

Grandma's Stories ~ दादी माँ की कहानियाँ ~ नानि हंजु कथु ~ M.K.Raina

Folk Tales of Kashmir

M.K.Raina



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Note : Main aim of this work is to bring old Classic Kashmiri literature closer to our younger generations. Stories reproduced in Kashmiri language in this series are written in Devanagari-Kashmiri Script to reach those Kashmiris who are not well versed with the Nastaliq Script. And those written in English and Hindi are meant to reach those people who can't read Kashmiri. This will be a way to reach our rich Kashmiri literature to people outside Kashmir. It may be noted here that J&K Academy's works are already published in Nastaliq Script and need not be reproduced in that script again.

- M.K.Raina



Folk Tales of Kashmir

Clever Vazir *dàrà vâzìr*

Grandma started in time. Today's story was Clever Vazir. Children listened with rapt attention.

Dapaan, once upon a time there was a king. He was known for his charity. He too was sure that people, who take his charities, are able to change their fate. And he was proud of it.



King had a wise Vazir. He was of the opinion that everyone in the world reaps according to his or her Karma. King would not agree with him.



One day the King had an argument with the Vazir. King said, "What do you think can the Karma do in comparison to my charity? If I don't give charity to poor people, they will die of starvation. How will your Karma work there?" Vazir did not agree and stuck to his earlier statements that people were getting only what they deserved according to their Karma. He said, "One can not change his destiny until he himself works hard to stand on his own legs. This is the only way to change one's destiny." Both of them continued to differ.

One day, the King told him, "Meet me tomorrow morning and be with me *néh phôlûna pêthay*. Whosoever comes first to receive charity, I will give him as much money as he will be comfortable with. As a consequence, he will be rich and will be able to compare himself with you in prosperity." Vazir said, "yes I will be there to witness."

"What is this *néh phôlûna pêthay* Grandma?" Asked Vir.

"*néh* means sleep. *néh phôlûna pêthay* means right from the time of flowering of sleep", said Grandma, which in turn means early in the morning.

So, next day, the Vazir reached King's place before dawn. The first person who came for the charity was a woodcutter. King asked him why he wanted charity?



Woodcutter replied, "I used to do hard labour, get firewood from the jungle and sell it in the market. This way I used to earn my living. Now I am a destitute, can't work much. My family is starving. That is why I have come here."

King was moved. He gave him as many gold coins as he could carry.



When woodcutter reached his home, he called his wife from a distance and shouted, "Look what a treasure God sent us early morning today. Now we can live happily and pay all our debt. Nobody can ridicule us." There was no answer. His wife was not there. She had gone to some neighbour's house for *dagû múnvâní*.

"What is *dagû múnvâní* Grandma?" Asked Mahima

"*dagû múnvâní* means pounding of grains in a large mortar", said Grandma.



When the woodcutter did not find his wife in the house, he placed the gold coins safely in a corner and came out to look for her. Soon he saw her coming from a neighbour's house, with some rice tied in the edge of her garment. Woodcutter said to her, "Your days of misery are gone. God has relieved us of all troubles." He almost dragged her to the room where he had kept his gold coins. On reaching there, he was dumbstruck. There were no gold coins. He started cursing and slapping himself. When exhausted, he said to his wife, "God had given us but some thief has stolen it. It means, poverty is written in our destiny and it can't be written off.

Next day, he reached the King's palace again. When his turn came, he related the story of his misfortune. King was moved again. He handed him a precious diamond and said, "Go and say good-bye to your misfortune." You can move mountains with this diamond." Woodcutter paid his obeisance to the King and left.



On his way home, an idea struck woodcutter's mind. He said to himself, "Yesterday, on receipt of the charity from the King, I should have thanked God too, which I did not do. Let me do it today." So he stopped at a pond, put the diamond aside and started washing his hands and face before entering the temple near by. When he was busy purifying himself, a fish jumped out of the pond, ate the diamond and dived back into the pond.



When woodcutter finished, he saw the diamond missing. He wept bitterly, rolled himself on ground with grief but all in vain. He left for his home, weeping and wailing. On reaching home, he said to his wife, "Today, the King was benevolent again but we are just unfortunate people. Even he can't help us." His wife said, "Forget it now. Let us see what God has in store for us."

Third day, woodcutter went to Palace again. He overheard the King saying to his Vazir, "Woodcutter must have made his life comfortable. He must be a happy man now." His Vazir was yet to say anything when the woodcutter entered the Durbar, weeping and wailing. He related his story again.

The King whispered to his Vazir, "Looks like this man is a fool, couldn't make best use of the charity he got." Vazir said, "*Badshah Salaamat*, he is no fool. He is just reaping the fruits of his Karma." King was furious. He said to Vazir, "Don't say me all that. Let us give him a piece of semi-precious stone this time and see what he does with that." Saying this, the King gave a glittering piece of stone to the woodcutter. Woodcutter grabbed the stone and left. All his way back, the woodcutter touched the stone at intervals to confirm that it was there and nobody had taken it.



A little distance before his house, the woodcutter opened his hand and had a full glimpse of the stone, celebrating that he did not lose it. Just then, an eagle dived from the skies and took away the stone in its claws. Woodcutter fell on the ground.



"Didn't he see the eagle coming? It was not a small bird", said Kishmish.

"Anything can happen when one's luck is bad", said Grandma.

The woodcutter came to the conclusion that nobody could change his fate. He thought, had God wanted to change his fate, things would have been different from the very first day. He was sure now, that God helps those only who help themselves.

When he reached his home, he called his wife and said to her, "Give me my axe. I will see what I can do. Let it be a small quantity this time but I will not go begging to anybody now."

On the other hand, King was saying to his Vazir, "Woodcutter must have changed his life now. I am sure he has sold the stone for a good price."

Wazir said to King, "*Aalam Pannah*, it has not happened. He continues to be poor and unfortunate. Now that he has reportedly started his work again, I think his fate will definitely change."

Woodcutter brought a big load of wood from the jungle on the very first day. He sold it for a good amount. He got all the eatables for his home, rice, fish, oil, salt etc. His wife and children were happy. They had a hearty meal that day.

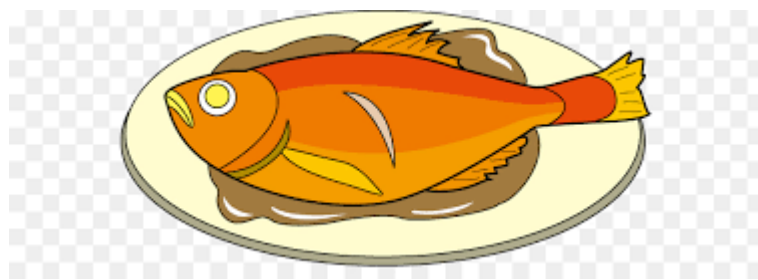
Second day, when he was cutting a big branch, he struck his axe forcefully on it to bring it down. Branch came down and with it also came down an eagle's nest. Woodcutters glittering stone was there in the nest. He collected the stone and left the wood and his axe behind.

On reaching home, he shouted from outside his house, "I saw the thief, I saw the thief."

"But it was an eagle, not a thief", Babloo wanted clarification.

"It was an eagle only but since woodcutter got his stone from its nest, he called the eagle thief", clarified Grandma.

Woodcutter's wife was cleaning the fish her husband had got the day before. When she was splitting a big fish, King's diamond came out with its guts. She was overjoyed. She also went running to her husband, shouting 'saw the thief, saw the thief'.



A lady in their neighbourhood heard them. She got panicky. She was the person who had stolen the gold coins from the woodcutter's house. Scared that her secret was out now and she might face King's wrath, she hurriedly came to woodcutter's house and handed them their gold coins. She also apologised to them.

Dapaan, Woodcutter and his family lived a life full of gaiety thereafter.

When the King heard their story, he praised his Vazir and said, "Yes, I admit, one reaps according to one's Karmas. You were right.'

Children were happy. They left and Grandma went to her bed.



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