

VATA SAVITHRI VRATA

This Vrata is celebrated on Jyeshtha suddha pournima.

Pooja procedure : Satyavan came back to life under a fig tree, Vata Vriksha, and his wife Savithri worshipped the tree on full moon day in Jyeshtha masa. Hence, the pooja is offered to a fig tree or picture of Savithri sitting under the fig tree. A fast is observed on that day and after the pooja, five mangoes each with betel nuts are given to five suhasins (sumangalis)

Story of Vata Savithri Vrata

Once upon a time, Sanath Kumara and his brothers requested Lord Mahadeva to tell them a Vrata which when observed sincerely will confer prosperity and sowbhagya on our womenfolk. Readily acceding to their request Lord Mahadeva narrated a story as follows :

There was a King by name Aswapathi who ruled over Bhadra Desa. As he had no issues, he worshipped Savithri Devi, who initiated him into Savithri Manthra and told him to ask for a boon. The King replied, I am desirous of a male progeny. I have no other desire. However, Savithri Devi told him that his desire to have a male child will not fructify but will be blessed with a female child who will bring happiness and glory to both the families.

Soon, by the grace of Savithri Devi, the queen was pregnant and after a time she gave birth to a female child. Since she was born by the grace of Savithri Devi, the King thought it fit to name his child also as Savithri. Child Savithri who grew up to be a beautiful girl, was well educated and mastered all arts.

The King thought that it was time for her marriage and began to search for a suitable bridegroom for his daughter. But because of the extremely beautiful gait and extraordinary intelligence of Savithri, no one came forward to marry her. The King was deeply concerned about her future. He decided to send Savithri to different parts of his domain so that she could herself choose a groom of her choice.

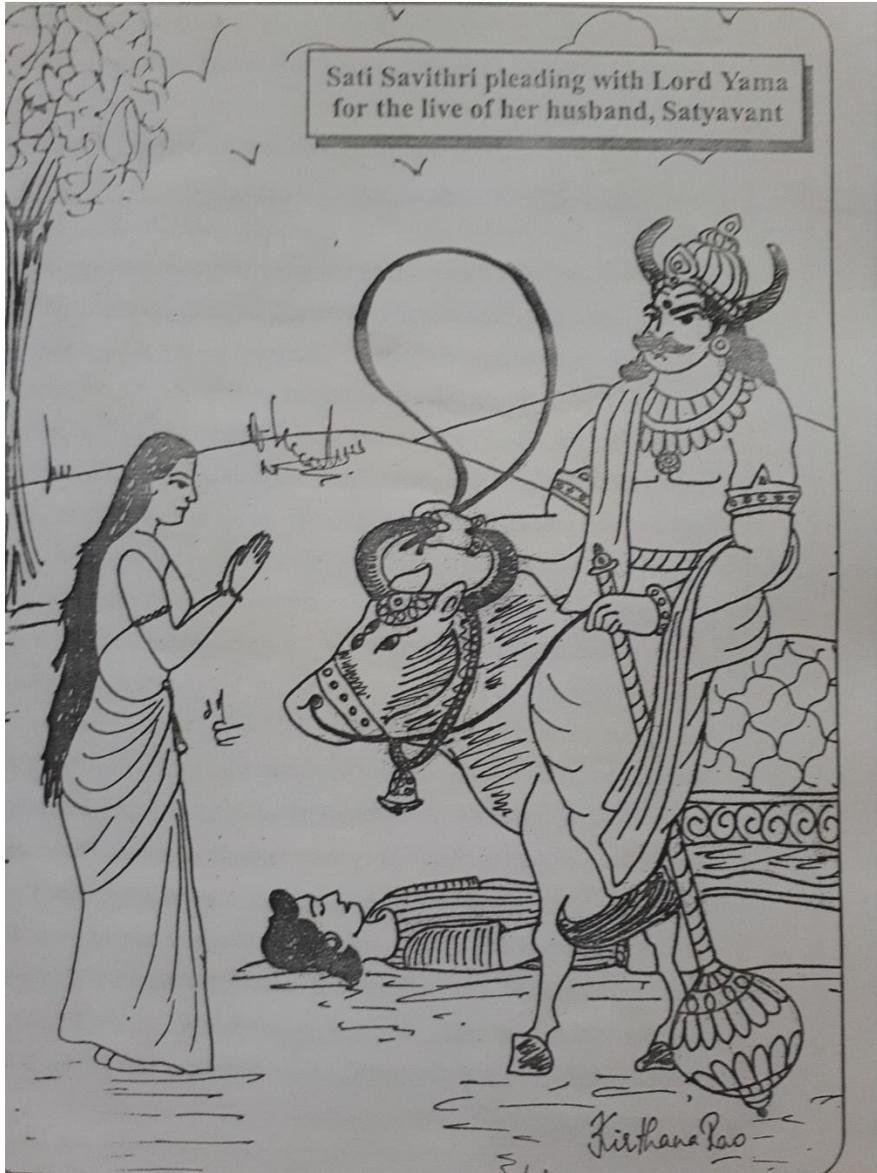
Meanwhile Sage Narada who arrived at King Aswapathi's palace, was received with due honours and the sage also enquired of his well-being. The sage became curious to know why Savithri's marriage was getting delayed. As the two were conversing, Savithri returned home. The King enquired of her whether she had succeeded in selecting a groom, she replied in the positive and said her choice fell upon Satyavan and continued, "O, revered sage, King Dyumatsena, having been defeated and dethroned by his enemies, retired to the forests along with his queen, the ill fated king not only lost his kingdom but also became totally blind. His son Satyavan is a person who not only loves truth but also always speaks truth. He is valorous, well versed and is of excellent character. I liked him and decided to marry him".

Hearing this, Sage Narada spoke to Aswapathi thus :- “O King, the groom which your daughter has chosen is not good. No doubt Satyavan is good and handsome, but his life span is very short. In fact, he is sure to die in another year. Therefore, ask your daughter to choose somebody else”. The King persuaded Savithri to change her mind but without success. She was firm in her resolve and said, “Once I have taken a decision, it is final. Satyavan will be my husband”. Sage Narada thereupon advised King Aswapathi to go ahead with the marriage. Preparations were afoot for Savithri’s marriage with Satyam and King Aswapathi met Dyumatsena and sought the hand of his son in marriage to Savithri.

Dyumatsena replied, “O, King, we are poor people. I have lost my kingdom and am also blind. My son lives on fruits and leaves. How can such conditions suit your daughter? Don’t throw her in distress”. King Aswathi revealed the firm resolve of his daughter and Dyumatsena was prevailed upon to accept the proposal. Satyavan was married to Savithri, both of whom led a happy life. Savithri looked after her in-laws well.

As time passed by, Satyavan’s life span was getting shortened and only three days were left. Death could snatch him away from this world. Savithri who was aware of this began to fast and kept awake at night. On the final day, Satyavan went into the forest to collect firewood against the wishes of his wife Savithri, who pleaded with him not to venture into the forests. She insisted on accompanying him and he agreed after being permitted by his parents, who advised Savithri to break her fast on the fourth day. While Satyavan was extolling the beauty of the forests, Savithri was increasingly worried about the fateful hour. Satyavan started climbing a tree to pluck fruits while Savithri sat under the tree. Suddenly he fell down due to fatigue and preferred to sleep on Savithri’s lap for sometime. These events foreboded the things to follow and Satyam eventually died on her lap.

Instantly, Savithri saw a dark and ferocious figure standing before her with a noose in his hand.



He was none other than Yama, the god of death. Addressing Savithri, he said, “The life span of your husband ended today and I have personally come to take him away. Normally, my servants do this job, but since Satyavan is a dharmatma, I came in person”. So saying, he threw the noose around Satyavan’s neck and began dragging him towards the direction of South (the direction of forefathers). At once, Savithri abandoning the dead body of her husband, started following Yama, who looked back and said, “you have been freed from your filial duties of your husband and please therefore retreat”. Savithri said that as per dharmic injunctions, a

Pativrata (dutiful wife) should follow her husband wherever he goes. Yama said that Savithri can ask for any boon which he is ready to grant, other than her husband’s life. Savithri requested Yama to restore the eyesight of her father in law which he granted. Seeing Savithri persisting to follow him, he granted her a second boon and restored the lost kingdom of Dyumatsena, advising her now to go back. Savithri now spoke, “O, Lord Yama, you are the person who decide the fate of all people. Good people like you should show mercy even to their enemies. Please restore my husband’s life”. Yama agreed to grant her a third boon. Savithri pleaded with him to bless her father with a male progeny and to bless him with a hundred sons, all of whom will be intelligent. This boon was also granted, yet Savithri did not retreat. Savithri again replied, “O, Lord Yama, I am not tired of following you for such a long distance, for in you I have good company and I have full trust in you”.

Now Yama was greatly pleased and said, “Savithri, nobody has praised me like you. I will grant you a fourth boon”. Replying, Savithri said, “In my place let Satyavan be blessed with a hundred sons, who will make his family prosperous”. Unwittingly, Yama granted the fourth boon.

Savithri said, “If you bless me thus, your fourth boon will be falsified if my husband is not brought back to life, being a Pativrata, how can I get a hundred sons?”

Smilingly Yama replied, “Savithri, you are very intelligent. Speaking soft words to me, you achieved your objective. I will bring back your husband alive and loosen the noose around the dead body of Satyavan. Savithri ran back to the place where her husband’s dead body lay and took him on her lap. Lo! What a wonder. Satyavan came back to life and opened his eyes as if he had awakened from a deep slumber. They both went back to their home. Dyamatsena’s eyesight was restored, he got back his lost kingdom and King Aswapathi begot hundred sons. The good deeds of Savithri were rewarded.

Thus ended Lord Mahadeva’s narration to Sanath Kumaras. Vata Savithri Vrata is a worship offered to Savithri, the Pativrata, by womenfolk even today for attaining sowbhagya.

The Marathi School and the Maharashtra Association Building Trust, Chennai.