

he did not see the Devī when she appeared. It was due to this piety that the Brahmin was given boons. (M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 199).

(v) Once Devī Sāvitrī appeared before Satya, a brahmin of Vidarbha. (M.B. Śānti Parva, Chapter 272, Verse 11).

(vi) Once Devī Sāvitrī praised the giving of rice as alms. (M.B. Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 57, Verse 8).

SĀVITRĪ II. A hand-maid of Devī Umā. (Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 231, Verse 49).

SĀVITRĪ III. A Sāvitrī who was the wife of a king and a righteous woman is mentioned in Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, Chapter 234, Verse 24. This Sāvitrī gave two ear-rings as alms and attained heaven.

SĀVITRĪ IV. The wife of Satyavān.

1) *Birth*. In the country of Madra, famous in the Purāṇas, there was a king named Aśvapati. His wife was Mālātī. Though the couple grew old they were childless. At last they worshipped Devī Sāvitrī. After vows and prayers for eighteen years the Devī appeared before them, and giving them the boon that a daughter would be born to them, she disappeared. The couple returned to the palace and Mālātī conceived and delivered a daughter whom they named Sāvitrī. (Skandha 9, Devī Bhāgavata; Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 293).

2) *Marriage*. Sāvitrī grew up as though Lakṣmī had taken an incarnation and bloomed into a beautiful damsel. But nobody came forward to marry her. On a New moon day she bathed and purified herself and getting the blessings of Brahmins, came and bowed before her father. The King felt sorry as nobody had offered to marry her though she was in the full bloom of youth. He advised her to travel in the outside world and to select a husband by herself. According to the order of her father she took the aged ministers of the King and travelled through the forests in which hermits lived.

Once Nārada came to the palace and while he was talking with King Aśvapati, Sāvitrī and the aged ministers returned. She bowed before her father and Nārada. As soon as Nārada saw her, he asked with curiosity about her marriage. The father replied that he had sent her in search of a husband. Sāvitrī said "I have accepted the Prince Satyavān as my husband. He is the son of King Dyumatsena of Sālva. Dyumatsena became blind in his old age, and taking this opportunity his enemies captured his country. Dyumatsena with his wife and son went to the forest and lived there."

Nārada described the qualities of Satyavān. "Satyavān is as radiant as the sun, as intelligent as Brhaspati, as valiant as Indra and as patient as the Earth. Aśvapati was immensely pleased at hearing about the good qualities of Satyavān, and asked Nārada, if there was anything to say against him. Nārada said that he had nothing to say against Satyavān except that he would die "within one year from this date." (Mahābhārata, Vana Parva, Chapter 294).

The King felt miserable when he heard this. Sāvitrī said that she had accepted Satyavān as her husband and that nothing could make her waver from her decision even if he is not going to live more than a year. The King agreed to the wish of his daughter and preparations for the marriage were begun. The King went with Sāvitrī to the forest and saw Dyumatsena

who gladly consented to the marriage. Aśvapati returned to the palace leaving Sāvitrī with Satyavān and his parents. As soon as Aśvapati had returned, Sāvitrī discarded her ornaments and assumed the dress suitable to life in the forest and lived with them.

3) *The death of Satyavān*. It was nearly a year and the day of death of Satyavān was fast approaching. There were only four days more. Sāvitrī had taken a vow lasting for three days. Dyumatsena dissuaded her from taking fast. She completed the fast. There was left only one night more. She kept awake for the whole night. Morning came. Though she ended her fast she had not taken any food. Dyumatsena wanted to know the reason. She humbly said that she would eat only after sun-set.

As usual Satyavān took his axe and started for the wood. Sāvitrī also followed him.

Satyavān:—"You have never accompanied me before. Moreover you are very weak on account of the fast. Then how can you come with me?"

Sāvitrī:—"I am not at all weak by the fast and vow. I want to come with you. I pray, don't hinder me."

At last Satyavān consented after getting the permission of his parents. Both went to the forest to gather fruits and roots. They gathered fruits and roots. Then Satyavān began to cut wood. By that exertion Satyavān sweated all over. He was affected by headache. "Let me lie down!" He said. The axe fell from his hand. Sāvitrī caught her husband who was falling down and laid him on her lap. Sāvitrī saw a person clad in blood-coloured garments, with red eyes and a rope in hand, coming towards them. He came to the spot and stood there looking at the body of Satyavān. Realizing the person to be Kāla (Deathgod) Sāvitrī stood up instantly and bowed before him.

Sāvitrī:—"Who are you Lord. What may be your object in coming here?"

Yama:—"Hei, Sāvitrī. As you are a hermitess of chastity I may converse with you. I am Yama. I am come to take away the life of your husband."

Sāvitrī:—"Lord, I have heard that your messengers come and take away the souls. How is it that you have come in person today?"

Yama:—"This Satyavān is a righteous man who is an ocean of good qualities. Messengers are not sent, in the cases of persons like him."

Saying thus Yama cast his rope and caught the soul of Satyavān. Sāvitrī saw the body of her husband lying without life and soul. Sāvitrī followed Yama who had gone to the south with the soul of Satyavān.

Yama:—"Child, you go back and conduct his funerals. You have followed your husband as far as you can."

Sāvitrī:—"I am coming to the place where my husband is being taken. That is the duty of a wife. What impediment is there on my way to follow you, when I have the merits of vow, fast, devotion to my elders, love and regard for my husband and the good will of yourself, my Lord."

When Yama realized that it was difficult to send Sāvitrī back, he asked Sāvitrī to ask for any boon. Yama was prepared to give anything except the life of Satyavān. She requested for the recovery of sight by Dyumatsena. Yama granted it. Still Sāvitrī did not turn back. Yama asked her to pray for one more boon. She