

PAHAKAS

1. Aaee taando khararan, borchyani thee vethi

She came merely to take a piece of charcoal(taando) , but she stayed on to become the head chef(borchyani). In English there is a similar saying, "Give him an inch and he'll take a mile." The proverb is based on a common enough occurrence amongst Sindhis in the past. In Sindh, before the Partition, Sindhi cooking was done on charcoal fuel. Sometimes the housewife would run out of pieces of coal for her cooking and she would often be found walking across to the home next door to ask her neighbour for a piece of burning charcoal. The pahako points to the fact that while it is all very well to help others when they need help, philanthropy can often result in losses to the giver, with the receiver misusing his access to the home and slowly taking it over completely. It was also used as a reference to the British who similarly came to India as mere traders but stayed on and took over the nation.

2. Aaha gareebaa qahar khudaayee

If one tortures the poor (gareeba), then even God (khuda) will not spare the tormentor. Sindhis believe that one should never harm the poor and helpless since one day, God himself will avenge such an act. The understanding given to children and adults through this proverb is that ultimately, our negative actions will boomerang on us, a karmic belief from the Gita. "Aah!" is the sound uttered in pain, but "aaha" also stands for being cursed by an innocent. Gareeb or gareeba represents the helpless and disadvantaged. "qahar khudaayee", loosely translated is "beware divine justice or the wrath of God", with khudayee an offshoot from "Khuda" or God. Thus, if one troubles a poor/helpless person, thinking that he cannot retaliate because of his condition, then one is mistaken, because God himself will intervene to set one right. Here's an example: Some friends were at a restaurant, when one of them (the richest) began to humiliate and insult the waiter, with the waiter meekly accepting the abuse. His friends are uncomfortable but keep quiet. Later, the abuser drives to a supermarket, and when he returns to his car, he finds his tyre has been punctured! It was unusually quick divine justice but his friend laughed and said, "Aaha gareeba qahar khudayee."

3. Abbo ghasae dheeya vasae

The father struggles and labours so that his daughter is well settled. Abbo is the derivative of "Abba" (father), however, these days most Sindhi children don't use "Abba" or "Baba" or "Dada," instead its either "Papa" or "Daddy" or "Dad." Well if your son is grown up, he might even call you, "ol man." Ghasae, literally refers to the act of scrubbing the ground hard repeatedly, and in the figurative sense, it means to labour long and hard. Dheeya is daughter. Vasae: to settle. Daughters are, generally, considered "settled" only through marriage. Sindhis, like several other communities, by and large, consider a girl-child as a liability. This prejudice is strengthened because of the heavy dowry the bride must take with her. The bridegroom's family demands items(including cash and jewellery) to support a flashy life-style; if their demands often expressed as broad hints, are ignored, the alliance might be broken off, or the bride might have a rough start in her new home. Wanting to ensure an easy transition for his daughter into her new home, Abba borrows heavily and sometimes spends his life paying back loan sharks. The most amazing part of this is that even highly educated grooms from prestigious Western colleges, refuse to put an end to this social evil which is outlawed in India. One day this proverb will die a natural death when educated parents of educated sons stand firm and mean it when they say, "All we want is the wedding saree/attire she comes in at the reception."

Thus, 60 years after our Independence, isn't it sad that when a Sindhi is told, "It's a GIRL!", instead of being euphoric, he tempers his joy by reminding himself that he has to work doubly hard now so he can pay her dowry when she is ready for marriage, perhaps, twenty years later.

4. Atto khaado koo-ay, maara payee gaabae tey

The mouse ate the flour but it was the calf that was punished. In other words, the cunning get away with crimes for which the innocent are wrongly punished. Atto= flour, Khaado= ate, Koo-ay= derivative of koo-oh=mouse(known for being quick and sly and difficult to trap), Maara payee = a beating was given Gaabae tey= to the calf. A calf is taken as an innocent, simple and clean animal, incapable of deviousness. Gaabey is the derivative of gaaba=calf. I find that, we can use this pahako for Sindhis. While the British, the Muslim League and the Congress were all responsible for the mess caused in Sindh, they, like the koo-oh or clever mouse, got away unscathed, while it was the gaabo (the calf) of the pacifist community of innocent Sindhi Hindus that was punished for it.

e.g. An old Amma talks to her sister on the phone:

Partition waqut, Sindhin khey chaa milo? Sindhi Hinduan khe ta vado nuksaan thyo- aakhir atto khaado koo-ay, maara payee gaabey tey.

5. Allah dey tho, para khanghey khanghey tho dey!

God gives.. but makes you cough real hard for it Allah= God, Dey tho= gives, Para=but, Khanghey=to cough It was a lovely

spring morning, and Vatayo fakir, sitting atop a tree, he wondered what God was going to give him for lunch. He was about to descend from the tree to go looking for his meal, when he noticed a farmer heading for the tree on which he was perched. He had brought lunch with him and immediately Vatayo thought, "Indeed, God is the provider!!" Then he thought, "The farmer is a generous Sindhi, so all I need to do is to make my presence known, and he will surely invite me to join him for lunch." But since he was high up on the tree, the farmer did not notice him. As soon as the farmer unwrapped his lunch consisting of baajrey jee maanee (millet bread), beha ain sirhinh jo saagg (vegetable consisting of lotus root and mustard greens), Vatayo cleared his throat to draw the farmer's attention. Unfortunately, the farmer was a bit hard of hearing, and didn't hear him.

He tried again, but once again there was no luck. By now the fragrance of the delicious meal was driving him nuts. Vatayo thought, "This just doesn't work! Now if I wait any longer, There will be nothing left for him to offer me! Maybe I should stop being so subtle." He began coughing louder, and louder, until finally the farmer heard him and looked up to see Vatayo choking. "Saiin Vataya Fakir! I'm sorry I didn't see you up there! Why don't you join me for lunch?" Vatayo Fakir thought to himself, "Alaah dey tho, para khanghey khanghey tho dey!" (God gives, but only after he has made you cough repeatedly for it) This proverb is used when someone is having great difficulty getting something.

E.g. Moti milyo dosta saan, "Arrey Yaara Hari, tun kiyen aaheen? Budho-aa toon

dadha paisa kamaya aahen!" Hari jawab tho dey, "Yaara, gaal na puch, eeho sach aah ke Jhoolelala jee barkat aahey, para yaara, Allah dey tho, para khangheykhanghey tho dey!"

6. Addha khey chadey sajey danh daurjey, ta addh bhi vinaijey

Addha= derived from addh= half, Chadey=leave, Saje=derived from sajo= full Danh= towards, Daurey= runs (in Hindi the word, daurna=run is similar)

Ta= then,Bhi=also, Vinaijey= loses.

Or

7. Addha khey chhadey jo sajey puthyan dukkey, tenkhe sajee ta na miley, para adha kaan bhi sikkey

Puthyan dukey= runs after, tenkey= to him, sajee= full, na miley= does not get, sikkey= longs for, or still with the Hindi influence it says,

8. Addha khey chhadey jo sajeeya laye dorrey, so adhu ta vinjaiyey, para sajee laye roye

roye= cries for

If you have half, and not satisfied with it, you hanker for the full, you leave the half, run after the full, then you find that instead of gaining the full, you have also lost the half. A similar English proverb is, "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush." Another one is, "half a loaf is better than none." The proverb offers that it is more sanguine to go for the smaller but certain profit, than to lose everything for a more uncertain but greater profit." The idea behind this is that looking for more profit, we lose even what we have or in Sindhi we can say, "Nafey je lalalach mein, nuksaan sehamn..."

Example:

A man/woman may be unhappy with their spouses, because of some human errors that person may have, and then he or she tries to chase another "better" person, but in the process, he/she might find that he/she gained nothing, and instead even lost the partner who made him dissatisfied earlier. The philosophy here is that man must learn to be grateful for what he has and not take it for granted, and should avoid hankering for what he doesn't have and lose everything in the bargain.

9. Achchee daaree atto kharaab

Achchee= white, Daaree= beard,Atto=flour, Kharaab=bad

White beard, bad flour

"If a man does something for which he is not fit or suited, the result will not be good."

There were two nawabs who were always trying to out-smart one another. One nawab would try to kidnap the other nawab's children to force them to do menial jobs like cattle-grazing, or making them to slog in his fiefdom; the other nawab would entrap old men(white-bearded men) and imprison and isolate them into a serai(big room) and get them to grind the wheat into flour. One day a young cunning boy went up to a white-haired old man and, while crying, he told him that his family was in dire straits and his mother had sent him to look for his father's brother, and the description she gave him of the chacha(uncle) exactly fitted him. The white-haired was moved and completely taken in by this dramatic and moving account and feeling sorry for him, decided to go to his help. When they reached there he realized he had been trapped, he was surrounded and then made to sit down to grind the wheat. However, not knowing how to do this, he was unable to grind the wheat correctly, either he went too fast or too slow, and thus the flour came out very thick or badly made. Seeing this, the people taunted him, saying that, he being an old man at least should know how to grind the wheat. But the

meaning is that even if one is old and experienced, when one does a job for which one is suited, the result will be bad or defective. That's when one says, "achchee daaree, atto kharaab!"

10. Aaya Mir, bhagga Pir

When the Mirs arrived, the Pirs fled.

Aaya= arrived/came

Bhagga=fled/ran

A Pir is a saint or wise man.

A little history as background to this proverb:

Sindh was ruled by the cultured Kalhora Pirs from 1701 to 1782.

The period of their reign is known as the "golden period" because, amongst other things, arts and literature blossomed. The three most creative and recognised Sindhi poets, Shah Abdul Latif (1689-1752) Sachal(1739-1829) and Sami(1743-1850) flourished at this time. These Pirs were overthrown by the aggressive Talpur Mirs who ruled between 1782 and 1843.

The idea being expressed through this proverb is that the arrival of uncouth or aggressive people is a clear signal for cultured and sophisticated people to leave since there can be no common ground between them. The proverb states that the two cannot co-exist. Example: If a person has a discussion with a friend who begins to abuse him (toon Hitler aahen, tuijho magaz kharab thyo aahey, etc) it is a clear signal to the wiser one to bow out of the discussion and leave because the dialogue has descended to an uncouth level, to which the wise one will not stoop. This proverb is sometimes misquoted as "Aaya Pir, bhagga Mir" but history shows us that this is in error since it was the Mirs who drove out the Pirs and not vice versa.

11. Akul khaaey gum

Akul= intelligence/wisdom, khaaey=eat, but here, absorbing, gum= sorrow/ unhappiness.

The intelligent/wise one knows to absorb pain. It is only the intelligent/wise person who, when provoked, refuses to retaliate, and ends up absorbing the pain. Because of this, the otherwise escalating, provocative situation, often peters out and peace returns. The use of judicious silence or a wise non-combative approach is being recommended by this pahako. The most apt example of this is the lightning conductor.

12. Aahey ta Eida, na ta Rozo

or

Aahey Eid, na ta Rozo

An interpretation of this is that one should live within one's means. One should not overspend when you have the money as if it is always going to be the festival of Eid and then run out of your funds and be forced to fast or starve and thus mourn as in the month of Ramadan when Muslims perform rozas. In other words, those who know not thrift or know not to balance their budget. Eid or Roza is implied towards the same person ... not towards life, fortune or any community. Eid or Roza can be replaced by Ddyari (Diwali) and Upvas (Fasting). Aahey ta Ddyari, na ta Upvas. In Sindh Eid and Roza was better known because majority of population was Muslim. Fasting during Ramzan is called Roza and it lasts for 40 days during which period Muslims eat and drink before sunrise and aftersunset only. This has a parallel in a Cornish proverb for this pahako: "Always a feast or a famine in Sicily." It shows us how a person who does not plan for tomorrow ends up in difficulties later.

13. Jey dijey na, ta dukhayje bi na

The first explanation is that if one is unable to help or give to somebody, then at least one should be scrupulous in not hurting the person's feelings. For example, if somebody asks you for a loan, and you are not in a position to oblige, then at least you should be very polite to the person, and not hurt his feelings. If you are not able to give, you have no right to hurt his/her feelings.

Example is: B asks for A for a monetary help. A does not help but scolds and tells B

"why did you not manage your own money well.. why did you not manage your business well .. why did you spend unwisely? .. how many people you own ? and so on ... Some cruel kings even asked their subordinates "isko dhakaa deke baahar nikaalo". These are typical examples of cruelties and the Pahako is well said. Another explanation is that if one cannot give happiness to others, at least we should not give unhappiness, thereby increasing the other person's load. Similarly, if you cannot love another, at least do not hurt him/her.

14. Shaque-a-jee dawa ta Hakeem Lukman-a khey bhi kona aahey

Shaque= suspicion, dawa=cure/medicine

Hakeem= a doctor (could even be a quack/informal doctor).

There is no cure even with Hakeem Lukman for (needless) suspicion. Hakeem Luqman was one of the navratnas in Akbar's reign. Birbal was one of the other eight. Also, there is additional info about a Hakeem Luqman, perhaps he is another hakeem by the same name. Luqman used to be one of the top doctors in olden days. A person suffering from a psychosomatic ailment but who thought it was a physical ailment went to Hakim Sahib, who assured him that there was nothing wrong with him physically and that he need not worry. But this person was not convinced and got even more depressed. Even Hakim Luqman was helpless, and could not cure this person. The pahako, in other words, says, "shaq jo ilaj Lukman hakim wat bhi kone." There is no remedy for suspicion!

E.g.

Whichever maid a Sindhi acquaintance of mine employed, she was mistrustful from the very beginning, the maid was guilty before the crime! So when the maid went to the bathroom to wash the clothes (this is before washing machines arrived in our homes) she would ask her to keep the door of the bathroom wide open and she would sit on a chair in the living room and stare at the maid while she washed clothes. If only I had known this proverb then, I could have used it that day as we shared a cup of tea while she kept an eagle eye on the poor embarrassed maid. I am sure you know of spouses who constantly cross-question their partners never secure they are being told the truth, well, here's one for them.

15. Maaran vaarey khaan, Rakhan vaaro vado aahey

Which means: God, the Protector is greater than he who wants to harm you.

16. Badana mein dum na thahey, naalo "Zorawar Khan!"

He can barely breathe (he is so weak) but his name is "Zorawar Khan!" (zorawar= fierce, forceful). This can be said of those who boasts a lot but has nothing really to show for it!

17. Labhey lath na, Baabo bandukan vaaro OR Labhey lath kona, baabo bandukan waro

About people who paint an exaggerated image about themselves, Sindhis claimed:

Which means that he is a type of person who does not even own a stick, and he claims to be a master of guns.

18. Har mein heenga, Badhan seenga,

Dar te dosti daahoon karay.

Har = Gathri Heenga = neighing of a donkey, Badhan = tie up, Seenga = horns of a bull, Dar = door, Dosti = friendship, Dahoon Kare = complains Those who have nothing on hand but show off as if they have plenty will find that their friends will complain of their unhelpful attitude.

19. Sakhryoon Kunyoon Ubhaaman ghano

Sakhryoon = empty

kunyoon = vessels = pots

ubhaman = boil up

ghano = more

Empty vessels (when put on fire) make too much noise, in other words, those who have nothing, boast a lot.

20. Hik Moong Daryaan, Sajo Ghar Bharyaan

I grind one Moong, and fill the entire house. Actually, this is in reference to ... I push one light switch, and fill the whole house with bright light. Simply put, the proverb says that just one act of kindness will bring joy and remove darkness from your life.

21. Vyaaj raat jo bhi pandh karey

Vyaaj= interest earned

pandh karey= walks

Interest continues to walk even in the night, i.e. it silently builds your capital.

The proverb states that interest is being earned even while people are asleep, and thus, one of the sure ways of increasing your wealth is by investing money in fixed deposits or by lending money on a rate of interest. Many believe that this pahako has more to do with the borrower than with the lender; the borrower hopes to return the capital and the interest back one day, however, since interest keeps "walking" even when he is asleep, it often runs too fast for him, and he gets

into a debt trap. It's probably used as a warning to youngsters and hasty borrowers. However, it can also be seen from the other side, which is the side of the lender. Here, the advice is to offer money on interest whether to a bank or an individual since it walks non-stop and thus earns a good return even when the investor is asleep. Both meanings can be applied, its all about reference to context!

22. Amil, khutal bhi khan

Khuttal= insolvent/broke

The Amil, even if he is broke, is well-turned out and carries himself with pride.

Amils were more educated than other Sindhis, and since Hyderabad was the capital of Sindh before the arrival of the English, those educated Hindu families who were in the service of Mirs (rulers of Sindh) were called Amils. Naturally, such people were the equals of modern day bureaucrats and therefore no less arrogant and proud of their pedigree. Khans in Sindh were the tough guys among Muslims who were in service with the Mirs. Thus, an Amil, even when facing bankruptcy continued to strut like a Khan.

23. Vaar achcha moon ussa mein kona kaya thum OR Vaar achcha moon ussa mein kona kaya athum OR Vaar achcha ussa mein kona kaya atham

I didn't get my white hair by merely sitting in the sun, OR "My white hair has been earned, its a sign of years of experience, not just a sign of sitting around."

24. Aazmai khey jo aazmaye, so dhoor mooha mein paiye

Aazmai- the tested one, aazmaye- testing, dhoor-dust

If somebody tests another person who has previously failed a similar test in the past, then one gets no good out of it whatsoever.

When the dust hits the face its an unpleasant feeling. If somebody has failed us in the past, it would be better to remember this or else one will suffer. The idea is to learn from one's experiences, and also to recognise that a leopard can't change its spots. The English proverb I am reminded of, which appears to be similar to this one, is "Fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me."

25. 'Naanney binaa' nar vegaano (bewildered man without money)

OR

26. Naanney san sabhkoi syaanno (bewildered man without money.)

Money makes everyone wise.

Note: pronounce nn in Naanney as in vann (meaning tree in Sindhi). vegaano = confused, bewildered, sad. Nanno = cash, money, wealth.

Sindhis believe that wealth is an important requisite to happiness, which means that without money, man feels alone and dejected.

27. Bukha mein basara bi mitha OR Buhkha mein basara mitha

To him who is hungry, even onions taste sweet.

The proverb tells us that when we are absolutely hungry, we will welcome any food and we will find it delicious! In other words, a hungry man enjoys anything put before him. More generally, if a man has been unemployed for very long, and is then offered a job even in an inhospitable place, he is still happy because he has finally got something... something is better than nothing! We can take this proverb and take it to its extreme and use the English proverb "Beggars can't be choosers." This is not the meaning of this proverb but its cousin, shall we say it is its maasat! Actually, many people like my father and my husband love onions anyway so they don't quite understand the point of this pahako! To them --basara ta hamesha mitha theenda hi aahin!

28. Akul-a jo kopo

OR

29. Akul-a jo ddattar (ddattar as in deeddaras in frog)

Devoid of sense, stupid Akula jo kopo means deficient of common sense. Akula jo ddattar also means the same but it is sarcastic.

30. Pahrenjo ghar datta jo dhar

One's home is the doorway of God.

31.

Ghar ta dhanee nata vikun khanhee

Vikur= sell

The proverb means that if you are unable to live yourself in the house, then it is more advisable to sell it off because if you retain it, you might end up losing it forever. This was great advice because owners of properties often rented them out only to find that later they could not get it back.

32. Pehenjo ghar Guru jo dar

One's own home, however humble, is like the doorway to the Guru's house, as sacred and as heavenly... Generally this Pahako is said by those who were anxious to have a long tour of places - whether pilgrimage in India - or tour around the world. At the end of the trip when they come back home, they find great relief and say, "Panhjo ghar Daataar jo Dar" or one can say, "Panhjo ghar Gurua jo Dar". There are some who are relieved when still up in the air in a plane when they spot their homeland. This proverb attempts to generate a strong sense of family and strengthen family ties, while teaching us that we must cherish our homes. I guess it was also showing us the path to happiness because if we are grateful for the sanctity of our home, we can truly feel blessed...

33. Chache je mahal khaan pee jo jhopdo bhalo

Father's hut is better than your Uncle's palace.

Expresses the same sentiment that your own home, however humble, is far more satisfying than a close relative's opulent house.

34. Byan jo mahal dise, panhejee jhopree na daraey

Meaning: Don't be jealous, don't hanker for things others possess, so what if your neighbor has a big mansion? Be happy with the simple home you have. It is not wise to demolish your own home, in fact, you should learn the art of happiness and be content with what you have.

35. Budyal beri maan, Loh bhee chango

i.e. From a boat that has capsized, its good if you even try to salvage whatever iron you can.

Or

36. Budandar bereea jo loh bi chango

Budandar = sinking, beree = boat, loh = iron, chango = good

This pahako is often used when one has lent money to another, and it turns into a bad debt. One should try to get even a small amount back from the person who has gone bust or broke. It is said that there was a superstition among Sindhis before the Partition, wherein it was believed that a daughter born after three sons was supposed to be not very lucky. Such a girl was therefore quickly married away. To alleviate misery in her life, she was required to wear "chhalo" (ring) in both mid toes (pera ji vichin ankur) for all her life. This "chhalo" was supposed to be made from the "loh" of a "buddal beri". However, there are others who believe that on the contrary, a girl born after three boys was considered extremely lucky! This proverb, has another variation, same meaning but the literal sense is different:

37. Budyala beriyan joon hareeroon bhee changyoon

Hareer was the cheapest laxative available in Sindh (it was probably an ayurvedic laxative) and it was sold dirt cheap, practically free. Here the proverb says that when a boat is capsizing, one is lucky if one is able to salvage even the tiniest, most insignificant object from it. So even to salvage the cheapest laxative(!) is worthwhile.

38. Chor jee maau, kund mein roaye

chor= thief, kunda or kund= corner, roye= cries

Literally: the mother of a thief cries in a corner, alone.

This proverb explains how crime has its repercussions on the innocent dear ones as well, by saying that the mother of the criminal cannot share her sorrow with anyone, and cries alone. Through such proverbs the youth of the community were also being trained to be decent upright citizens, be happy with dal-roti, ninda suthi, rather than have riches that give near and dear ones pain because these riches were ill-gotten.

39. Andho haathi lashkar jo ziyaan

A blind elephant is the cause of the defeat and destruction of the army.

Lashkar=army, Ziyaan=destruction

The pahako is showing us how somebody very big(a person in a position of power and strength) when blinded by some desire, can cause the downfall of his side. Our vices or weaknesses are expressed here through the word "andho" meaning somebody whose consciousness is asleep, and being in the control of his emotions and vices, the man in charge can prove to be his own undoing as well as destroy all around him. If one sees King Lear, it is again the King's vanity that causes him all the heartbreak, his ego caused his downfall. He preferred to be blinded by flattery rather than see the truth, which caused his downfall. If the head of the family is biased towards a certain child, then this blind love will cause him hardships from his other children who feel the pain of being treated as inferior.

40. Arseeya jo daar ain dil jo daar saalim na thiye

A cracked mirror and a broken heart can't be repaired. Mending a broken heart is as impossible as eliminating the crack in the mirror, both have scars on them, despite our best efforts. I remember a saying we as kids used to write at school in each other's autograph book, it was like this one, "Friendship is like china, precious, rich and rare, Once broken, can be mended,

but the crack is always there."

41. Aun ain kaun

There was nobody there except me and the crow. It is used to express the complete aloneness of the person.

42. Bandey jey man mein hikri, Sahib jey man mein bee

Literally means: While man has something on his mind, God has something else on His. The above proverb stresses the power of God which transcends man's plans. Sindhis, by and large, believe in God's will, and feel that "Man proposes, God disposes." It teaches one to be humble and be concerned with doing his duty correctly, and leave the consequences to God. Doing right is by itself the reward so often!

43. Andhan Multan ladho OR Andhan bi Multan ladho

The explanation is that even the blind can find their way to Multan which is a straight road, thus, you can't get lost on the straight road. This pahako means that there is nothing difficult in life. Those who endeavour can achieve anything. A similar pahako is:

44. Jey puchh-na, se na munjh-na which means that those who ask for directions, never get lost.

Some people get nervous when they have to undertake a long journey (in the past especially, travelling was both risky and treacherous). To such persons, old men used to counsel that if a blind man can reach Multan (an insignificant place in those days like Timbuktu these days) why should he fear he won't be able to reach his destination, by asking people en route? The above proverb implies that nothing is impossible if one sets ones heart and mind to accomplish a certain task.

45. Jehro sung tehro rang

If one keeps good company, one becomes good, if one chooses people with bad habits, then one will also become like them.

Here I am reminded of Shah Abdul Latif, and a story involving him. Here is the story:

I quote from Principal Butani's book on the poet mystic:

Once one of Shah's faqirs who came regularly to him once a year, always bringing a present of a blanket, did not come. The next year he came with the present. "What happened, my friend, you didn't come last year?" Asked Shah. "Sir, I had not the strength to buy a blanket..." (I could not afford to buy a blanket) "Hell with the blanket!" said Shah, "Which separates a friend from a friend!" Unquote. Keeping the company of wise people, one will sense that one has reached a shaded grove in a world of merciless heat. However, when one meet hedonists or fanatics, one takes on their colors(habits). As the washing machine says, separate the white clothes, and let them swirl together!

46. Atheenay perhiya uth, maakoro maasatt

atheen=eighth 8th, perhi=generation, uth=camel

makoro=black ant, massat=mother's sister's child.

Maasaats are considered one's closest cousins. There is often a greater degree of unconditional love among these cousins.

If the eighth generation was camel, then the ant must be a cousin (too). This is interesting. You must have come across people who insist on establishing a relationship with you, by calling you a relative. Despite your never having seen them or known them, they will try to convince you that the two of you are related by saying things like "my father's mother was related to your uncle's mom." This especially happens to people who have become rich and famous, with all kinds of people saying, "Oh, he is my uncle's brother-in-law's nephew, etc".

47. Baara hanja mein, dandoro shehera mein

In the past, some of our elders took children to bathe in the river; and sometimes, either out of being drunk with bhang or out of sheer forgetfulness, the father who was actually returning home carrying the sleeping child on his shoulders, would forget the child was there and start crying out loudly, "Where are you, Moti/Topan?" The idea is that often we make a big hullabaloo about our losses whereas we have none, and we raise a hue and cry about this imagined loss.

48. Moorakh jey khushaamad khaan, Syaaney jee tok bhalee

This pahako advises that we should guard ourselves against those who merely flatter us and inflate our egos, because that flattery will delude us and make us act unrighteously. On the other hand, even critical or sarcastic words from a wise person can be positive, and have the opposite effect. In fact, often criticism helps us grow while foolish flattery can prove to be our undoing, This has a similar off-shoot,

49. "Bewakoof dosta khaan syaaron dushan behtar aahey" there are variations of this

pahako in Hindi too. The meaning, "its better to have a clever enemy than a stupid friend. "A stupid friend can be more harmful than an enemy, because with a friend one is often unguarded, whereas with an enemy one is in a high state of alertness and therefore he may not be able to harm us. There is a saying of Voltaire's which goes, "God, protect me from my friends, from my enemies I can defend myself."

50. Chachee bi chaway, choondee bh paaey.

He calls me aunt, and then he also pinches me!

This pahako is used when a person is sweetly insulting someone. The person tries to tell you something nice about you while all along he is hurting or insulting you. This pahako can be used for the madness of "conversions" that engages faiths such as Christianity and Islam. They want to add numbers to their tribe and then they come knocking on your door pretending to "save" your soul which is in jeopardy by converting you to their faith so you may go to "heaven" you can't enter since you are a heathen and therefore damned!

51. Ahera suhiran tooha ta janga l mein bhee ahin

Which literally means that beautiful "tooha" flowers abound in the jungle. This proverb implies that just like "toohaa" flowers, which have no value, grow in plenty in the jungle, similarly good looking people have no value, unless they possess good qualities.

E. g. If a daughter brings home her boyfriend who is good-looking but seems to lack any real character, more like a two-dimensional person but very good-looking, the parents can express their opinion by using this proverb.

52. Ganga gaaye Gangadas, Jamuna gaaye Jamunadas.

Everyone praises himself, everyone is selfish.. There is another form of this in Sindhi which my father would say after a braggart had left, "sajo waqt maa-maa pyo karey.." (the whole time he is showing off with "i-me-myself!")

53. Insaan khatta jo ghar

Man is full of errors and mistakes.

This reminds me of the song from "Kala Bazaar" in which the line goes, "maaf kar banda bhee ek insaan hai, ooper wala jaan kar anjan hai...apni to har aah ek toofan hai.."

*** Thanks to Lata Jagtiani for co-ordinating and sending these Pahakas ***