

RAVIVAR KI KAHANI-I

People keep fast on Sundays in the name of Surya Narain or the Sun God. They take food only once a day, generally fruit, before sun-set. Saltish and fried items are avoided. It is believed that a fast on a Sunday saves one from skin diseases like leprosy, ringworm, and eye sores. Sun God is worshipped with red sandalwood and red flowers. This story is related with Surya Narain.

Once the Sun God or Surya Narain ruled this world. He looked after both the world and his family. He fed one and all from the same spoon. He gave half a spoon to all the creatures on the earth and the other half to his family. The members of Surya Narains family did not work hard and washed away his blessings. Once Surya Narains wife said to her mother-in-law, Your son does not give enough food to us. You go and tell him that he should give us more food. Surya Narains mother went to her son and said, "Your wife says that the food given by you is not enough for us. Increase the supply.

Surya Narain smiled and said, Dear mother, I give half a spoon of food to all the creatures and the remaining half to your family. I have no more food to give. The mother came back and said, He is helpless in increasing the supply. Better you go yourself and convince him. Surya Narains wife made for her husbands court. The courtiers welcomed her. Surya Narain made her sit by his side and listened to her difficulties. Surya Narains wife insisted on larger supply for her family. Surya Narain smiled and said, Your family members do not work hard. They do not even dean the house properly. Take these five dices and play with your neighbours. You will find surplus food for your family. Surya Narains wife returned home with the dices. She was happy that she would show the dices to her neighbours and play with them.

It was Sunday morning. She took the dices to her neighbours, but found to her great surprise that they were busy at work right from the sunrise. Some of them were cleaning or dusting their houses. Others were milking their cows or doing petty household work. None talked with her. She took courage and entered one of the houses and requested the people there to play with her. The lady of the house said, I am on Sunday fast. I am to clean my house and prepare food for worship.

Surya Narains wife said, How does this fast help you? The lady said, Because of it, I have developed a habit for early rising, keeping the house dean, behaving well with every body and remembering God. Surya Narains wife said, What is the way for keeping this fast? The lady told her that it was simple. She advised her to take rice before the sun-set and avoid salty and fried dishes.

Surya Narains wife decided to keep fast on all Sundays. In a short period, she became prosperous.

Once Surya Narain decided to test his wifes integrity. He disguised himself as an old Pandit and visited his house. He asked for some food. His wife said, I am on fast. You will have to wait till evening. The Pandit agreed. By evening, the food was ready. The Pandit said, I shall take my meals in the same dish in which Surya Narain used to take. Surya Narains mother became angry. But his wife agreed to serve him in the same dish. It was night. The old man said, I shall sleep on the same bed which Surya Narain uses. Surya Narains wife will press my feet also.

Although Surya Narains mother became angry, his wife agreed to press his feet. As the night advanced, the old man asked her to share bed with him. She sensed the reality and shared the bed with him. From now onwards, the Pandit visited her house every Sunday. The lady became pregnant. Everybody talked ill of her. She gave birth to a child. It was too much for her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law said, This is lechery. This is impious and immoral. Your husband will not forgive you.

The lady said, The old man who visits me at night is no one else but Surya Narain himself. The mother-in-law said, You will have to undergo a test. Are you ready for it? The lady agreed. The mother-in-law brought an unspinned, kachcha, thread. She tied its one end to a tree and hung the other end in a deep dingy well. She asked Surya Narains wife to go to the brink of the well. Surya Narain wife caught hold of the thread and put her legs inside the well. It was too much for the onlookers.

All of a sudden, Surya Narain appeared on the scene. He caught hold of her hand and narrated the whole story to his mother. The onlookers were pleased. Surya Narain now led a happy and prosperous life with his family members.

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RAVIVAR KI KAHANI-II

This story is also related to Saturday fast. People eat parched grams on this day to keep off the influence of Saturn. They massage their bodies with mustard oil and also give oil in donation.

Once the seven gods, the lords of the seven days of the week, were having exchange of wit for their amusement. Rahu and Ketu also joined the company. Rahu and Ketu posed a question—who is the most powerful god among us all? They could not decide this issue by themselves. They went to Lord Indra for his adjudication. Lord Indra equally found himself in a fix. He thought if he gave judgement in favour of one, others would be displeased with him. He said, “Respected gods, I am just one among equals. How can I decide this complicated issue? I cannot give an impartial judgement. Better go to planet earth. Vir Vikramaditya rules over there. He is very logical, judicious and righteous. Accordingly, they went to King Vikramaditya.

King Vikramaditya gave due respect to them and begged for any service. They told him about their mission. Though it was a difficult task, Vikramaditya being a dutiful king, accepted it gracefully. Vikramaditya decided that he would not pronounce his verdict directly. He, therefore arranged seven beautiful thrones. These thrones were made of gold, silver, bronze, brass, tin, zinc, mica and iron respectively. The gold throne was placed at number one and the iron one at the end. Vikramaditya requested the seven gods to grace the throne of their own choice. Sun was in the gold chair while Saturn occupied the iron chair.

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When the seven gods were in the chairs of their own choice, king Vikramaditya said, "You may please decide your own rank now according to the order to your throne. I have not thrust my judgement upon you. Saturn could see now through the clever judgement of Vikramaditya. He stood up and said, "King Vikramaditya, you have ranked me the lowest among the seven gods. You do not realise my power. Sun can stay on a zodiac or 'Rashi' for one month and two and a quarter part of a day, Mars for one and a half months and Jupiter for thirteen months. Mercury and Venus can reign a zodiac for one month only. The Rahu and Ketu move in opposite directions and pass through a zodiac in eighteen months only. It is only I who can reign a zodiac from two and a half years to seven and a half years. Even powerful gods tremble at my sight. When I was angry with Rama, he got exile instead of a throne. Ravana's family was destroyed by me when I ruled over his zodiac. Now be prepared. It is your turn."

After a short time, inauspicious period of seven and a half years was occupied by Saturn on king Vikramaditya's zodiac. He visited Vikramaditya's capital as a horse trader. He had very attractive black horses with him. When the king came to know about the strange horses, he sent for the Ashavapaal (groom) to buy a best horse for him. The groom selected one horse. The king was so pleased to see the horse. He could not resist himself from riding it and giving it a kick. He had hardly gone on the horse for a few seconds when it disappeared in the air with a great speed. In no time, the king found himself all alone in a deep and thick forest. He loitered here and there, but of no avail. He then met a cowboy. The cowboy arranged some water for the king and helped him quench his thirst. The king gave him his golden ring.

The king ultimately reached a nearby city and met a respectable businessman. The businessman felt pity on him and arranged food for him. He earned high profits by the grace of Saturn and took 'king' as a lucky visitor and kept him as a head cashier. Next day the businessman took him to his house. The 'king' saw a precious necklace hanging by a peg. For his great surprise he also saw the peg swallowing the necklace. He could not explain it to the businessman. The businessman took him for a thief and presented him before the court. The court ordered that the king's hands and feet be cut with one stroke of a sword. An executor carried out these orders.

The 'king' was now without hands and feet. A 'Tell' (oil seed crusher) felt pity on him and brought him to his house. He dressed the 'king's' wounds and made him capable of driving the bullocks around the grinding machine with loud voice. Time passed on. The inauspicious period of seven and a half years was about to be over. The 'king' thought of singing the Malhar Raga on a rainy day. His powerful voice broke the silence of the night. The princess was thrilled to hear the song in her bedroom. She got fascinated towards the singer.

The princess sent her personal attendant to know about the singer. The attendant was told that the singer was a help to the Teli and without hands and feet. Even then she decided that she would marry that man or would remain unmarried throughout her life. She conveyed her decision to her parents. The parents resented the decision. To register her protest, she put on ordinary clothes and moved to a special chamber or Kopa Bhawan and lay down on an ordinary carpet. The king and the queen ultimately bowed before the princess's decision and said, "If such is your fate, we are reconciled to it."

The king sent for the Tell and said, "Arrange for the marriage of this handicapped help of yours with the princess." The Teli did not believe his ears and took it as a joke. The king resented his behaviour and

said, "Do not take it as a joke. This is our final decision." On an auspicious day, the princess's marriage with that handicapped person was solemnised. That was the last inauspicious day of the king.

It was a honeymoon night. At mid-night, the king had a small nap. Saturn visited the king in his dream and said, "You ranked me the lowest among the gods. You have undergone enough sufferings for your misjudgement." The king begged his pardon and said "Please do not inflict such sufferings in future on anyone as you have inflicted upon me." The Saturn accepted the king's request and disappeared. The king opened his eyes and, to his great surprise, found his hands and feet in proper shape. The princess's joy knew no bounds when she saw her husband in perfect shape. Next day, the king also felt as much happy. And when the king came to know that his son-in-law was no one else but king Vikramaditya himself, he was overwhelmed with joy and praised his stars.

The businessman got this news and felt guilty over his behaviour towards Vikramaditya. He invited him for dinner. King Vikramaditya said, "I shall dine in the same room where the peg swallowed your precious necklace." The businessman agreed and arranged the dinner in that room. When the invitees were dining, they saw to their great surprise that the precious necklace was slowly emerging from the same peg. The businessman was so much overwhelmed at this sight that he, too, decided to marry off his daughter to Vikramaditya.

King Vikramaditya returned to his kingdom. He and his two queens were received with full warmth by the subjects. The king asked his courtiers to make a proclamation by the beat of drum that Saturn is not less powerful than any other god and that they should keep fast on Saturday as a mark of honour of Saturn. Also, they should feed the ants, both in the morning and evening.

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Ravivar ki Kahani-III

This story of the Sun God, is related on the occasion of Sunday fast. It depicts the importance of cow and cow dung and suggests the victory of innocence over jealousy.

Once there was an old lady. She would get up early in the morning and took her bath. She kept her house dean by plastering it with cow dung, and took her meals only after offering food to the Sun God. She lived a happy life. This lady used to collect cow dung from her neighbours house. The neighbours wife was jealous of her. She tethered her cow inside the room so that the old lady could not collect the dung. And as she could not plaster her house with cow-dung, she did not cook her food. She did not even offer food to the idols. She remained on fast throughout the day and slept with empty stomach.

The Sun God appeared before her in her dream. He sold, Why did not you take your meals? Why did you not offer food to the Idols? The old lady said politely, My neighbours lady did not allow me to collect cow-dung from her house. I could not clean my house. I have no cow of my own. The Sun God said, I am happy with you because you kept fast on Sunday. I am pleased with your worship. I shall give you a

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beautiful The god disappeared. The old lady opened her eyes. A beautiful much cow with a calf was there in her courtyard. She was surprised to see them. She arranged hay and water for them.

When the neighbours lady saw the cow in the old ladys house, she became jealous of her. She also noticed that the cows dung was of gold and not an ordinary dung. She took the gold dung and replaced it with the ordinary dung of her cow. She continued the replacing practice for a number of days. The Sun God noted that the old lady was being cheated by her neighbour. He caused a storm at sun-set. The old lady tethered her cow inside her room for its safety. She was, however, surprised to see that her cow gave her gold dung instead of an ordinary one. She could see through her neighbours trick.

The neighbours lady was constantly jealous. She thought of a plan to deprive her of the wonder cow. She went to the king and said, My Lord, a poor old lady in our neighbourhood has a divine cow. The cow gives gold dung. It would be befitting for your graciousness if this cow is with you. She keeps it inside her room. No one can have even its glimpse. The king was a greedy person. He told his courtier, Go immediately and bring the

The old lady was about to offer food to the Sun Gods idol when the courtier reached her house. He untied the rope from peg and took away the cow. The lady prayed and wept, but all in vain. The old lady missed her meals that day. She prayed to her God for the safe return of the cow. She could not sleep at night. The king on the other hand, was highly pleased to have that divine cow. That night, he had a dream. The Sun God was there who said, I offered this cow to the old lady as a token of my affection for her worship of me. You do not deserve this cow.

The king woke up. He was badly shaken. He saw that the entire palace was full of cow dung. There was bad smell all around. In the morning, the king sent for the old lady with due honour. He returned the cow to the old lady and also gave her some wealth. The neighbours lady was suitably punished which was a cause of relief to all. The king proclaimed order that all his subjects should observe fast on Sundays if they wanted their desires to be fulfilled. Now, all his people were prosperous. Illness never visited them. They never faced any natural calamity. Everyone enjoyed happiness.

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