



Om Shri Satyanarayana
Namah

Satya Narayan is the Narayan form of Lord. The Lord in this form is considered an embodiment of truth. Satyanarayana is worshipped commonly by Hindus in their homes with family and friends, usually on a full moon (purnima) day of the month. In this puja called **Satyanarayana Pooja**, people worship by reciting the gracious story of Lord Satyanarayana. This story was originally told by *Lord Vishnu* himself to the sage Narada for the benefit of humankind.

This puja is conducted to ensure abundance in ones life. Many people carry out this puja immediately after or along with an auspicious occasion like a marriage or moving into a new house or any other success in life. The Satyanarayan puja can be performed on any day. It is not a puja confined to any festivities. But Poornima (full moon day) or Sankranti are considered to be most auspicious day for this puja. Performing this puja in the evening is considered more appropriate. On the day of the puja, the devotee has to fast.

The prasad for this vrata is known as *Sapaad* which is prepared thus: Take an equal measure of rava, Milk, Ghee, Banana, Sugar (the measure should be 1 1/4 or multiples thereof) cook it till all mix into a paste.

The Pooja or Vrata

The vrata is explained in five chapters. The first or the introductory chapter deals with the timing of the vrata and the procedure to go about it. The remaining four chapters contain three stories to reassert the greatness and benevolence of the Almighty. The stories weave out such anecdotes, which reveal the significance of the vrata quite effectively. The vrata is also revealed in nine chapters in some books.

On the day of the **vrata**, it is required to fast and perform the pooja towards the evening. In a sacred pooja room, a new cloth has to be spread on an elevated platform. Rice about a Kg is to be spread on the cloth and in the centre and a kalash capped with a new cloth piece should be placed and on that the token or a small idol of the Lord has to be positioned. A **Panchamruta** (a mixture of ghee, milk, sugar, honey and curds) abhishekam has to be performed.

Vrata begins with the lighting of the lamp, a symbolic gesture of lighting the lamp of devotion in one's heart. Then we pray to Lord Ganesh, the dispeller of obstacles, Lakshmi, the giver of prosperity, Vishnu, the sustainer, Lord Shiva and Parvathi, the primordial couple who dance their way to cosmic rhythm, Sun God, the giver of good health, the nine planets and



Shri Satyanarayana

Ashtadikpaalakas including Lord Indra.

Lord Ganesha and Panchaloka Paalakaas should be positioned to the north of the Kalasha and can be worshipped through areca nuts or almonds or turmeric pods or dry dates. Later, the nine planets should be worshipped by placing areca nuts on betel leaves followed by Lord Indra and other Dikpaalakaas. Later the Lord Satyanarayana's idol or image on betel leaf should be worshipped through panchamruta abhisheka. The pooja runs in ashtottara or satanaama attributes and culminates with haarathi and taamboolam. At the end of the vrata there is udvaasana, a formal way of concluding the pooja. The vrata can be performed by every devout individual by inviting brahmins, friends and relatives. The underlying spirit is to bring in as many people as possible into the divine cult.

Pooja Materials:

A book on the vrata (It is preferable to seek help of a purohit), a square platform, mango leaves, two new cloth pieces, kalasha, lord's idol or a photograph, turmeric, kumkum, panchamruta, six coconuts, prasada, four oil lamps, sandal paste, incense sticks, betel leaves, two garlands, areca nuts, turmeric pods, dry dates or almonds, camphor, offerings in form of cash or coins, tulsi leaves and flowers.

Satyanarayana Katha

CHAPTER 1

Shri Sathyanaranayana katha is from Skandha purana, Reva kaanda. Sutha Puraanikji was the narrator of these stories, in Neimishaaranya to the rishis lead by Shounakji who were performing a 1000 year yajna for the benefit of mankind.

Shounakaji and others now ask Suta Puranikji an important question. "When a man has a desire, how can he fulfill that ethically sound desire? By worshipping whom, by what vrata, or tapas? Please let us know.

Sutaji was pleased to know that this question they asked, was for the benefit of the mankind and not for their personal benefit, for, they had abandoned their homes and all desires. Sutaji said " this question was also asked by Devarshi Naradaji once to Lord Narayana Himself; **Let me tell you that story.**

Once Naradaji was traveling all over the worlds and finally came to Bhuloka, where he found almost everyone was suffering one or the other misery on account of their past Karmas and were not knowing how to extricate themselves from their untold miseries which were multiplying everyday on account of their ignorance. Being a Satjana his heart felt their agonies and immediately he reached Vaikunta, to Lord Narayana to find the right answer for getting the people out of their miseries. But when he sees the Lord, being a great devotee of the Lord, he forgets his purpose and starts praising the Lord. The Lord Narayana smiles at him and asks the purpose of his visit, knowing that normally Naradaji

does not visit Him without a purpose. Naradaji tells Him what he saw and requests Him a panacea for all such miseries. The Lord is now happy at this question of Naradaji because of Naradaji's intention of benefiting the world by seeking the right answer. The Lord said:

Yes, there is a vrata called Sri Satyanarayana vrata which is not known to the inhabitants of the Bhuloka. This is a secret and yet since your interest is the benefit of the mankind, I shall narrate to you this vrata. This can be performed by anyone (anyone means it does not need an expert or a priest to worship the Lord - ANYONE of any caste, community, creed can worship the Lord directly) and very easily. One who does this, will get all the benefits and the pleasures of this world and will eventually get Moksha too. Now Narada wants to know more details of this vrata. The Lord says, this can be done any day, in the evening. Gather friends and relatives and perform this vrata with faith and devotion. The night should be spent in Bhajans and praise of the Lord. All those attending Pooja should be given food and respect. Thus the performer will get all his wishes fulfilled.

CHAPTER 2

Sri Lord Narayana tells Narada the further story:

There was an old and poor Brahmin in the city of Kashi. He was a man of virtue and yet extremely poor and was always begging for the next meal. Since the Lord is Viprapriya- (Brahmana priya means Lover of Brahmana- Brahmana means anyone on the devotional path) - He came in the guise of an old Brahmin and accosted him " Tell me my friend, what ails you?". The brahmin replied "I am an old and very poor man and I shall be grateful if you can tell me how to get rid of this poverty of mine which does not seem to leave me". The Lord replied "Why don't you perform Sri Satyanarayana Vrata", and He told him how to perform the Vrata.

The poor man now desires to do this vrata and thinking over these thoughts of the Lord he goes to bed. He could not sleep on account of these thoughts. Again in the morning he had same thoughts and he says to himself, "whatever I earn today by begging I shall use it to perform the vrata". Since the Lord likes such feelings, (Bhavana Devam - Lord does not want our material possessions, he is won by the genuineness of our feelings) that day, he got plenty of money while begging and thus pleased, he took the necessary articles and performed the vrata.

Very soon he became rich and had all the things of the world and thereafter he started performing the vrata every month and thus he enjoyed all the pleasures of the world and finally reached the Moksha too.

Now Shaunakji and other rishis want to know how this vrata spread in the world. Also those who have heard the story, what benefits they got.

Sutaji replies:

Once when this brahmin was performing the Sri Satyanarayana Pooja there came to his house a woodcutter. He saw the pooja and wanted to know what it is and what are its fruits. The brahmin said, "This is Sri Satyanarayana Pooja. Whatever desires you have in your mind will be fulfilled by performing this vrita. My own poverty and troubles all ended by my very decision to perform this vrita". On hearing this, the woodcutter prostrates to the Lord, takes prasada, and decides to perform this pooja next day. He thought in his mind, "Whatever amount I get from the sale of the wood tomorrow, I will use it for the performance of the vrita." That day he sold the wood for twice the price. Happily thinking of the Lord Satyanarayana he proceeds to do this pooja, inviting his friends and relatives. Thus performing regularly he became rich and happy and finally reached Satyaloka.

CHAPTER III

Suta Puranikji continues the story:

Once there was a good king called Ulkamukha. He was wedded to truth and sense-control. Everyday he used to go to the temple, worship the Lord, distribute alms to the needy. Once he was performing Sri Satyanarayana Vrita on the banks of a river. At that time there came a merchant in a ship loaded with precious goods. He approached the king and wanted to know the details of the pooja and also its fruits. The king said, "My friend, what we are doing is a vrita called Sri Satyanarayana Pooja. This is done with a desire to have progeny, wealth, property, etc. By this, we are worshipping Lord Narayana or Mahavishnu".

The merchant said, "Please tell me the details as to how to perform this vrita, because I would like to have children whom I have not been fortunate to have till now." The king tells him the details of the vrita and the merchant returns home. He tells the details to his wife and they decide to perform this vrita if they get a child. Sometime later his wife Lilavathi became pregnant and delivered a girl who was named Kalavathi. Lilavathi reminded her husband about the vrita and he kept postponing it, till his daughter grew of age and was ready to be married. The father finds a suitable groom and marries her off and again forgot to perform the vrita although he had decided to do so at the time of marriage of his daughter. The Lord now wanted to remind him.

The merchant and his son-in-law were in a city called Ratnasara where king Chandrakethu was ruling. There was a theft at the palace and the burglars were chased by the police. The running burglar saw these two merchants resting near a tree and they left the booty with them and ran off. The police caught the two merchants with the stolen goods and they were straight away sent to the prison. The king himself overlooked to investigate. It is this time the merchant suddenly realized that this was all on account of his forgetting the promise to the Lord. At about this time, back home both Lilavathi and her daughter Kalavathi lost all their belongings due to thefts at home and were rendered beggars. During one such wandering trying to find some food Kalavathi sees Sri Satyanarayana Pooja being performed at one house. She goes in, hears the story and details and returns to tell her mother what had taken place. Lilavathi now knows that it is

their forgetting to do the Pooja that had created all these problems. Next day she calls her relatives and friends and performs the Pooja, begs for forgiveness. Accordingly, the king had a dream that the merchants were innocent and he releases them on inquiry and gives them lot of wealth.

CHAPTER IV

Suta Puranik continues the story:

Thus released from the custody the merchants were returning home. They reached the outskirts of their town in their ship. The Lord in order to test them again comes in the form of an old Sanyasi and inquires as to what the load in the ship is. The merchant bluffs and says that it contains dried leaves. The sanyasi says "Tathasthu". When the merchant returns to the ship he finds that it does contain now dried leaves only. He swoons and when he regains his consciousness he realizes that these are doings of the Sanyasi whom he had cursorily dismissed earlier. He seeks him out and begs for forgiveness. The ever-merciful Lord again forgives him. Now that the merchant was near the town, he sends a messenger in advance to Lilavathi to let her know that they are on their way home. Lilavathi tells her daughter to complete the Satyanarayana pooja they were performing and goes ahead to meet her husband. Kalavathi does the pooja, but in a hurry to meet her husband, she neglects to take the prasad; and when she nears the anchorage, she does not find the ship nor her husband! It looked to her that they both sank/drowned. She swoons and now she decides to die.

The merchant thinks that this must be on account of some fault on their part in ignoring the Lord and then and there he decides to do the pooja as a part of expiation from his side for mistakes of omission or commission. The Lord now pleased makes him realize that it is the daughter's oversight in not accepting the prasad that has created this problem and now if she goes and takes the prasad, everything would be all right.

Kalavathi returned to the altar and took prasad with all faith and reverence. And her husband returned and from then onwards, they all performed Sri Sathyanarayana Pooja regularly till the end of their life and finally after death, they reached Satyaloka.

CHAPTER V

This chapter is important to us as we too tend to behave like the King in this story, in respect of pooja/worship/religion of other people.

In the woods of Nemisharanya, Suta Puranikji continued the story narrating the greatness of this Vrita to Shounaka and other Rishies:

In ancient times, there was a King called Angadwaja. He was good and righteous king {like all of us, good and righteous}; and yet once he ignored the prasad of Sri Satyanarayana Pooja and had to suffer very dearly to that.

Once this king was returning from hunting the wild animals in the forests. He rested under a tree for a while. A few yards away a small group of cowherd boys had gathered to perform Sri Satyanarayana Pooja. They did not have anything except their daily bread they were carrying and a talkative among them became their priest and they played the game of doing a pooja. At the end of the pooja, they offered the prasada to the king who, out of contempt and pride, left it untouched.

Pretty soon all his wealth was lost; his hundred children died and he now knew, being a good king that this was all on account of his contempt for those children's pooja. Without any delay the king goes to that very spot where the cowherd boys had done the pooja earlier, gathers them all around him performs the Satyanarayana Pooja with all shraddha and bhakthi.

Thus the king again got all his wealth and kingdom and kins.

Suta now tells the Rishis that this Vrita is specially effective in Kaliyuga. This Lord of Lord is called Ishwara, Satyadeva, Sri Satyanarayana and by many other names. He alone has taken names and forms.

One who reads this story and one who hears it will be rid of all woes and difficulties.

Types of Vishnu

Pauranikas consider Narayana or Vishnu as of four types based on the celestial world — 1. The Lord of Paradise (*Vaikunta Nadha*) 2. The Lord-lying on the ocean of celestial waters (*Anantha sayana*) 3. The inhabitant of the white Island (*Sweta Dvipa*), and 4. The Lord of Goloka (*Golokanadha*).

1. **Jyotistoma** is the region of light from the earth to 21st plane. It is full of fire. It is Vaikuntanatha—the first sacrifice. "This fiery and divine sacrifice (*Swaha yajna*) consists of 34 utterances and the 21st plane is its establishment (*Pratista*). Thirty three fire-deities related to Vishnu are its limbs. The whole of these deities is Vaikuntanadha Vishnu". He will be awake for eight months and sleeps for four months. During these four months, there will be dominating influence of water and the fire becomes recessive. So the sacrifices will be destroyed. This is what we call 'sleep of Vishnu'.

2. **Dwadasa yajna** extends from 22nd plane to 33rd plane which is full of spiritual water (*Apa*) and essence (*Soma*). This is the Lord Vishnu lying on the Ocean. He is said to be having 34 utterances including Prajapati (*Pridvi*). He is the second Vishnu. Vishnu of the celestial ocean, always sleeps and often awakes. The Splendour of ignition (*Agni*) is the waking state. The ignition will be weak in the sea and hence the sacrifice will be slackened. The word 'sleep' denotes this condition.

3. **Navaha yajna** starts from 17th plane to 25th plane. The sacrificial Vishnu of this region will have white island as His habitation but is established at 21st level. He is the third Vishnu called Lord Satyanarayana. As Satyanarayana will always be in self-

mortification, He is always awake. He never sleeps since Navaha yajna at 21st plane uniformly continues throughout the year.

4. **Pancha Dasaha yajna** extends from 22nd plane to 36th plane. It is uttered by Sama Veda. Here Gau spirits are born and hence is called Gosava or Goloka. It is established at 29th plane. This region is pervaded by the ocean, a form of spiritual water, air and essence. The spiritual waters are the form of cows (*Gua Spirits*). They are of spreading nature. This is the supreme world (*Paramesti*). Lord Vishnu of this world is called Govinda.

These four divisions belong to Pridvi that extends up to 33rd level. Thus they are the four dwellings places of the four types of Vishnu. The Lord of Goloka has two arms but the others are four-armed.

Lord Satyanarayana owing to utter blackness is white in complexion. The other three are blue in color. As Satyanarayana is an embodiment of Tapas, (*self- mortification*). He has no wife.

The others forms have wives. Govinda Vishnu's wife is Radha. She is the splendour of Vak (*Vagjyoti*) and carrier of wisdom (*Janana Vahini*). Lakshmi is the consort of Samudra Seyana Vishnu. She should be considered as Padma (*Pridvi*) born of the sea having the quality of terrestrial atoms (*mrit paramanu lakshana*). Vaikuntanatha has five wives – Pridvi, Tulasi, Ganga, Saraswati and Lakshmi. But he is considered to be having two wives – Sri Devi and Lakshmi (*Bhudevi*), perhaps the reason is the three wives Pridvi, Tulasi, and Saraswati are accepted by the word 'Sree'. Here 'Pridvi' means celestial waters called 'maras' the source of the Earth. Tulasi means the waters of Solar rays called marichis, the source of medicinal herbs and plants. Ganga means waters called 'ambhas'.