The Dhanwar’s crow

Deep in the forest, there lived a Dhanwar who had a pet crow. When he went out hunting or to pluck the wild rice that grew near the lake, the crow would fly to Brahma’s court. There it would perch on the neem tree in the courtyard and listen all that Brahma said, for everything that Brahma says will come to pass.

Once, when the crow was on his favourite perch, Brahma and his scribe came and sat down nearby.

‘This year there will be no rainfall,” said Brahma. ‘There will be a great famine, but it will rain on the hills.”

As soon as the crow heard this, it flew off to tell the Dhanwar. “Go to the hills and sow your rice there. The rain will only fall on the hilltops, and your crops will thrive,”

The Dhanwar did as the crow said, and later when famine struck the low lands, the Dhanwar and his family had enough rice to survive. Brahma, looking down, wondered how the Dhanwar had escaped his fate.

The next year, when the crow was on the neem trees in the court of Brahma. He heard Brahma say, ‘This year there will be an even greater famine. All the crops will be destroyed by insects and pests.’

The crow flew off and told the Dhanwar what Brahma had said. “How will I save my family this year?” the Dhanwar asked sadly. “I cannot fight the pests.”

“Brahma said there will be a lakh of pests and insects,” said the crow. “So if you call two lakh mynah birds, hawks and kites, they will eat up the pests and your crops will be saved.”

The Dhanwar, with the crow’s help, invited two lakh birds to his fields. When the pests and insects came, the birds gobbled them up, and the Dhanwar’s fields yielded a rich harvest.

Brahma looked down and saw the fields. “The Dhanwar’s fields haven’t been destroyed. He’s had a good harvest. How has he escaped again?” he asked his scribe. “I will fix him this time. Next year only those who plant dry stalks will get a good yield. All the others will die before they bear grain, and famine will spread all over the land. Now let’s see how the Dhanwar escapes his fate. No man in his senses will plant dry stalks.”

But the crow had heard this and told his master what to do. And though many called him mad, the Dhanwar planted dry stalks and when the harvest time came, only he got bushels of grain.

Brahma looking down from his cloud heights saw that the Dhanwar had not been affected by the famine at all. “How did he know that the dry stalks would give him a good crop?” he wondered.

The scribe said, “He listens to good advice and it is a hardworking, alert man. In times of difficulty he does what he must, and such men are successful. You see, his pet crow listens to all you say and then tells its master what to do.”

Brahma nodded and then said, “This year those who sow seeds that have not been separated from their stalks in time, shall not get a good crop. But I’m sure the Dhanwar will escape. I can see the clever crow flying off to tell him.”

And so it happened. The clever crow told the Dhanwar what to do and at harvest time he got many hundreds of bags of rice. This time Brahma looked down on the man and his crow and smiled.