



Learn English Through Stories

Panchtantra Tales

**Adopted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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36. The Elephant and the Jackal



Once upon a time, there lived an Elephant by the name of Hathia in a forest. He was brutal and haughty by nature. He used to roam in the forest without restraint. All the animals of the forest were afraid of this wild Elephant. Without any purpose, he used to pull down the trees and ripped the branches. In this way, he destroyed innumerable nests with eggs and crushed the nestlings under his massive feet.

In short, he had created all round chaos in the forest. Fierce animals like Lions and Tigers also kept themselves at a safe distance from this Elephant. Once it happened that he destroyed the burrows of the jackals in his merciless stroll. This action of Elephant was not tolerable to the animals and all of them wanted to kill the Elephant. They had a conversation regarding this but thought it was nearly impossible to kill the Elephant due to his gigantic size.

The Jackals were full of rage and planned to call a separate meeting. They were ready to do anything to get rid of the mighty Elephant. But killing the huge Elephant was not a tiny task to do. All of them had a discussion that how could they kill the Elephant. Suddenly, an old Jackal said, "Leave everything on me. I will cleverly bring about his death". Everyone gave his consent to the idea of the old Jackal.

The next day, old Jackal went to the Elephant, bowed respectfully before him and said, "My Lord! Favour me with your royal glance". The Elephant looked at him and said in a loud voice, "Who are you? Why you have come here?" The intelligent Jackal replied, "I am only a poor Jackal. Your Majesty, no one can deny your greatness. You are kind-hearted, gentle and possess all qualities of a ruler. Taking these things in the mind, all the animals have chosen you to be their King. Please accept this offer and make us obliged."

The Elephant appeared to be happy with all the praise thrown by the Jackal. Jackal found the time to be appropriate and further acclaimed, "Your Highness, all the animals are eager to see your kingship ceremony. It will be held in the middle of the forest, where thousands of animals have already gathered to get your glimpse. Our astrologers have told this is the auspicious moment for your crowning. Time is slipping fast. So, please come with me without any delay."

The Elephant was really pleased by the Jackal's talk. He always dreamt to become a King. He contemplated that the kingship ceremony will be matter of honour to him. Instantly, he got ready to accompany the Jackal to the place where ceremony was to be held. The Jackal took the Elephant deep into the forest. On the way, they had to walk through a swampy area by the side of a lake. The Jackal walked across the swampy region easily.

But as soon as the Elephant stepped on the swamp, he got stuck in it. He tried his best to come out of the swamp, but to no avail. The more he tried to move out, the more he went deep into it. He got frightened and called out the Jackal, "Friend, Please help me to come out of this mud. I am sinking deep into the mud. Call other animals quickly to help me otherwise I will die."

The Jackal replied, "I am not going to save you. You deserve this conduct. You are a cruel, arrogant and a merciless creature. You killed our siblings and kids. You have destroyed our burrows and nests of poor birds. You knew everything, but remained indifferent. I am sorry to say that your end has come." The Jackal left the place immediately and the Elephant kept shouting for help. In a little while, the Elephant disappeared from the scene, sinking into the deep mud.

Moral: Every despot has to meet his doom. Or: The tyrant has to meet his fate.

37. The Cobra and the Crows



There was a big banyan tree, where two crows - husband and wife, had prepared a nice nest and made it their home. In the hollow of the same tree, lived a black cobra.

The crows had a problem because the black cobra would climb up the tree and eat the new-borns, whenever the female crow hatched her eggs. They could do nothing to save them.

The crows went to a jackal, who lived in a nearby banyan tree, to seek his advice. They narrated everything to him and requested his advice for them to get rid of their problem.

They said, "O Friend, It has become dangerous to live here. Please tell us how we can protect our children from being eaten up by the wicked black cobra."

The jackal replied, "Please don't give up. Even powerful enemies can be overcome with the use of wit."

On hearing this, the crows requested, "O Friend, please tell us how we can overcome and destroy this wicked cobra."

The jackal told them a plan, "Fly into the capital of the kingdom, not far from here. Visit the house of someone who is wealthy and careless at the same time. Notice if something of value is lying around. If you find so, pick it up when the servants are watching you."

He continued, "You will need to fly slowly so that the servants can follow you. Return back to your tree and drop it in the hollow of the tree where the cobra lives. When the servants reach, they will kill the cobra when they see it."

The crows decided to follow the jackal's advice and flew off immediately according to his plan.

As they flew above the capital, the female crow noticed wealthy women swimming in a lake. They had left gold and pearl necklaces on the banks of the lake, which were guarded by royal servants.

At once the female crow swooped down, and picked up a big necklace in her beak, and started flying slowly.

When the royal servants noticed her, they picked up sticks and stones, and started throwing at her, and ran to chase her.

As planned, she dropped the necklace in front of the hollow of the tree, where the black cobra was asleep. She sat on one of the branches for the royal servants to notice.

When the royal servants arrived, the black cobra came out of the hollow of the tree to see what all the noise was about. The black cobra confronted the king's servants with swelling hood, but the servants attacked the cobra with sticks and stones to recover the necklace.

They killed the wicked cobra, and returned with the necklace. And the crows, having gotten rid of the cobra, lived happily.

The wise indeed say:

Even a very powerful enemy can be destroyed through deceit.

Or: Anybody can destroy others through deceit. There is a compulsive liar in India. He is destroying the opposition parties through his lies.

38. The Pawnbroker and the Farmer

A pawnbroker is a person who lends people money with interest. People give the pawnbroker something they own, which can be sold if they do not pay back the money before a certain time.

Dharm Chand was a pawnbroker. He lived in a village called Sonay Dia Chooria. Dharm Chand was a wealthy merchant. He made a lot of money by cheating innocent people. He owned a lot of gold: bangles, bracelets, necklaces, etc. People had no choice when they needed money; they had to beg Dharm Chand for money: money for their daughters' weddings; money to buy cows; money to buy goats, etc.

Karam Singh was a farmer who lived in the same village. Once he needed to buy a ox. He had no money. He went to Dharm Chand and asked for some money.

Dharm Chand said, "Hello, Karam Singh. You know the way I do my business. Before you take any money from me, you must leave something valuable as a guarantee."

Karam Singh gave him his gold ring and took 200 rupees.

Six months later, Karam Singh came to Dharm Chand. He brought 240 rupees with him – 200 rupees loan and 40 rupees interest.

Karam Singh said, "Can I have my ring back before I give you the money."

Dharm Chand replied, "You don't need to pay any interest because my mouse ate your ring. Just give me 200 rupees."

Karam Singh agreed and gave him 200 rupees, and then said, "Send your little son with me, and I will give him some sugar-cane juice so you can make rice pudding."

Dharm Chand agreed and sent his younger son with Karam Singh. Karam Singh locked the boy in a room. Then he made a bucket of sugar-cane juice. He took the juice to the pawnbroker and said, "Here is a bucket of sugar-cane juice."

Dharm Chand asked, "Where is my son?"

Karam Singh replied, "A big hawk has snatched him away."

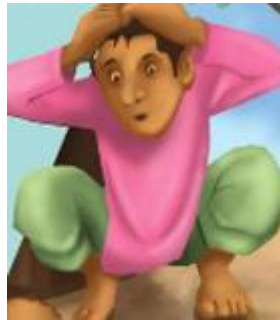
"How can a hawk carry away a big boy?" said Dharm Chand.

"If a mouse can eat a gold ring, then a hawk can carry away a boy," replied Karm Singh.

At once, pawnbroker returned the ring and the farmer freed his son.

Karam Singh thought to himself, "Juice of 10 sugar-canes saved me 40 rupees."

39. The Miser



Daulat Ram lived in small village. Most people in the village were poor, but he was the richest. He was loaded with money, but Daulat Ram hated to spend a rupee. He was a true miser. He gave nothing even towards a good cause. Once the villagers wanted build a school for children. They asked Daulat Ram for donation. Daulat Ram gave them nothing and showed that his pockets were empty.

One day, he sold all his property, except his house, and bought a huge brick of gold. Then he bought a sculpture of Laxmimata.



He installed the sculpture in the garden. Under the sculpture, he hid the brick of gold. Every night before sleep, he went to see the brick of gold. The glimpse of the brick cheered him up. Humming a happy tune, he went to sleep.

Every morning, he got up early. He took a bath and went to his treasure. He would admire his treasure and say, "You are the apple of my eye."

Time passed, and he was getting old. He hired a servant to cook his food. First, the servant thought that Daulat ram was a religious person, and went to the garden to worship Laxmimata. Then the servant realised that Daulat Ram never sang a word of any hymn. He became curious. One day, early in the morning Daulat Ram went to the town. No sooner he left the house than the servant went to the garden. The servant dug a little under the sculpture and found the brick of gold. He quietly picked up the brick and made off with it.

Daulat Ram returned home in the afternoon. He called his servant but there was no reply. He saw that the garden door was open. He went straight to the sculpture of Laxmimata. When he saw a hole under the sculpture, he nearly fainted. The treasure was not there. The gold brick vanished. Daulat Ram was overcome by grief and despair. He groaned and cried. He tried to tear his hair, but he was bald and had no hair.

When his neighbours heard his cries, they came up to him. They asked what had happened.

“My gold, my brick of gold!” cried the Miser, “my servant has robbed me!”

One old woman spoke, “You had a brick of gold in the garden, under the goddess Laxmimata. When people came up to you for donation – a donation to build a school – to improve the future of our children – you gave them nothing. You said that your pockets were empty...”

She picked up a large stone and threw it into the hole and then said, “Now, cover up the stone. It is worth just as much to you as the brick of gold you lost.”

40. The Hare and the Hound



Once upon a time, there lived a hound in a forest. His name was Shikari Kuta. One week, there was a heavy rain. For some days, it rained cats and dogs. The hound could not get any food for several days. He was very hungry. He was starving. He got up and started roaming here and there in search of his prey.

Suddenly, he saw a hare. He barked and started chasing it. The hare was quick and soon out of the hound's reach. The hound was tired. He stopped and went back to his den.

Ramu, the woodcutter, was in the forest. He was cutting a tree when he saw the hound chasing the hare. Ramu and the hound knew each other well. Sometimes, the hound helped Ramu. If Ramu was thirsty, the hound fetched water for him from the nearby lake.

That day, Ramu was in a laughing mood. He teased the hound. Ramu laughed and said, "You lazy dog. You could not even catch a weak, little hare. Shame on you! I thought my friend was strong and fast. What happened today?"

The hound replied, "You are wrong, my friend. For last few days, I had no food. Today, I felt weak. Do you know? The animal gets what he is destined to! Today, the hare was lucky and I unlucky..."

Ramu said, "Hound, don't be so despondent or heartsick. I've got plenty of food with me. We can share it. This morning my wife was in a good mood and she gave me extra food: goat curry, rice and full fat yoghurt, etc."