he said to the lion. "There's nobody I'd rather have as a son-in-law. I won't need a scarecrow to keep the crows away with you around, eh?" The lion laughed politely.

"But you are a lion, and my daughter's bound to be a little bit frightened. If you really love her, you'll pull out your teeth and cut off your claws."

So the lion, who really did love the farmer's daughter, did what her father suggested. But of course as soon as he had, no-one was frightened of him anymore, and the farmer beat him with a stick and drove him away.

30. The lion and the Wolf



Once, there lived a shepherd, Fatu, in a small village near Dehradun. One day, as usual, he took his flock of sheep to the fields for grazing. Accidentally, he found a spot in the fields where a party from the city had come to have a picnic. There was a rubbish bag lying there. When Fatu opened the bag, he found a quarter of whiskey bottle in side. The shepherd could not resist and he drank the whiskey in one go. Twenty minutes later, he fell asleep.

Soon, a wolf came to the fields. He grabbed a good-sized sheep and killed it. Just when he was about to carry the corpse to his den, a lion pounced and tried to snatch a sheep away.

The wolf looked at the lion and shouted, “You should be ashamed of yourself. You are the king of the forest, and you know everyone trust you. How can you rob me of my food? You are a disgrace to the forest!”

The lion laughed at the wolf and said, “Why should be ashamed? I have robbed someone who is rogue steals all the time. How dare you accuse of being a disgrace to the forest! It is you who should be ashamed for robbing the shepherd of his sheep.”

As they say:

One thief is no better than the other.

