

THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS FORTUNE

(Mushkel Aasan)

Translated from Gujarati

by

Dhun Madon and Cyrus Madon

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Revised 2007.

PREFACE



I wish to dedicate this book to all Zoroastrians, young and old, who have settled abroad and are unable to read the story of **Mushkel Aasan** from the Gujarati book. I have taken keen interest in this story since the age of 8, and my family and I have greatly benefited from reciting this throughout the years. It has the power to get you out of the worst kinds of difficulties. **When there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel, I can assure you that the light will be brought to you in a miraculous way by our Holy Angel Behram Yazad (also spelled "Warharan", or in the Avestan language "Verethraghna") known as the "Yazata of Victory".**

This event is supposed to have taken place in Iran some thousands of years ago. It is advisable to recite this story not just in times of difficulties, when spiritual help is needed, but habitually.

I wish to thank my children Sharon and Farrah who, in spite of not being well versed in the Gujarati language, have supported me in reciting the story from time to time. This is what got me started on an English translation. I also wish to thank my husband Cyrus and Dr. Sam Kerr who have assisted me in compiling and translating this story into English.

**Dhun Madon
Sydney,
Australia.
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METHOD FOR RECITING

It is important to bathe and say your Kusti prayers before reciting this story. While one person recites the story, others sitting in acknowledge periodically with a “Jee ray jee”. If you are alone, place a small mirror in front of you and recite the story while simultaneously acknowledging with a “Jee ray Jee” periodically yourself.

SUITABLE OFFERINGS

While folks back in India use “Channa”,(a kind of roasted chick pea), where this is not available, nuts, dates or other dried fruit may be used. Light an oil lamp (Deewo) and some incense sticks and place a small vase of flowers with your offerings. You may also light sandalwood if available.

(RECITE THE FOLLOWING)

A million thanks to Lord Almighty and all His Spiritual Powers and to Behram Yazad. May Your Blessings protect me and my loved ones and ease our difficulties in life. Please accept my humble offerings to You today. Amen!

THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS FORTUNE (Mushkel Aasan)

Mishkin was a very poor woodcutter who earned a meager livelihood by chopping and selling wood. He lived in a small house with his wife and daughter. One day when his neighbours were preparing a meal, Mishkin’s daughter was enticed by the tempting aroma that was wafting through. She wanted that food so much that she went over to their house on the pretext of borrowing some kindling wood, all the while hoping they would offer her some of that delicious food. The neighbours gave her the kindling but did not offer her any of their food. After a while she went again with the excuse that the kindling had burnt out and could she please get some more. She got

her kindling but once again had to come away without sampling some of their food. The poor girl was hungry and desperate and when the neighbours were about to sit down for their meal she made one more bold attempt by asking for some more wood as the last lot had burnt out too. By this time the neighbours were wise to her intentions and in a tone of annoyance said “we know why you keep coming here. Take this wood but remember, it is a sin to deliberately put out a fire”. With that they slammed the door in her face. Mishkin’s daughter came away in tears and was miserable for the rest of the day.

That evening when her father returned home from the forest she sobbed and told him of the rich food the neighbours were preparing and her failed attempts to get some of that. Mishkin consoled his daughter by saying that the following day he would go early to the forest and collect a larger load of wood. With the extra money that he would earn, they would be able to eat very well. Early next morning Mishkin went to the forest; but to his utter disappointment he saw that a fire was raging through the forest. Mishkin waited the whole day in the hope that the fire would subside. That evening a tearful and very sad Mishkin went home to his family. All they had to fill their bellies that night was some water. The next day was the same for this poor family. By the evening of the third day Mishkin could not get himself to go home to his starving wife and daughter. His sobs of despair attracted the attention of five Angels, Behram Yazad, Ardibehsht Yazad, Meher Yazad, Bahman Yazad and Sarosh Yazad, all dressed in robes of white green and yellow, who were passing by. They approached Mishkin and Behram Yazad, the Angel for solving human problems, asked him “why are you weeping? Do tell us and if it is possible, we will surely resolve your problems.” Mishkin at first did not want to share his woes with them but then the burden on his heart was too great and he poured out his tale, telling them of his daughter’s humiliating experience with his selfish neighbours and of his promise to her to bring home extra money for a good meal and finally of the tragic forest fire that had them all starving for the past three days. Behram Yazad picked up three handfuls of dirt from the ground and put them in Mishkin's lap, saying “keep this safely with you. If your situation improves with this, then whenever convenient narrate your story to others and remember us with offerings of nuts, flowers and sweets”. Mishkin thought to himself that this little pile of dirt was certainly not going to solve his problems. He would throw it away as soon as they had gone. The Angels disappeared into the air but a mysterious voice came from above, “Oh Mishkin, look after this pile of dirt as you would, your own life.

You will prosper with it. Do not throw it away; otherwise you will face poverty all your life". When Mishkin returned home he threw the dirt in one corner of his house and once again the family went to bed with just water to satisfy their hunger. In the very early hours of the next morning the neighbours noticed bright flashes of light coming out of Mishkin's house. They thought it was a fire and raised the alarm. Mishkin's daughter woke up and in turn shook awake her father saying to him "there is unusual brightness in the house, father, could it be a thief?" Mishkin replied, "don't be afraid my child, we have nothing in our house except some rope and an axe for the thief to steal. You have been hungry these past few days and are only imagining this." However, Mishkin was disturbed by the unusual brightness around the house and got up to check for himself. He was amazed to see that the pile of dirt he had dumped the previous night was now a pile of dazzling and glittering gem stones. Mishkin put these away safely and went back to bed.

In the morning Mishkin thanked God for his good fortune and went to the market to sell one of his precious stones. The first jeweller he visited was so amazed to see the piece that he asked Mishkin to name his own price for the piece. Thinking that the man could not be serious, Mishkin went to another jeweller to get the gem valued. "In all the years that I have traded here I have never seen a stone as precious as this" said this old jeweller. "I will pile three different lots of money and you can toss your gem and take away whatever pile of money it lands on" he explained. Mishkin tossed his gem and it landed on the largest pile of money. Mishkin now went shopping for groceries. He bought the choicest items and hired a labourer to deliver the groceries to his house. He also bought nuts, fruits and flowers and these he distributed to the people he met on his way home. In the meantime at Mishkin's house his wife and daughter refused to accept the groceries, convinced that the poor labourer had brought these to the wrong address. These would surely belong in a rich man's house. As they were arguing over this, Mishkin arrived home. "We are starving and there is not a crumb to eat in the house and here are all these groceries that are supposed to be ours!" exclaimed his puzzled daughter to Mishkin. "Have you been out robbing someone?" Mishkin smiled as he told his family, "these, my dears, have been bestowed upon us by God" and so saying he told them the whole story from the time he met the five Angels near the burning forest to the time he got the large pile of money at the jeweler's in exchange for one of his gem stones.

It was not long before Mishkin had a house built that even humbled the King's Palace by comparison. One day as the King was passing by he was

astonished to see this house that was more palatial than his own. Upon making enquiries the King was told that Mishkin who was a simple wood cutter had risen from rags to riches through the grace of God, and was the owner of that beautiful home. The king was intrigued and this made him wonder whether such a man would be humble or arrogant. To test this, he decided to send a platter of food from his own table to Mishkin's house. Mishkin and his family were genuinely humbled by the King's gesture and wondered how they would return his favour. In the end Mishkin returned the King's platter with a large dazzling diamond from his collection. There was not a single jewel in the King's collection that could compare to this diamond; and his daughter, the Princess, had it set into a necklace.

Being a very religious man, Mishkin decided to go out of town on a Pilgrimage. He entrusted his daughter with the task of praying to Behram Yazad with regular offerings of dried fruits, flowers and nuts. Mishkin's daughter had many friends now and one day they were at a local pond where they met the Princess who had come to bathe there with her servants. The two soon became good friends and visited each other's homes quite frequently. In her enjoyment, Mishkin's daughter forgot her father's instructions that she pray to Behram Yazad.

One day when the two girls came upon a lake with their friends, the Princess wanted to go for a swim. Mishkin's daughter could not swim and agreed to look after the very precious necklace and the Princess' clothes. When she returned from her swim, the Princess noticed the diamond missing from her necklace. There was an altercation between the two girls. The Princess accused Mishkin's daughter of stealing the diamond from her necklace. Her pleas of innocence fell on deaf ears and a very angry Princess went home and complained to her father the King that jealousy had prompted Mishkin's daughter to steal her diamond. The King was furious. He ordered that all of Mishkin's possessions be confiscated and his wife and daughter be thrown into jail. Mishkin in the meanwhile was on his way home when he was waylaid by bandits and robbed. Upon coming home he was informed of his family's arrest and went straight over to the King for an audience. "Your Highness", said Mishkin in a reverential tone. "It is unbecoming for the man of the house to sit at home while his wife and daughter languish in jail. Please release them from the jail and let me take their place instead." The king agreed to this and Mishkin went to jail instead of his family. That night an Angel appeared in his dream and spoke, "you were granted so much wealth and happiness in your life but you failed to make a simple offering to Behram Yazad". Mishkin realized that his

daughter's forgetful ways had brought all this upon them. He was very sorry and pleaded for mercy. "Very well" said the Angel," in the morning when you wake up you will find some coins under your pillow and you will be granted your freedom. Find someone to buy you nuts, dried fruits and flowers and pray to Behram Yazad with these offerings".

When Mishkin woke up the next morning he found the coins under his pillow, and soon after he was set free. Outside the jail he stopped a horse-rider and requested him to buy the items for his offering. "I am in a hurry to buy clothes for my son's wedding," the man said. "I have no time to fetch these things for you." So saying, the man rode off. His horse soon tripped, throwing the man from his mount and breaking his leg. Mishkin then asked a sad old man that was passing by to do his bidding. "I will fetch whatever you want," the old man said, "I was on my way to buy a shroud for my young son who is dying, but I can surely spare you some time. The old man brought Mishkin the items for the offering and Mishkin invited him to join in the prayers. Mishkin narrated his story and together they prayed to Behram Yazad for the health and happiness of their families. When the old man finally arrived home he was given the happy tidings that his son was well again and there was rejoicing all around. This established the old man's faith in Behram Yazad and he too became a regular devotee.

One day, not long after, the King, Queen and Princess were taking a stroll in their garden when a large bird flew over and dropped the missing diamond at their feet. They were very sorry for what they had done to Mishkin and his family and the King personally apologized to them. Mishkin said to the King "you have shamed our family with your accusations of theft. What man will ever marry my daughter now"? Seeing the truth in this, the King and Queen asked for his daughter's hand in marriage to their only son, the Prince.

They were one family now and visited each others' homes often. On one such occasion when the King and Queen were over at Mishkin's house the Queen noticed that Mishkin had laid out these offerings and was praying. "What is the significance of these fruits, nuts and flowers?" she jokingly asked Mishkin. "They are the source of all our happiness" Mishkin replied and enlightened her about the blessings of Behram Yazad. "I have lost my brothers for the past seven years" the Queen said to Mishkin. "If they should turn up I will make your story renowned throughout our Kingdom." Together they made an offering to Behram Yazad and prayed for the safe return of the Queen's brothers. Three days later the brothers suddenly came back to the Queen. With her belief in the powers of Behram Yazad firmly cemented, the very joyous Queen made this story known far and wide

throughout the Kingdom and advised the citizens to have faith in Behram Yazad too.

END



When our great Priests left Iran by ship to save our religion, there was a huge storm and it is only with your Divine help, Behram Yazad that our Eternal Fire was saved and preserved in the Holy Fire Temple that was established in Udwada, India.

Just as Mishkin and his family's desires were fulfilled, just as the old man's son rose up from his death-bed, just as the Queen's brothers mysteriously returned after seven years, so too, Behram Yazad may you bestow your Blessings upon my family and may all our problems be resolved.

May God Almighty resolve all our difficulties and May Peace be upon all of the World. **AMEN.**

(Pray 5 Yatha Ahu Vairyo and 3 Ashem Vohu here.)

We are trying to have free copies of this book available in most Agiaris and Atash Behrams in India. Or visit <http://www.avesta.org/other/mishfinl.htm>