

INDO-GUYANESE FOLK TALE IN THE ORAL
TRADITION
HARD TIMES

It had dis poor wuk man in de estate name Balgobin. He nah get wuk and he find times hard hard. The white man ah fight war and sugar price drop low low. When he ah watch he ah see he pickney suffering for food. That hut him bad bad.

Balgobin cya afford to buy food for he pickney. All about the people ah chant.

“Oh manager, oh manager
Cane nah cut
And price nah pay
Rice and flour dear at shap
Ah wha you mean at all.”

Balgobin cya bear this ting now. He ah decide the only ting to do is to kill heself. He tie he *dhoti* (lioncloth), pick up he *punt* rope and scramble the last banana pon de shelf. He lef de house and gone by Koker Dam. He climb pon ah mango tree, tie he rope round he neck and tie the edder end pon de branch. He peel am banana and he ah take am time and eat em. He ah throw away de skin. Ah man run come out from de bush and he scramble de skin and start to eat em.

Balgobin watch good and he say to heself.

“It gat mo mad people outside dan inside.”

Balgobin watch on top de sky and he tak to gad.

“Gad, me come alone in dis world, me come naked in dis world and naked me ah go back.”



BALGOEIN LEF DE HOUSE. (Illustration by S. K. Ragbir).

He take out he *dhoti* (lioncloth) and throw im down. Ah nex man run out from de bush, he take up de *dhoti* (lioncloth) and run back in de bush.

Balgobin dey pon de tree naked. He ah start to wonder, he astonished now he wondering. He ah say.

"Look . befor something else happen ah better jump and bruk me neck and done meh worries."

He tighten de rope round he neck and going to jump. Same time he ah see ah nex man come. The man watch Balgobin good and he say.

"*Bhaiya*, (brother) you mus ge me dat rope when yuh dead."

Balgobin come to he senses, he say.

"One man come and eat em meh banana skin, he de mo hungry dan me. The nex one come and tek meh *dhoti* (lioncloth). This one now what meh lil piece ah rope. All ah dem worse dan me."

Balgobin tek out de rope pon he neck, he loose the rope pon de branch and come down de mango tree.

He say, "Ah poe but ah wiser, e ha mo people suffering dan me, gad you show me ah lessen."

Balgobin hold he lil piece ah rope in he hand and he wuk back slow to he house.

bhaiya - brother.

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