

Translating “*Vatas*”, the Rajasthani Folk Narratives of Satal-Som

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Abstract

A *Vata* is a story in prose having a plot interlinked with smaller and side stories, often culminating in a happy ending. The *vata* came into being during the Mughal period when Rajput rulers enjoyed a comparative calm and their retinue demanded entertainment. These *Vatas* constitute a significant part of oral story telling tradition of Rajasthan. They cover a wide range of themes containing historical, legendary, ethical, social and cultural contents. These *Vatas*, besides providing entertainment also served the purpose of infusing patriotic and heroic sentiments among the youngsters. The romantic *Vatas*, are presentations of popular stories. Such *Vatas* are relished for their erotic content and fine piece poetry interspread between prose narrations. The style of these *Vatas*, is rhythematic and flowery as is the case with Dola Maru re vata, Palla de ri vata, Lata Mervad ri vata, etc. The legendary *Vatas*, which are quite large in quantity, deal with folk heroes having supernatural powers. The *Vatas* entitled Raja Man Data ri Vata, Vikram de Songara re Vata, Pabu Ji ri Vata, Jaimal Matawat ri Vata, Jag Panwar ri Vata, etc. fall in this category. Certain *Vatas* are more or less reproductions of popular folktales. The *Vatas* entitled Palak Dariyav ri Vata, Kunwar or Sahukar ri Vata are fine specimens of this type. The *Vata* selected for the translation is taken from a well-known collection of *Vatas*, *Rajasthani Vat Sangrah* published by one of the eminent publishers of Rajasthan- Rajasthani Granthagar, Jodhpur and compiled by scholars- Manohar Sharma and Srilal Nathmal Joshi.

Keywords: Folk heroes; Rajasthani folk literature; Story-telling Tradition; Translation; *Vatas*.

Narrative of Satal-Som

Fort of “Samiyana”. Popularly known as “Hiwaroo Samiyana” and presently known as “Kumbhatgarh”, situated near the fort, was a pond called “Bhandlav”, constructed by Bhande Rebari. Kumbhatgarh was ruled by

Satal and Som Chouhan. Satal and Som were deputed as security men of Emperor Allaudin of Delhi. They used to hold emperor's sword.

Emperor used to challenge everyone daily while he visited the court, by saying, "Is there anyone on this earth who can fight with me?" Then Satal and Som mutually contemplated that in order to break the emperor's insolence they will request the emperor for a combat.

One day in the court, Emperor was sitting on the throne, and all the chief-tains were standing with folded palms to greet him. The emperor said, "Is there anybody on this earth who can bear my sword? Can fight with me?" At this juncture Satal and Som came forward greeted the emperor with folded palms and politely said, "if we say so then it may show lack of integrity, but his highness says that no one can bear his sword, but we can." Praising them the emperor said, "Well done Satal! May God protect you!" Satal said- "Highness, I need a time of six months, so that I can make proper arrangements." Thereafter Satal was in service of the Emperor and Som departed. He went home organized everything, made arrangements in the fort. Six months passed in this process. Then Satal humbly requested the emperor with folded palms, "six months have passed." The emperor ordered, "move towards Kumbhatgarh."

The emperor started his journey, taking timely rests. When Kumbhatgarh was not more than one or two resting places far, then Satal took leave. The emperor bid him farewell by giving him turban and a horse. Satal arrived at fort.

Som had made all the arrangements in the fort. Five thousand people mounted the fort and proclaimed- "Here is the fort." The emperor saw the fort and surprisingly asked, "Where is the fort?" Then people said, "That is the fort." Then the Emperor said, "why have you brought me to this fort, it seems to be a canopy. Is this a fort? I will have food after conquering this fort."

Then the armies climbed on the fort and started destroying it, the war continued for the whole day. Bullets were shot on head. The night fell, the armies came back. The next day, the war commenced at the dawn near the fort. Arrows and bullets were shot. For the whole day the fearsome war took place. At night armies came back to camp. The emperor said, "up

till now the fort has not been done? (It has not been conquered) The chief replied, "Highness the fort has not been done up till now." Their Emperor ate dry fruits, drank milk.

Third day they reached near the fort, bullets and guns were fired. Armies surrounded the fort for whole day but the fort which was as strong as mountain was not affected. At the nightfall armies came back again.

On fourth day the chieftains, requested the emperor, "His Highness, be with us, so that fort can be conquered." Then the Emperor fought, armies approached for a whole day, but the rock strong fort was not affected. Armies returned to camps at night fall. Then in the morning discussion took place. It was decided that a fort of sand be constructed and about fifty people were to be kept in it. The fort will be conquered by killing them, so that Emperor can have food. The emperor ordered for a sand fort.

When Satal and Som heard this, Som said, "ultimately we have to die. If you suggest then I will go to that sand fort". Satal said, "Very good". Som took 2500 people and came to the sand fort. They turned out the enemy soldiers. Som remained in that fort. The emperor's armies started arriving, battle took place. Arrows and bullets were shot. The battle continued for the whole day. The day passed on, night arrived. The emperor ordered, "battle must continue in night". The battle continued for whole night. The second day began but the battle went on. On the evening of the second day, the sand fort was conquered. One lakh soldier of both the armies were killed. Then the king renamed the fort. Som was killed.

For twelve years the king remained in "Samiyana". When it was not conquered the king planned to go back to Delhi. He reached 'Kaniyana' village seven miles from "Samiyana". Satal sent the messengers. He called the king back, "His highness, come back. I will give the fort. Tell the Emperor, this body waits for you. Take your way."

Then the emperor came. Satal opened the main gates of fort and was killed in the battle. The emperor conquered the fort and returned to Delhi. The emperor said "Oh! this was Samiyana".

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