



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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Rushi Panchmi

Rushi Panchami is an auspicious day and falls under the month of Bhadarvo. This day is an opportunity from Maharaj to wash our sins gained from touching women during their menstrual cycle. On this day we should observe a Fast, both men and women. Some think that this day should only be observed by women because they gain all the sins from touching others as it is their fault. However this is not true, men should also observe Fast on this day because they too touch females in their menses unknowingly. **Shikshapatri Bhashya shlok 173 and 174** mentions in detail the rules of rajaswala dharma but sometimes there are situations where this rules are not applicable or the rules are accidentally broken e.g. when commuting, at workplace, at school/college/university or even at home. In these cases, the sins can be repented by observing Rushi Panchami; if the sins are not repented, then the person will take a rebirth as an animal. To highlight this, there has been an incident narrated in the **Puranas**.

Rushi Panchami came about in satyayug; there lived a Brahmin family in the country of Virdarbha – Sumitra, his wife Jayshree, their son Sumati and his wife Chandravati. Sumitra were very pious and a hardworking farmer; although he was very religious, his wife did not observe her menstrual cycles and she continued doing the household chores: cleaning the house and cooking food that was then offered to her husband.

When both husband and wife passed away, they were reborn in their son's house as animals due to the non-observance of the menses. Sumitra was born as a bullock and Jayshree was born as a dog. As the bullock grew older, it was put through the hardship of working in the fields all day.

One day Sumati said to Chandravati that it is the anniversary of the death of his father, therefore as an offering prepare sumptuous foods and dine five Brahmins, saying this he returned to his daily routine of tending to the fields. The wife prepared luxurious foods such as puri, dudhpak, laddoo and many others. She then returned to her household duties leaving the food unattended.

The dog observed a snake squirt in the dudhpak and poison it; the dog thought to herself that the food has been prepared for the shraadh of her husband and will be offered to the Brahmins hence it will kill them; this will endure more sins upon the family in addition to the previous sins. She therefore decided that she would spoil the dudhpak by putting her paws and tail in it. As she did this, Chandravati saw the dog and began to utter harsh words to it. She threw the foods and prepared fresh dishes. Meanwhile in the fields, the bullock was pushed very hard; Sumati did not even have time to feed him, they both returned home from the fields very tired. Sumati gave some grass and water to feed the bullock but as Sumati was very tired he forgot to remove the mouth-guard of the bullock. The dog made his way to the bullock and started complaining that she had also not received food all day. The bullock was very angry because it was due to the dog that they were in this position. Chandravati overheard the bullock and the dog conversing and understood who they were, from then on both the dog and the bullock were cared for lovingly.



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Sumati now realising that the bullock and the dog were his parents decided to find out what could be done to help release them from their fate. He went to the forests and met Maharishi Sarvatapa and asked him why his parents had been reborn as animals. Maharishi narrated everything to him and told him that on Bhadarva Sud Panchmi (Rushi Panchami), invite the seven enlightened saints: Vashisht, Kashyap, Atri, Bhardwaj, Gautama, Vishwamitra and Jamdagni to dine and worship them. On that day, both you and your wife should observe a fast or falahar, after that perform udhyapan ceremony and offer the fruits to your parents, they will achieve moksha.

From this narrative, one should learn to observe the rules of menses. If things have been touched accidentally or the female is touched accidentally during her menses, then one should observe a fast on the day of Rushi Panchami to avoid being reborn as an animal. It is a common mis-conception that this is a fast for only the females, both males and females to observe the vrat to atone for any sins that may have been committed during a females rajaswala.

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