

THE CROW'S HASSLE



ONCE upon a time a farmer's wife was sifting corn. Then a crow, flew by, and swooped off with a grain from her basket. The farmer's wife got really angry and threw a mud ball at the bird. She had such good aim, the mud ball hit the crow, who fell to the ground, the grain of corn fell out of the crows mouth and it rolled under the roots of the great Banyan tree. The farmer's wife ran up to the crow, and grabbed it by the tail, **"Give me back my grain of corn, if you don't, I'll eat YOU instead!**

The poor bird was so afraid, **"I'll get the grain of corn and give it back to you. I promise, I'll get it, I promise."** He tried and tried but his beak couldn't quite reach the corn, **"Don't worry wife of farmer, I'll get it somehow, don't eat me, I promise I'll get the corn. I know what to do."**

So he flew to the wood-cutter and said,

"Man! man! cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn to save my life from the farmer's wife"

But the wood-cutter refused to cut the tree; So the crow flew on to the King's palace, and said,

"King! king! Punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the King refused to punish the man; So the crow flew on to the Queen, and said,

"Queen! Queen! convince King: He won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the Queen refused to convince the King; So the crow flew on till he met a snake, and said,

"Snake! snake! bite Queen; She won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife"

But the snake refused to bite the Queen; So the crow flew on till he met a stick, and said,

"Stick! Stick! Beat the snake; Snake won't bite Queen; Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man: Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the stick refused to beat the snake; So the crow flew on till he saw a fire, and said,

"Fire! Fire! Burn the stick; Stick won't beat snake; Snake won't bite Queen; Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the fire refused to burn the stick; So the crow flew on till he met some water, and said,

"Water! water! Put out fire; Fire won't burn stick; Stick won't beat snake; Snake won't bite Queen; Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the water refused to quench the fire; So the crow flew on till he met an ox, and said,

"Ox! Ox! Drink the water; Water won't put out fire; Fire won't burn stick; Stick won't beat snake; Snake won't bite Queen; Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the ox refused to drink the water; So the crow flew on till he met a rope, and said,

"Rope! rope! tie up ox; Ox won't drink water; Water won't put out fire; Fire won't burn stick; Stick won't beat snake; Snake won't bite Queen; Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the rope wouldn't bind the ox; so the crow flew on till he met a mouse, and said,

"Mouse! Mouse! Chew up rope; Rope won't tie up ox; Ox won't drink water; Water won't put out fire; Fire won't burn stick; Stick won't beat snake; Snake won't bite Queen;

Queen won't convince King; King won't punish man; Man won't cut tree; I can't get the grain of corn; To save my life from the farmer's wife!"

But the mouse said to the crow,

"But Crow, if I chew the rope, the rope will tie up the ox; the ox will drink up the water; the water will put out the fire; the fire will burn the stick; the stick will beat the snake; the snake will bite the queen; the queen will convince the king; the king will punish the man; And then the man, well the man will cut down the great banyan tree!"

The crow said, **"Yes! Then I can get the grain of corn and save my life from the farmer's wife."** And the mouse said, **"The great banyan tree must not die. If the great banyan tree dies... the man will have no dead branches to chop. The king and queen will have no shade to enjoy. The snake will have no vines to climb. The stick will have no twigs to play with. The fire will have no leaves to burn. The water will have no roots to feed. The ox will have no bark to scratch his back. The rope will have no tree to hang from. Don't you see crow! If the great banyan tree dies, everyone suffers!"**

The crow was amazed and asked, **"Well it's the only thing I can do save my life from the farmer's wife."** But the mouse was clever and said, **"There must be something else to do. I know someone who helps everyone, who is very old and wise. Let us go and ask from them."**

Do you know who they went to go ask?... The crow and the mouse went to ask the great Banyan tree! The crow said to the Banyan tree, **"I need the mouse to chew the rope; So the rope will tie the ox; So the ox will drink the water; So the water will put out the fire; So the fire will burn the stick; So the stick will beat the snake; So the snake will bite the queen; So the queen will convince the king; So the king will punish the man; So the man will cut you down; So I can get the grain of corn to save my life from the farmer's wife!"**

The great Banyan tree just laughed, **"Ohahaha, Oh all that doesn't have to happen! I got a much better idea..."**

The crow said, **"Oh, anything to save my life from the farmers wife!"**The Banyan tree said, **"Mouse, is it true that you are rather sneaky?"** The mouse said, **"Why yes, I am very sneaky."** The Banyan tree said, **"Is it true that you can squeeze through any crack"**The mouse said, **"Why yes, I can squeeze through any little old crack!"**The Banyan tree said, **"Why don't you sneak down in to my roots and get the grain of corn."**

So the mouse snuck in the great banyan trees roots and got the grain of corn. The crow gave the grain of corn to the farmer's wife... The Great Banyan tree was still alive. The man still had branches to chop. The king and queen still had shade to enjoy. The snake still had vines to climb. The stick still had twigs to play with. The fire still had leaves to burn. The water still had roots to feed. The ox still had bark to scratch his back. The rope still had a tree to hang from

The farmer's wife went back to sifting corn. The crow flew away, and everyone was happy. He finally understood that when you think only of yourself, life becomes a hassle after hassle after hassle. But when you think of others everything is taken care of. The Guru says,

"Sadh Sang Sabh Hot Nibera

By the company of the Holy, all problems are ended."