## IN ALTRE LINGUE

## A fox, a crow, and a weaver An animal folktale in Afar

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## Wakriiy, kuraanu kee candoola<sup>2 3</sup>



**Wakri**: garboh alluwwak tiya. Wakri Cafar hayyeyyoonittet mangih ayti-gedhdho le ala. Dheflih Cafar ayyuntih hayyeyyoonittet wakri gala bedde dhaggiime waam dagoh. Cafar ayyuntih addal Wakri wale kee egelil yamidhdhige. Kalah kadhdha hangi kee kibaal le iyyan. Tuk teena toofek annak anni yayse iyyaanamal yamidhdhige iyyan. Tuk teena fadhek kaadu annah abeyyo,

hinnay xaylah nabam gaba kaat haytek yaabat badisak elle yayse inna gibbatam decsita. Cafar baadho dheflih saxra akkek kafin ardi. Wakri kaadu too ardi belu kee xeelo.

Kalah Cafar caadah ayti-gedhdho le garboh alluwwak ummaan ali kedo le. Xeelalloh wakri Dammohoytah yaabuke iyyan. Toh sabbatah bagille migaacah sahdayti migac leeh, Xasana iyyan wakrik Cafar.



**Kuraani**: kuraani haadaytu. Cafar baadhoh kuraani namma belu le. Toh kaadu dhagar inkih akak data kuraanu kee gersi dhagar inkih dataah, takkay ikkah labkah amook dagaak ooba cidi le kuraanu. Cafar addal kuraani haadak kadhdha egel le haadaytu decsita. Migaacah Data Cali kaak iyyan.

Kuraani dheflih horta gedha. Tiyak teeni kaak biyaakitek amol akak gaboowa. Sahda kaa biyaktek too kaa biyaake num edde yan carik

amok gaaboowak kaak kaak iyya wak gersi kuranwa inkih tokkel gaabowtaah, dariifak baalil tuk teena kaak abtek carik awci koo mahaa. Dariifak baali kuraani fatanlil yaadhigen. Toh kaadu budhak teenak duyye ukkucca haah gersi budhah addal cideh xaba. Elle cide budha usug baahe duyyeh wanna wayteeh edde toffoofeeh, gedhinnaanim gedhak teneek wannonti geytek lukuk suge mari garcaleela decsitan. Tonnal kuraani cideh xabem xuggaane hitta essertaah, "tah sin im maay kinniih?" iyyan.

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 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$  A previous version of this traditional story was published by the author in 2001 in the booklet *Dumah tenem leh iyyen. Dumah tenem baye waytay* ['It was said in the past. What was in the past do not vanish']. Asmara: Ministry of Education, pp. 7-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Afar [*Cafar*] text is written following the official Eritrean Afar orthography. Notice in particular that  $c = [\S]$ , dh = [d], and  $x = [\hbar]$ .



**Candoola**: candooli Cafar rasul tan barri haadak tiyak teena. Candooli sahdal kaadu baaham maliiy, usug salaamah tan alluwwak tiyak teena. Candooli dhaylo ramma inta xadhak dheflih ecebih amot dhala. Candooli ardi nunuyak yaloole. Cafar elle intannal candooli dhuune kaadu yakmeh iyyan. Candooli elle waara wahanih belu le. Candooli galwa le wakaay takkay kadhdham mahaada.

Hayyeyyoona cimbisan wak cimbisan num hayyeyyoona warisa Cafar caadah "Dumah tenem leh iyyen" iyyeh cimbisa.

Gersi maray kaa ankaxisa "dumah tenem baye waytay" adhxuk guuma kaah yabbidhen. "Dumah tenem leh iyyen" iyyaanam dumah dher muddatak afal teneemiy away ane wayta yaanama. Warisa num tu warisaamak afat ta madhxo baaheh, away caku leemiy away ane wayta daalisam fadha kinnim yaabbe mari yaadhigeh.

"Dumah tenem baye waytay" yaanam dumah luk nen abuk-racti baye waytay iyyaanama. Tah yaanam kaadu xubbussa haynek luk sugnem dumi sugeet baye waay yaanama. Kalah Cafar xeelalloh duca abta wak "able waynem able waynay, abbe waynem abbe waynay" inta.

Dumah yen daban inki candooli inki xadhay dheeriih, garaarinih amot cari luk iyyen. Too carih addat kaadu cundha dhayloy tufruke luk yen.

Tah tah iyyan saaku wakri ullutulluyak yemeete iyyen. Ta candooli edde yan xadhak gubah gubal dagoom oftoy beeta gidih solla iyye wacdi wali suuc suruy lem kaat suruyte iyyen. Kalah xadha gubal kimbir daaxo xeltam yuble iyyen. Tah xubbuse wakri budhudhuh ardih ramacca iyyeh, "ta xadhah amot tuk teena tan" iyyeh gubaak xadha wagite.



Tokkel wakri xadha too xadhak a bagu gaxxa woo bagu xagga adhxuk mermeeritek wadiril tah xadhah amot tanim candoolay dhaylo le kinnim yismiteh iyyen. Tohih lakal wakri "kee yinah candoola tah manna, dabcih nummah mece arax litoh tanik, a gaba kol naxe gidih yol oobey" yedhxe iyyen.

Candooli kaadu elle waara manol wakri tuk teena edde yaadhigeemikkal annaak gaba maxuy gorrisse waam xedeh iyyan. Tonnal wakri gaxseemih candooli "yinah xansanow cafu yoh ab dhaylo dubuk xabeh kol oobam matakka" yedhxeyyen.

Wakri "candoolaw obtek meceeh, bale intek, amakkek iba kol gaxisu

waa wacdi kol obtu waytam abletto" iyyeh gedhe iyyen.

Takkay ikkah candooli wakri too xadha kaa kee dhaylol feere waam yismiteemih sabbatah, "kee gedh abtu waytam mantuk" kaak iyye.

Wakri amannaak kaa maxaba iyyeh, gersi saaku subxi dhaaxat is kee kalla godmay fillal leh "yacam candoolaw maaxisse" yedhxe iyyen. Candooli kaadu "mece maaxa gey" iyyeh kaal gaxise.

Wakri "yacammow koh warsaamah, alco ta atu is kee dhayloh amot akak tan xadhak daabal heeh, koo kee ken inkih inki wacdit ardil sin cideh akmeemik, inki badha yoh taxeeh, sin xabam tayse? Wonna hinnammay hittat inki wak sin bakoo?" iyye yen.

Candooli wakrik gabat godma yubleemih sabbatah cundhuteeh "kee yi wakri inki wak nee macidinay aykak tiya bet" iyyeh dhaylok tiya kaah yexe iyyen.

Candooli "yi rabbow wakri yol andabbe waay" adhxuk yalla dhaacitak raace wakaay takkay, Xasan gersi saaku cagitak "candoolaw nummah ku badhih xado gabul luk teneeh, tamu yot temcek badha yot cagis, ee bale intek kaadu wadhaaxin godmah xadhak daabal heeyyom idhig" yedhxe iyyen gadgadimak.

Candooli "yallak obtem kee cari namma gabah oggolaanah yedhxe iyyeenih, yalli yoh yimmire kaana" adhxuk dhaylok tiya kaah yexe iyyen. Gedhinnaanim gedhak teneek dhaylok inkitti kaah raace saaku kuraani ken yuble iyyen.

Tonnal ayrok teena kuraani wakri candoola lekkek gedham cambaalak suggu iyyeh candoola xiggiile iyyen.

"Salaam caleykum candoolaw! Yallak maaxisinnaan saaku yacam Xasan badha kok beetah ablek dhaylo kaah akah taxem maxaay" yedhxe kuraani.

Tokkel Candooli "kee yi badhaw ah koh taabbem hinnak isih daffey" yedhxe iyyen. Kuraani "woh tu hinnak yoh warisey" yedhxe iyyen.

Too wacdi candooli "Xasan yallak maaxisinnaan saaku amot akak tan xadhak daabal godmah heeh koo kee dhaylo inkih bakam fadhe waytek inki badha yoh xuy adhxuk, tama akah tablennah gidiidin dhaleemik inki badhi yoh raace yan" yedhxe iyyen.

Kuraanuy toh yoobbe "kee xakkumoow" iyyeh ardit gomboh gaxak fayuh "kol inkih yaxem diraabak mameysitin, kallak abeh yan godaamak koo edde meysiisam" kaak iyye. Candooli "nummah inta, a yoo edde meysiisam kalla godma, meceh kok obbeh wallah" iyyeh abu waamat xubbusak raace.

Taadhige wakri dumih innah tullutulluyak amma iyyeh, "yacam candoolaw badha bahtah inna? Hinnay xadhak daabal heeh hittat sin oobisoo?" adhxuk kalla godma gabat wadh wadh hee iyyen.

Candooli kaadu dumih inna hinnay niya mucuk "kee yi Xasan (wakri) tahak sah yok abtem koo dhiice waytek, ta raace yan tiya lih yoo edde bey" kaak iyye.

Wakri "kee maabitin, manol waartam fadhdhek, badha yoh xuy" iyyeh fallamitak candoola bura le intit wagite.

Candooli "Xasan ta saaku yalli abinnaanim nel oobelekkal dumih innah gaba geyih ta badhay saaboh raace badha mageytak kot xeltam abit" iyye.

Wakri "kee maabitin yacam candoola" iyyeh geera wadh wadh heeh taadhige kalla godmah xadhak daabal hee wak, kallayti burura yekke.

Cagiteh "cambal yabbah godma racteh taniih baahu waa" iyyeh gersi kalla godma baaheeh xadhak daabal hee wak kaadu butukka inte.

Tut maxabinnay "kadhdha yabbah godma fadhdhah tan" iyyeh gersitto baaheh, elle xaseh immay burura tekke.

Wakri "anu yaado badhi! woo kadhdha yabbah abbah godma baahu waa" iyyeh gersi kadhdha kalla godma baaheh elle heeh immay yeffereeh, gersi mala malsaamat yemeete. Wakri tonna luk iyyeemih "woh hinna yacam candoolaw! akke yok sa iyyi koo xiggiileeh?" iyyeh kaa essere.

Candooli "num yoo maxiggiilinna" iyyeh kaal gaxise. Takkay ikkah wakri namma aytik tiyaay midu kareerissi haak xubbussu hee wak kuraani kaa lekke xiggiilam kassiteh. Tonnal kuraani goran kee kaa abu waamat ugute. Fiiruk boodoy namma afa leh tani dageeh, geerak kay goranah elle gedhe ikkel kaa geeh.

Wakri "kuraanow nagasse?" iyyeeh, kuraani kaadu "mece assima gey" iyyeh kaal gaxise.

Cagisak wakri iyyeemih "woh hinna kee kuraanu! anu abu waam abetto?" iyyeh kaa essere.

Kuraani kaadu "yeey abeyyo" iyyeh yemeete.

Too wacdi iyyeemih, "anu ta boodok ta afaak xulla, too gersi afaak bukka adheyyok atu tannah abtu duudetto?" iyye.

Kuraani kaadu "yeeyik afaak atu abey" iyyeeh wakri kaadu toh abeh.

Kuraani kaadu too wakri akah abennah abeeh, wakri cagisak "inki afa aliffa heeh, too akak xule afak awcu duudeyyo, atu maxa takkale?" iyyeh essere.

Kuraani "atu abba haytam inkih abeyyok abey" iyye wak wakri xulla bukka iyye.

Kuraani toh gibbata gidih xule wak, wakri too racteh sugte affa aliffa kaat heeh, isih gedheeh, kuraani boodoh addat kaak raace.

Wakri ayyamissa hee wak amma iyyeh kuraanu fakeeh, "mannaay kee kuraanu?" iyye wak kuraanuk dhagar inkih mugeh yaniih, dhagarat dhaariya kaak dhalteh sugte. Afak cangara korisu maduudaay, haadam hinna immay, gali fayya haam maduudinna.

Wakri tu dhiice waah, haade waam kaak yuble wak mecennah raba gidih "tawak anke koo beyuuh?" iyyeh kaal essere.

Kuraani tawak kaadu isi kabuk egel abaamat ugute. Tonnal kuraani "fadhekke yoo beytaamah daaro xado akattal haysitta budha kee gaali dabcih gari yoo maben rabeyyok" iyye.

Wakri "fandham toh hinna" iyyeh, too usuk elle yoo mahana iyye ikkel kaa heeh, kuraani toh geek sah lih ure. Takkay ikkah wakri kaa yable wak biyaakitam xeelak yen. Urra haadda, isih fadhakke maadda haa fanah, too budhaadhil akattal heenih yanin daaro xabbabbat kee gaali dabac yaffiileeh, yattakamme gibyi xabbabbat edde ureeh, "kaak kaak" adhxuk haadam cimbiseeh, haadeh isih gedhe.

Wakri kuraanu elle xabekkel wee wak "kaa cidem ekkelemmay, kaa wadeh an" iyyeh xisabbootak raace.

Takkay ikkah kuraani xane gaxsitih isi bagul dhiiba xuleh yen. Wakri edde cidu waa gita kaah gedhise.

Kuraani uddur suggu iyyeh, wakril yemeeteeh, "kee yacam wakri anu atu yok abteemik cafu koh adhxeeh, calla kollih haysita".

"Anu badak woo kabil ardil koh mecem uble. Toh kaadu wadaraay, illi kee laa dubuk elle talooleeh, num sinnih tan baadho ubleh emeeteh an".

Xasanay toh yoobbe asalah af receecissa heeh, "kee Data Cali talco mece dhaagu bahtah tanik, taham fanah maxah yok toocoreh sugte" iyye.

Kuraani "yi Xasanow ucura hinnay atu woo gaba gey yoh maay texe, awayay kataysis nekkekkah!" kaak iyye.

Wakri "toh nummak tekkeemih cafu ab. Bas Data Caliyow anu inni ibah tullu tulluyam akke waytek giiru maadhigak mannah tabeyyo too gaddi elle yan boorul" iyye.

Kuraani "ta gayyak anu koo tabisaah, tokkel atu is kee yooh ayrooy tiya neh akak cidettooh, dubuk elle waare lino" iyye.

Wakri toh yoobbe "woh yol xabay, bas atu gayyak mannal yoo tabisetto?" iyye.

Kuraani "anu galiik galil tabisak koo beeyyo. Galik teeni yok xabala wak kaak adhxeyyok atu kacca inteh, galiik galil yok tabetto" iyye.

Wakri "kee Data Cali ku Xasan tah edde abe waamak kinniyo num yoo taadhigek, nee beytam idhig" iyyeh cambadhdhaageh, wokkel yakmu waa xadoh afal lee kaak gedhdhe. Kuraani "wallah tohut boola mantum yot xeltak, hayya hay gendheh" iyyeh caadat kaa korissa heeh dacaarimeenih.

Wakri caraanak baguk baaxat yuble wak "subxaanallah akke waytam matan talco ardik haada elle abluk nen caran ferreeh gayyak amo tabnah nan" iyye abu waamih hirfit agdhita.

Baaxatak gude guffa heen wak "kaak kaak" iyyeeh, wakri hittah xulen dhagnal galiik galil taba gidih kacite wak, woo elle kacita galih kabu kuraani ceegissa kaak heeh, caran baguuk ankeleelebuk gayyat cideh isih budha fanah yendebbe.

Tonnal kuraani mayso luk orbam hinnay rabat kaak ase iyyen.

Yallih im nummaay, yim diraaba.

Ta hayyeyyoonak umam elle bahte num cafu koh iyyaamah inkih yoh habbaaleh inteh kaa maamanin. Kalah gersi num annaak koh aba xatok xubbi abittam tayse. Toh lakat tuk teena taallu duddah. Xatotta ummaan wacdi fadhe waynay.

## Free translation

**Fox**: The fox is one of the animals of the forest. It is the main character in Afar folktales. There is hardly an Afar legend that does not mention the fox.

The fox is known for its wisdom and cunning. Thanks to its wisdom, the fox offers ideas to other animals in times of trouble and achieves its goals through deception or evasion. The Afar live in an arid land where the fox is commonly found.

Traditionally each of the famous animals is associates with one of the Afar tribes.

For example, the fox is associated with the Afar tribe called Dammohoyta. As a result, it is named after a human being in society and is called Hasan.

**Crow**: The crow is a bird. There is a wide variety of crow species, but in Afar areas two types are distinguished. One is the black crow, the other is the black crow with white spots around the shoulder. In Afar society, the crow is considered one of the wisest birds. It is also given a human name and is called Black Ali (Data Cali).

Crows move mostly in flocks. If one of them gets sick, they gather around the sick individual. If humans harm a crow, it caws continuously over the attackers' house and others come circling around it cawing for a while and then fly away. On some occasions they do not allow the attackers to leave their house. In some places people call the crow a troublemaker because he drops what he has taken from a certain house inside the fence of others, thus triggering a dispute between them, as one accuses the other of theft as a result of this act. To avoid this accusation and subsequent dispute, people usually ask each other "what is this?", when they come across something dropped by the crow in their immediate vicinity.

**Bustard Kori**: This is a type of bird commonly seen in rural Afar areas. It is a peaceful bird that does not cause any harm to humans. It lays its eggs at the top of various trees such as acacia, jujube, etc. This bird feeds on anything on the ground that is convenient for it, such as insects.

When the narrator tells a story in Afar society, he traditionally begins with "It was said in the old days there was..." And listeners respond loudly "what was in the past does not vanish". The listeners infer that the narrator is about to tell a thing that rarely exists or happens today. To say "what was in the past does not vanish" on the part of the listeners means that they want the old traditions and customs of society to remain alive. Once there lived a kori bird at the top of a tall tree. At the lowest point of the tree it had a nest, where the newly hatched young lived.

One day, the fox came upon this tree. When the fox stopped to rest under the tree, he smelled a scent that filled the air around the tree. The fox also saw bird droppings everywhere under the tree. "Birds must live here," said the fox as he looked toward the top of the tree.

The fox observed the tree from all sides, circling it several times. Eventually he realized that the weaver bird lived there together with its newly hatched young. Then the fox said, "How are you, dear bird? Indeed, you have a nice place to live here. Can you come down and say hello?"

Realizing that the fox was not sincere in what he said, the Kori bird refrained from coming down lest it become food for him. He replied, "Dear fox, I'm sorry I can't come down. I am taking care of my little birds."

"It is alright if you come down, otherwise you will meet your fate when I return," said the fox and immediately left.

Since the Kori bird was sure that the fox was unable to climb the tree and therefore posed no danger to her and her young, he said, "Go away, you can't do anything."

"I will not leave these birds," thought the fox and set out. The following day the fox arrived early in the morning holding a clay axe and said, "Good morning." The Kori bird, for its part, replied, "Good morning, sir."

"Should I cut down the tree and eat you and your young together or will you save yourself by dropping one of your young?" asked the fox giving the Kori bird the chance. The Kori bird was frightened when it saw a blade in the fox's hand and dropped a baby bird to save its life and that of the other baby birds.

Although the Kori bird wished he would never see it again, the next day the fox came and said, "Tender, delicious and fresh. Give me one more of your babies. Otherwise I will cut down the tree and eat you all."

The Kori bird, poor and desperate, had no choice but to drop another baby to the fox, and dropped it. The scene was repeated day after day, until the Kori bird was left with only one baby. One day the crow observed the weaver bird dropping its young to the fox. When the fox left, the crow came and said, "Good morning, my dear." "Good morning, sir," replied the Kori bird, sad at the loss of her young. "Why do you leave your young to the fox?" asked the crow. "Leave me, my dear crow. You would be of no help to me. This is not an easy matter to deal with," replied the weaver bird. "Tell me, please, so that we can seek a remedy," said the crow.

"Every day the fox comes early in the morning with an axe in his hand and threatens to cut down the tree and eat us all if I don't drop one for him. If I often drop one for him, look I am now left with only one little one," complained the Kori bird.

Hearing this, the crow bowed its head in amazement and told the Kori bird about the deception by which the fox had taken its young. "Everything he says is false," said the crow, "Don't be afraid, he has a blade of clay." Added the crow, "Is that true? What he is holding is a stick of clay?!" exclaimed the weaver bird. "Okay! I heard you," said the Kori bird, thinking about what to do when the fox should return.

"Hey, drop your baby, otherwise I will cut down the tree and eat you all," said the fox waving the clay axe to scare the Kori bird as usual.

But at that moment the Kori bird was confident that the clay axe could not cut down the tree and said, "If you are still not satisfied, I cannot drop my only remaining child, kill us if you want to do that."

"You'd better give me the child if you want to stay alive," stressed the fox.

"We will face what has been preordained for us. Do not expect anything else from me. Do whatever you want," replied the Kori bird angrily.

Swirling his tail, the fox said, "Be careful," and then struck the tree with a clay axe, which immediately shattered.

He said, "Wait, my father's axe is more effective," and brought another clay axe. It too shattered after hitting the tree. Then he said, "My grandfather's axe will better serve the purpose," and brought the last clay axe, which also shattered after hitting the tree.

Even now the fox did not give up and said, "It will take my great-grandfather's axe," and brought a large clay axe, which also disintegrated. But now the fox changed his mind and tried something else. Then he immediately said, "Has anyone come here in my absence?" "No one came," replied the Kori bird. However, pricking up his ears, the fox thought for a while and suspected that the crow had come and advised the weaver bird to thwart his attempts to feed on the Kori bird and its only remaining young. The fox then began to search for the crow and a way to take revenge. First the fox prepared a den with two openings. Then he found the crow and went looking for it. When they met, the fox said, "Good afternoon, my dear." "Good afternoon, sir," replied the crow. Then the fox said, "My dear brother, will you behave as I behave here?" The crow replied, "Yes, I will," and approached the fox. The fox said, "I will go into this den this way and come out that way. Can you do that?"

The crow replied, "I can do that. But you try it first." Then the fox did what the crow asked him to do, while the crow did the same with the fox. Then, closing an opening, the fox asked the crow, "Now I can go out through the same opening I entered the den through. Can you do that?"

"I can do anything you do," replied the crow. So the fox went into the den and came out through the same opening.

When the crow tried to do so, the fox locked him in the den by closing the remaining opening and went away, leaving the crow in the den. After a week the fox came to open the closed den and said, "How are you, sir?" But he saw that the crow's shiny black feathers had been removed and its body was full of worms. The crow was unable to utter a word. It was not only unable to fly, but also unable to lift its wings. When the fox saw that the crow, "Where do I take you now." The crow thought and said shrewdly, "You can take me wherever you want, but don't take me near the house where the meat is put in a rope or near the camel encampment."

The fox said, "I was looking for him," and immediately took the crow to these places. Here the crow soon recovered, but he pretended to be sick whenever he saw the fox. In order to regain his health and the ability to fly and get where he wanted, he ate meat placed on ropes near the houses and pecked ticks in the camel encampment. Eventually he became healthy and flew away croaking.

When the fox arrived, he did not find the crow where he had left him and said angrily, "I thought he was dead, but alas he has revived."

The crow then vowed to take vengeance on the fox. And he looked for ways to get rid of him. After a while, the crow went to the place where he met the fox. After exchanging greetings with him, the crow told the fox that he had forgiven all the wrongs he had suffered and asked to establish a new relationship. The two agreed on this, and then the crow asked the fox to take him to a distant land across the sea, where he had falsely suggested that he had seen a lot of goats, sheep and cattle without herders. The fox, hearing this, became excited and said, "Oh! Good news, Black Ali, why have you kept them hidden until now?"

"You gave me no respite to tell you before. And now this marks the beginning of a new era in our relationship," replied the crow.

The fox said, "I apologize for what happened earlier. And I appreciate your good will to establish a new relationship between us. But my dear crow, I am not able to swim. The only thing I can do is walk on dry land. How can I reach it?"

The crow said, "I will take you there. You will hunt animals for us. And we will live there by feeding on them."

"Okay! Leave it to me. But how will you take me there?" asked the fox.

"I will take you with my wings. When one wing gets tired, I will croak to get you to the other," replied the crow.

Showing great eagerness to get the bounty he had heard about as soon as possible, he said, "Dear crow, take me soon. You will see my skill as a hunter."

"I know well how skillful you are at hunting. Let's go," said the crow. And immediately he flew, taking the fox with him.

When the fox saw the ocean below him, he said in amazement, "Oh my God! I am in the space where only birds fly and I see the ocean shining below me." He wondered what he would do across the ocean, where he had heard about many animals.

When he got to the point where the ocean was too deep, the crow cawed, and as the fox tried to move to the next wing, the crow bent it and let the fox fall into the deep ocean. And it returned home.

In this way, the crow not only triumphed over the fox, but got rid of it forever.

God tells the truth, mine is a legend.

<u>Moral</u>: From this story we learn that even if someone you have hurt forgives you, don't think they have forgotten everything. Or we need to be aware of anything provided for free, because there may be a secret behind it. We mustn't wait for free things.