

# Jamaican Phrases

Phrases are often used in Jamaican Patois. The exact meaning of a phrase is dependent on the situation in which it is used, or on the speaker's intonation. Take a look at some commonly used Jamaican phrases.

"Mi come here fi drink milk, mi noh come here fi count cow". A reminder to conduct business in a straight forward manner.

"The higher di monkey climbs di more him expose". A truly comic image if you've ever been to the zoo, and comforting to any of us whose backs have been used as a stepping-stone for someone else's success. "New broom sweeps clean, but di old broom knows di corners". A profoundly witty statement that sums up any number of current situations, including the state of today's music. Chicken merry, Hawk deh near. Where there is too much merriment and excitement, danger lurks near. Di darkest part a di night, a when day soon light. When thing and times are the hardest, brighter times are near. Empty bag cyaa stan' up. A hungry man cannot work. Howdy an' tenk yu, noh brok nuh square. To say howdy and thank you is not a bad thing; it is good. Manners tek yu thru' di worl'. Good manners take you thru' the world. Noh cup nuh brok, nuh coffee nuh throw weh. If you survive unharmed, everything is fine. Weh nuh poison, fatten. If an experience doesn't distroy you, you can benifit greatly from it. Hog seh, di fus water 'im cetch 'im walla. Make use of the first opportunity. Bucket wid hole a battam have no business a riverside. Mind your own business. If you have faults of your own, you shouldn't criticize others.

Peppa bun hot, but it good fi curry. Everything has its usefulness. A goodadvice/counsel might be painful to take/accept. It' better fi lose yu time dan yu character. Keep your principles. Yuh mek yuh sail too big fi yuh boat, yuh sail wi capsize yuh. Don't be someone you're not. Don't get a big head. Man nuh dead, nuh call him duppy. As long as someone is alive, don't dismiss their potentials. Alligator lay egg, but 'im noh fowl. Things are not always what they seem. Not because people does similar things, they shouldn't be judged soley on there similarities.

When water throw weh it cyaa pick up.  
You can't turn back the hands of time. What is done, is done.

When visitors come a wi fireside, wi mek wi pot smell nice.  
When you have guests, you treat them the best you can.

Lickle bit a ram goat have beard an' big bull noh have none.  
Little people/things can have grand attributes that big people/things don't.

Yuh shake man hand, yuh nuh shake 'im heart.  
What you see on the outside, doesn't mean it's the same on the inside.

Too much callaloo, mek peppa-pot stew bitter.  
Too much of a good thing, can spoil everything.

Nuh care how boar hog try fi hide under sheep wool, him grunt always betray him.  
Don't care how much disguise someone puts on, their true self will surface.

When rat like fi romp round puss jaw, one day im gwine end up inna puss craw.  
When one flirts too much with danger, soon he or she will get hurt.

When crab walk too much, him lose him claw.  
Overuse will eventually cause breakage. One who is aimless and wondering becomes worthless and ineffective.

When kitchen dresser tumble dung, maaga dog laugh.  
The deprived will laugh at the misfortune of the fortunate.

When yu go a Jackass yard, yuh nuh fi chat 'bout big eaz.  
Don't criticize others in their presence.

Pudden cyaan bake widout fiah.  
You need the right tools for the job.

Pretty rose got macca jook.  
There is a bad side to seemingly good situation.

Man nuh done cross riva, nuh fi cuss alligator long mout long.  
Don't cuss those who can block your path.

Monkey mus' know weh 'im gwine put him tail, before him order trousaz.  
One must know one's self before doing what others are doing.

When Jackass smell corn, him gallop.  
People respond to the right encouragement.

We run things, things nuoh run we.  
Control your own destiny.

Today fi mi, tomorrow fi yu.  
Time and place for every thing.

Every dog got dem day, Every puss dem 4 o'clock.  
Every one have their time, to shine.

Rat belly full, potato have skin.  
When your are not in need, you are choosey.

When Jackass back strong, dem overload him hamper.  
The best worker always get the hardest task.

If you want half a bread, beg smaddy buy it, but if yu want wan, buy it yuhself.  
If you want it done right, do it yourself.

Cus-cus nuh bore hole a mi skin.  
Words cannot hurt me.

Crab'n choke puppy.  
Don't be greedy, it will hurt you.