

Grandma's Stories ~ दादी माँ की कहानियाँ ~ नानि हंजु कथु ~ M.K.Raina

Folk Tales of Kashmir

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Note : Main aim of this work is to bring old Classic Kashmiri literature closer to our younger generations. Stories reproduced in Kashmiri language in this series are written in Devanagari-Kashmiri Script to reach those Kashmiris who are not well versed with the Nastaliq Script. And those written in English and Hindi are meant to reach those people who can't read Kashmiri. This will be a way to reach our rich Kashmiri literature to people outside Kashmir. It may be noted here that J&K Academy's works are already published in Nastaliq Script and need not be reproduced in that script again.

- M.K.Raina



Folk Tales of Kashmir

thathû gôr Jester

Yesterday Kàkanⁱ Jigûr, the Grandma was not well. She had to take rest, so did not say a story. Today the youngsters came earlier than scheduled and started pressing Grandma's legs. She was overwhelmed. She blessed them all and started right away. Today's story was *thathû gôr*, a Jester.



Dapaan, once upon a time, there lived two brothers in a village. One was named Sula and the other Gula. Sula used to say jokes right from his childhood. People would greatly enjoy hearing him. *kéhan òs asàn asàn hâli kânên gúrús gatshàn.*

"What does this mean Grandma *kéhan òs asàn asàn hâli kânên gúrús gatshàn?*" Mahima asked. She had lived in Canada for a long time and would not understand typical and uncommon Kashmiri words and phrases.

Grandma replied, "It means they would laugh so long and so loud that they would feel pain in their hips." Now listen what happened.

People would come to hear Sula from far and wide. He became famous. People nicknamed him *súlû thathûgór*. One day, the king of his country heard about him. He sent a message for him. Sula came and king appointed him as his jester. It was Sula's duty now, to tell good jokes to the king and his courtiers.

On the other hand, Sula's brother Gula was looking after his home and his fields. Sula's salary would only meet part expenses of the house, so Gula had to make extra efforts to earn more and run his house. There was no ill will between the two however and days were passing peacefully.

Gula's cousins and neighbours did not take all this lightly. They poisoned Gula's ears. They told him, "You never relax a bit and haven't given your body a little rest ever. You work so hard, all the year. What does Sula do? He is enjoying his life like anything. Why don't you call him and tell him frankly that you can't work like a donkey anymore.

"Oh, what did he do then?" Asked Babloo.

"He thought, his relatives and neighbours were not wrong. Now listen onwards." Said Grandma

Gula got concious. He thought his own people could not be wrong. "I am wasting my youth in running my house and my brother Sula is making merry there in the palace. This is not good. This is total injustice. Let Sula come tonight, I will tell him all at his face. Let him run his kitchen separately", Gula said to himself.

When Sula came in the evening, he heard Gula saying something in low tone in his room. Sula went into the room to see who Gula was talking to. But Gula was alone inside. Sula said to him, "What happened? Are you well? Who were you talking to?" Gula got angry. He said, "How are you concerned? You are enjoying at the palace, just by saying a joke or two to

the king. I am neck deep in trouble here. Don't you realise? I am playing with my health only to feed your family. I can't take it any more. I have decided that we both run our kitchens separately.

Sula was taken aback. He never expected his brother to say all this. But he kept his cool. He said, "My dear brother, don't I have two eyes and don't I see this all. I know you are working hard to meet the expenses, but I am also contributing whatever I earn from the palace. I understand, my income is little but doesn't it help in meeting some expenditure?"

Gula was adamant. He said to Sula, "No brother. I am not here to listen to your stories. From tomorrow, you must look after your land and cows yourself and also run your kitchen separately. I am not going to do anything for you."

Sula got emotional. He said to Gula, "I understand you work hard to run the home and feed my family. I am ready to quit my job at the palace and look after the land and cows and kitchen. But I am afraid of one thing. King may not take it lightly. After all he is paying me for my time. Quitting his job may prove disastrous for us."

On hearing his brother, Gula laughed aloud. He said to Sula, "If you are so concerned for the king, let me go there in your place. I am capable of telling good jokes and king will like me too."

Sula said, "That was fine, but you will not be able to conceive the jokes instantly and tell the king. Gula said, "It is not a big thing. I can do it much better than you. Moreover, when one wishes to do anything, God too shows the way." Sula did not argue. It was decided that instead of Sula, Gula will go to the Palace from next day and tell jokes to the king.

"What did Gula do? Did he go to the Palace?" Vir asked

"Yes, he did go. I will tell you what happened there", said Grandma

Gula went to the Palace next day and said to the King, "*Alam Pannah*, I am Gula, brother of Sula, the Jester. Sula is not well. I will perform his duties here till he recovers and joins back."

King heard him and said, "It is OK. But can you tell us jokes like he does." Gula replied, "*Alam Pannah*, I can do it better than him." King laughed and said, "Tell us a joke."

Gula had a deep breath and said, "Badshah Salamat! Yesterday, dogs were barking in the sky above our village." King said, "Tell us one more." Gula said, "*Alam Pannah*, yesterday we cooked mutton and I got a piece 40 yards long." King and the courtiers laughed aloud. Gula thought, his jokes worked well. He wanted to leave for the day when King said to him, "You can not leave the Palace until you open the secret of your jokes." Hearing this, Gula got nervous. He had never thought that he will be asked to reveal the secret of jokes. He had no secret to reveal. He stood like a stone. King ordered his guards to take Gula to the jail. Gula fell on ground.

"Oh, did he die?" said Mahima.

"No, he did not die", said Grandma.

Gula was immediately taken to jail. When he did not return to his home for days together, Sula got panicky. He believed some mishap had taken place in the Palace. After waiting for ten days, he himself went to Palace to check. There he came to know that Gula had been jailed by the King. He went to see the King. He said to the King, "*Jahan Pannah*, I have heard that you have jailed my brother Gula. What is his fault *Jahan Pannah*?" King replied, "We are sorry, we had to jail your brother. But the fact is that he could not reveal the secret of his jokes when asked. If he was not fully prepared for the job, why did he come here to play

jester?" Gula pleaded, "Alam Pannah, is there a way to get him freed?" "Yes", said the King, "If you can reveal the secrets of his jokes, we will free him."

King ordered his Vazir to tell Sula what Gula had said. Vazir did it. Vazir stood up and said to Sula, "Gula said, one, dogs were barking in the sky over his village, and two, he got a piece of mutton 40 yards long in his meals. Neither can dogs fly to skies, nor can there be a piece of mutton as long as 40 yards because no animal is that much long.

Sula thought for a while and said, "Alam Pannah, my brother has not said any lies. The fact is that in our village, a bitch had delivered puppies. One puppy was taken away by some demon. The same was felt barking in the skies above, during nights." King was satisfied.

For second question, Sula smiled and said, "This is a fact too. Last time we had cooked mutton. Butcher had supplied us an uncut *nóh* of a sheep, which was exactly 40 yards long."

"What is *nóh*?" Kishmish asked.

"*nóh* is bowels of an animal. It is a long single piece until cut into small pieces", replied Grandma.

King got satisfied with both the answers. He freed Gula and rewarded Sula for coming to his brother's rescue. Both of them left for home.

At dinner, Gula said to Sula, "Bhai, I am convinced one can not necessarily do what others can do. I am also convinced that God has distributed work according to one's capabilities. Please forgive me." Sula embraced him.

Dapaan, Sula and Gula both lived peacefully and lovingly thereafter.

Grandma finished the story and children left.



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