

SHRI

SAI LEELA



Sai Baba begs alms



SHRI SAI LEELA

JANUARY—1974.

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1. The heart which maddens not with Master's Spell
 And pineth not for him, is bloody fell
 The day you neither think of Lord nor Word
 A worser day you may not find in Hell.
2. Arise O Master ! Come with all Thy grace,
 Dispel our doubts and show Thy loving face;
 And from Thy Chalice let us quench our thirst
 Before they make a goblet from our clays.

—Omar Khayyam.

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Editorial :

BE NEUTRAL

In our daily life we have to face a number of problems. Have we ever given a thought to the reasons that have given rise to all these problems ? If we try to go at the root of all these problems, woes and worries, we will come to know that the causes of all these worries are our prejudices. If we further try to analyse the reasons for forming these prejudices, we will find that they are formed because of religion, race, cast, creed, etc. We are often looking at a person with suspicion simply because he belongs to some other religion, some other cast, some other country or some other state; but if we try to think coolly about the whole affair we soon realize that our prejudices were illfounded and baseless. A person is never bad simply because he does not belong to your own cast, creed, country, etc. On the other hand after careful retrospection we will find that the cast, the creed, the religion to which we belong and hence about which we are proud, has also as many bad people as any other cast, creed or religion.

Hence it is necessary to be above all these prejudices. In the Bhagawatgita, Lord Krishna has emphasised this point of being neutral in several ways and at several places. In the following verse he has expressed the maximum degree of neutrality that a person with stable intellect can achieve :

विद्या विनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ ५।१८ ॥

While explaining the behaviour of a person with neutral intellect, Lord Krishna has pinned down his viewpoint on certain odd elements that a person is likely to come across. He says that a learned person will look with a neutral eye on a Brahmin, who is endowed with learning and umbleness, a cow, an elephant, a dog and also a Chandala.

In the days of Mahabharata, a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a Chandala were never placed on a common footing. The Brahmin was in those days the preceptor of all and was hence revered most. A cow was also thought to be holy but the elephant, dog and the Chandala had no honour in anybody's mind.

The dog and the Chandala on the other hand were hated by everybody. Hence, unless a man's intellect had assumed perfect neutrality, he will in no way be ready to look upon all these beings with a perfectly neutral eye and when he does this he will be above all prejudices, and will not be overjoyed by the presence of a Brahmin or bored by that of a Chandala.

The teachings and the behaviour of all saints are akin to the above maxim of the Bhagawatgita. Special attention can be drawn towards the teachings and the behaviour of Shri Sai Baba. He was as happy in the Dwarkamai as he was in the temple. He was looking upon the Muslims and the Hindus with the same benevolence. To him the young and old, were alike. He never distinguished between a man and a woman or between a Brahmin and a Chandala, while bestowing his blessings, like the Sun who shines equally bright all over the world.

All Sai devotees should, therefore, try to master this neutral attitude of Shri Sai Baba towards all our fellow beings. Even mastering it for oneself only is not enough. They must try to preach it to others. Enlighten others by the example of Shri Sai Baba. If that is done we will be able to shake off all our prejudices. This will result in giving equal treatment to all. This attitude will reduce our likes and dislikes about the persons around us and the mutual friendship amongst our countryman will take a deep root.

It will thus be seen that this neutral eye will reduce the tension on all our fronts. Even in the political field if the politicians are able to cultivate this sort of neutral attitude towards all, the political upheavals in all the countries will die out like the fire on dry rock.

Let us therefore start looking upon all living beings with a neutral eye. Let us not have prejudices of any sort and, following this simple principle, let us put an end to most of our woes, feuds and worries. This will end not only all our family worries, quarrels and disputes but most of our political feuds also will come to an end. This simple teaching should be borne in mind and practiced by one and all.



SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By:— Swami Chinmayanand

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAK-UP

We have already seen how on the battle-field of Kurukshetra tension was slowly mounting up. Duryodhana had already started showing signs of nervousness. At this moment Arjuna, with the confidence of a seasoned warrior, asks Krishna to drive his chariot between the two armies that he may himself survey the enemy lines.

Krishna drives up the chariot and places it in front of Bhishma and Drona—who were also the Pandava's teachers—and says, "Behold, O Partha ! All these Kurus gathered together." This is the only sentence Shri Krishna utters in the entire First Chapter. Yet it is an all-important one for herein Krishna may be said to be deliberately drawing Arjuna's attention to the assembled Kauravas. It is an innocent sentence, quietly uttered, yet one which triggers off the entire Geeta with its clipped brevity—' Partha Pashyaitan Samavetan Kurooniti. '

Arjuna slowly swept his gaze over not only the Kaurava army, but also his own. He saw there, " fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends too." Seeing so many friends, relatives and acquaintances, poised for war against each other, he, probably for the first time, realised the tragedies of a total fratricidal war.

His composure broke down. He was a man, it seemed, defeated by the vagaries of his own mind. A feeling of " compassion " over-whelmed him. It is a human habit to glorify weaknesses such as this and extol them with high-sounding names of virtues. Thus a rich man is often called charitable when he builds a temple with the secret ambition of perpetuating his own name in time.

All mental processes are unpredictable and complex. All his life Arjuna had waited for just such an opportunity to oust the Kauravas in fair battle, where he knew their sly moves would stand no chance against his own mighty prowess. But when such a chance presented itself, it seems strange that he should have lost heart and found himself lacking the confidence to measure up to such a situation.

Arjuna's self-confidence, at this juncture, deserted him and overwhelmed with grief, (Kripaya Parayavishtaha) in sorrow and dejection (Visheedann idam abraveet), he said (I-28-29) " **Seeing these my kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed, eager to fight, my limbs fail me and my mouth is parched; my body quivers and my hair stands on end.** "

He then enumerates the symptoms he feels. These very same symptoms, modern psychologists would say, are characteristics of what they would call, "anxiety-state-neurosis."

'Seedanti mama gatrani'—my limbs fail me; 'Mukham cha Parishushyati'—my mouth is parched; 'Vepathushcha Shareere Me'—my body shivers all over; 'Romaharhashcha Jaayate'—my hair stands on end. Again "Gaandeevam Sansrate Hastaat"—the Gaandeeva—bow slips from my hand and 'Twakchaiva Paridahyate'—my skin burns all over.

These then are the physical symptoms characterising the state of his mental break-up, for he adds, "I am also unable to stand up and my mind is whirling around, as it were." (Na cha shaknomi avasthamtum Bhramateeva cha me manaha).

And for the next few verses he prattles on, giving conclusive proofs that he is in the grips of severe hysteria. At this stage, no modern psycho-analyst could have done better than Krishna. He just allows Arjuna to rattle on, to bring out all his pent-up warped emotions, quietly listening, making no attempt to arrest the flood of Arjuna's magnified dejection and his misplaced compassion for his friends and relatives. The "patient" is himself giving an account of his physical and mental condition, pouring his sentiments into the quietly receptive ears of Krishna.

It does not take much to diagnose Arjuna's entire anti-war tirade as eruptions of a hysterical mind, drowned in blinding grief and despair. Here is escapism. An urge to run away from the problem in the face of it; an impulse to shirk the weight of responsibility; a mental shrinking from the thought of inevitable

consequences. Arjuna is headed for a dangerous collapse of personality. He tells Krishna, (I-31) “ I see bad omens, O Keshava, and I see no good in killing my own kinsmen in battle. ” He tries to take shelter behind even superstitions, myths and beliefs—as long as they hide his confusions and perplexities and help him maintain a righteous front and regain what he can of his lost dignity.

Such mental shrinkage and cowardice in the face of grave situations loot us of our own successes. The cracks in Arjuna’s mental makeup slowly widen and soon Krishna has a clear view of the shattered individuality in Arjuna.

At some stage in life, we all have to face such dire situations. Confused, and worse, confounded, thick mists of delusion rise before our mental eye. We seem to bump into blind alleys. We trip up on our own toes, we stumble and fall headlong into grinning traps of dejection and despair. We know not what to do, and our clouded intellect offers no line of right action. The treatment of such a neutral, mortal illness of the inner mind is the theme of the entire Geeta.

(courtesy — GEETA OFFICE)



STORIES FROM MAHABHARAT

—By Shri. D. A. Ghaisas

2. THE QUESTIONS OF YAKSHA

[The questions asked by Yaksha to Yudhishtira (Dharma) regarding religious problems, are one of the salient features of Mahabharata. Here is given the short story with full list of the questions and answers, for the benefit of the readers of our Shri Sai Leela Magazine. —Editor]

After leaving Kamyaka forest, the Pandavas again returned to Dwaita forest. There, in order to catch a deer which had run away with the piece of wood used by a Brahmin in the sacrificial processes, and which was a necessity for him, the Pandavas, on being requested by him, took each his bow and arrow and went into deep forest. While traversing the length and breadth of the forest, they could not come upon the swiftest deer. Tired and thirsty, they searched for some water source. Dharma, resting under a tree with his brothers, sent Nakula to the lake which was seen from the tree-top. Nakula was to bring water for all the brothers. Proceeding to the precincts of the lake, he reached down for having a sip of the waters when from the space, a voice announced " Oh, Nakula ! Do not make haste. This lake is belonging to me. You have first to answer my questions fully and correctly and then only you can drink of these pure waters. " Nakula however neglected the warning and drank the water. No sooner did he take one sip, than he fell lifeless on the bank.

After awaiting his return for some time, Dharma directed Sahadeva, Arjuna and Bheema by turns as the former did not return in time, but unfortunately, all the four brothers did not pay heed to the warning of Yaksha and all were dead.

Dharma, waiting for long minutes, himself ran down to the

lake and to his great sorrow, saw the bodies of his dear brothers lying motionless on the bank. He wondered and went nearer the bank. The Yaksha's warning echoed again. "Oh Dharma ! I am a crane ! This is my lake. First answer my questions satisfactorily and take a sip, otherwise, be dead just as your brothers. "

Dharma was knowing the nuances of religion. Before taking benefit of anybody's property, one has to fulfil certain conditions and take his permission. One cannot trespass and usurp anybody of his ownership or possession. Dharma was very polite. He said, " You do not seem to be a bird. You must be an angel of some high order like Rudra, Vasu or Marut (The angles of Fire, Earth or Air). Please let me have your Darshan. I will try to answer your questions according to my ability.

Yaksha was waiting for such a man. He asked Dharma many questions and Dharma replied all :

Yaksha-Prashnas

- Question : What makes the Sun rise ?
 Answer : Brahman.
 Q :— Who are His companions ?
 A :— Hosts of Devas.
 Q :— Who makes the Sun set ?
 A :— Dharma— The Universal Law.
 Q :— In what is the Sun established ?
 A :— In Truth.
 Q :— What makes a man Shrotriya ?
 A :— By Shrutees (Vedas).
 Q :— By what a person attains Mahat abode ?
 A :— By Penance.
 Q :— What makes a man " accompanied by second ? "
 A :— By Courage.
 Q :— What gives a man intelligence ?
 A :— Serving the elders.
 Q :— In Brahmins, what is divinity and what is human quality ? What is saintly practice and what is evil practice for them ?
 A :— To learn Vedas is divinity, to perform penance is saintliness, to sacrifice is their human quality and to blame others is evil for them.

- Q :— What are similar qualities for Kshatriyas ?
- A :— For Kshatriyas, Archery is divinity, Yadnya is saintliness, Fear is their human quality and “ Not to protect the poor ” is evil for them.
- Q :— Who is dead though living, enjoying sense-perceptions, intelligent and respected by all ?
- A :— One who does not feed the angels and gods, the guests, the servants, the mother and father as also his own soul, is verily dead though breathing.
- Q :— What is greater than the Earth ?
- A :— Higher than the Sky ?
- Q :— Faster than Wind and numerous than grass-blades ?
- A :— Mother is greater than the Earth. Father is higher than the sky; Mind is faster than wind and worries are more numerous than blades of grass !
- Q :— Who is a friend to travellers in foreign countries ?
- A :— Who is a friend to house-dweller ?
- Q :— Who is a friend to a sufferer and who is a friend to a man on death bed ?
- A :— Co-travellers are friends in foreign land, wife to the house-dweller, doctor to the sufferer and surely, ‘ charity ’ is the friend to the dying man.
- Q :— Who is guest to all ? What is eternal religion ?
- A :— What is nectar ? What is in short all this world ?
- Q :— Fire is guest to all. Unchangeable tenements of religion is the eternal religion, the cow’s milk is the nectar and this world, in short, is like wind.
- Q :— Who travels alone ?
- A :— The sun.
- Q :— Who is born again after once being born ?
- A :— The moon ?
- Q :— What is medicine for cold ?
- A :— Warmth of fire.
- Q :— Which is the largest place ?
- A :— The Earth.
- Q :— What are the main abodes of religion, success, heaven and happiness.
- A :— Carefulness, charity, truth and culture (good morals are the main abodes respectively.
- Q :— What is the soul of man, friend of man, source

- livelihood and his last resort ? msec
- A :— Son is his soul, wife is the ordained friend and companion, the cloud is source of livelihood and Dana (charity) is his last resort.
- Q :— What is best : (1) quality in auspicious persons, (2) possession, (3) benefit and (4) happiness ?
- A :— Awareness is the best quality of auspicious persons, scientific knowledge is best possession; good health is best benefit and contentment is best happiness.
- Q :— What is the highest religion in society ? What religion gives lasting benefit ? What thing if controlled, does not bring in sorrow ? Whose agreement remains valid ?
- A :— Pity, the religion laid down in Vedas, the mind under control and agreement with gentleman are the answers to these four questions.
- Q :— Giving up of what (1) makes a man popular ? (2) makes him self-contained, (3) makes him free from sorrow and (4) makes him happy ?
- A :— **Renounce conceit** to become popular, **desire** for being self-contained, **anger** to be free of sorrow and **envy** for happiness.

(To be continued)

* * *

'A PERPLEXING PROBLEM'

Some responses from Readers

Law of nature requires two sides, two opposites in every thing. There are negative and positive, as we always see in Negative & Positive wires of electricity and poles of a magnet. Cohesion of matter is also on the same basis. But for infusion of negatives & positives matter will diffuse. Man's intelligence, known as science, separated these bindings and created Atom, devastating power of which we all very well know. As God created demons, He also created gods. He created good as well as the evil. So is the case with Maya and Man. The latter is well equipped to fight Maya, if he really wants to. For that reason Maya is also made very strong. If man fails to use his intelligence and knowledge, the result can be like explosion of Atom. Man knows that fire burns, why should he put his hand into it? A snake is passing by, why should man stand in its way and get bitten? A pit is dug (with or without mounds of mud lying around it), why should man walk with closed eyes and fall into it? There is big red board saying "High Voltage—Danger", why should man touch it? Well, if he does, he has to suffer. Man is riding in a chariot with wild horses. He should have control of these horses—creation of Maya. If he does not, he meets his doom instead of reaching his destination.

The God created Maya to test man. Man is Atman, a part of Paramatman. Man's goal is to reach Paramatman. It cannot be made easier. Actually it is easy if man uses the powers bestowed upon him by God. Imagine how hard a student has to work even to pass school test. Man has to raise himself to conquer Maya and then reach his goal like a drop of water which reaches back to the ocean after a long and difficult ordeal. Maya's hold is momentary when man's intelligence is weak. In such a

moment what to say killing someone else, he even kills himself. Once that moment of heat passes, he realises his mistake. Thus man is more powerful than Maya, if he keeps his intelligence intact and uses it.

The whole universe is founded on the primary polarity principle of positive and negative forces. Only the ultimate reality, the Absolute, or Brahman or God or whatever we may term it, has no polarity, no pairs of opposites. All principles are harmonised in it.

From the one Brahman emerges Shiv-Shakti, the father and mother (opposites) of all that is! Shiva is the Twin God-head—the destruction and generation aspects (Opposites). In fact, the concept of opposites is basic to our very thinking. We cannot talk of "Adwaita" without "Dwaita." We cannot know light without darkness.

—Shri. V. B. Nandwani
Above Central Bank,
Mahim, Bombay-16.

SCHOOL

An Instrument of Universal Peace

At a time like the present, when we are smarting under the clutches of hatred & hallucination, selfishness and self-centeredness, controls & black-marketing, hoarding and stock-swallowing, party politics and favouritism, nearness and nepotism the cry that is wrung from the hearts of all suffering and ailing innocent souls, is for eternal & universal peace and bare necessities of life which are now being snatched away from them by the hoarders and the power mongers. When the big and powerful nations of the world are dreaming of the third world war and are eagerly awaiting for a match to strike a cold war, emitting gases of enmity and jealousy and ever growing instinct of expansion of land, we feel that the humanity cannot stand and survive another world war. Hence the common feeling is that it should be made safe for peaceful life or if it cannot be guaranteed or managed to effect, in one way or the other, the permanent freedom from war, the dooms day is not far off.

Universal peace is a must and a necessity, it is desirable and desired too, but how will it be realised and established in our midst, is still a big interrogation before every thinking mind. Compromises and treaties, pacts and promises, have been proved useless, arbitration agreements, and bargains have been torn to pieces every time as so many worthless scraps of paper. The League of Nations itself failed to ensure the universal peace. It now remains to be seen that the U. N. O. which has seen the light of the day through the womb of Second World War with the object of establishing and maintaining Universal peace throughout, till the Sun is shining, the moon is peeping and the stars are twinkling in the azure sky, will remain true to its objects. Then we are to

suppose that the universal peace is only a myth and a fiction and will elude our grasp for ever? Is it that we are fated and decreed to indulge in orgies of bloodshed and embrace death with intermittent intervals of distraction and dis-satisfactions, thereby maiming and crippling youth and destroying and nullifying the very foundations of culture and civilizations?

Perhaps these wars are the results of men thinking in water-tight compartments, thinking in the narrow furrows of unreasoned prejudice, enviousness and blood-thirsty insanes. All sane and right-thinking souls under heaven think that all the sons of the same father—god and all are the members of one and the same family. The late Mr. Windell Wilkie after circumnavigating the globe discovered that the world is one and indivisible whole. The modern invasions have reduced the distance and have brought all the souls nearer. It is only when we put the racial, the religious, the provincial, the linguistic, the border line disputes or the national considerations, before the considerations of humanity, that we sow the seeds of division and pave the way for murderous and treacherous war.

It would seem, therefore, that in the school—"the temple of education" where the little innocent minds are taught the lessons of co-operation and co-ordination, oneness and unity, truth and non-violence, selflessness and sacrifice, one for all and all for one, we have really efficacious and effective instrument of Universal peace. So, one is inclined to think that this is not enough if some international personalities such as Woodrow Wilson or H. G. Wells or Mahatmaji or Nehruji think in terms of a world community and a family or universal brotherhood. But today due to the conquest of air and atmosphere which has abolished the frontiers, many intellectuals and right-thinking men have realised that all should struggle to work out and to bring about (1) A Central Control of the communication through-out the globe. (2) A common federal protection of everyone in the world from private, sectarian or national violence (3) A world system of currency cash and credit. The masses to-day are not in the know of the things which concern them all and they do not know which is good and useful for them. They fall an easy prey to unscrupulous and selfcentered political figures who figure in their constituency before their so called rulers—the voters—only a few days earlier to the election. There-

fore, it is a firm & sincere opinion of all the selfless souls of the world like Mahatmaji that it can never be realised so long as the people of the whole world are not properly and adequately informed of the things that concern them all, that are of them, for them, about them and around them.

It is only through the temple of learning, that good and useful knowledge is imparted fairly in an unbiased unprejudiced pure and healthy atmosphere. This temple of learning is such a unique place wherein the free and fresh air of non-violence prevails and peaceful atmosphere pervades. Such healthy and sound atmosphere helps to inculcate good habits and to develop in young and innocent minds, the urge to establish sound principles towards the achievement of universal peace. Only here the people can be told what is truly in their interests.

Knowledge is one and indivisible. There cannot be a Maharashtra physiology as distinct from Karnataki physiology, nor can physics mean one thing to a student of Calcutta University and another to a student of Shivaji University. What we need urgently is a world brain, a world encyclopedia. When the world is wisely and judiciously scientifically and conscientiously educated, culture and civilizations may be able to take deep roots on the soil to outlaw hatred and hallucination, selfishness and self-centeredness, to sink differences and disparity, to ban war once for all and to put a full stop to cold war thereby, and flourish without hindrance. Then and then only this will pave the way for Tennyson's dream of "the Parliament of man and Federation of the World."

The temple of learning and confluence of impartial and sound learning, culture and civilization only will help the humanity to establish the long felt desire and cherished object of universal peace—Religion of Humanity and secularism.

—By Shri M. M. Amingad
Gulunche, Purandar,
Poona.

THE CHRIST

Are you an angel,
Sweet and gentle,
Come with a divine mission
To stop our fear and frustration,
And lead us to the Abode of Almighty,
Where it is all peace and ecstasy !!
Lo ! You 're full of love and sympathy
For the whole humanity
As you're the chosen son of Almighty
To serve His creation with joy and glee,
Unmindful of the pain and agony
Or the death on gallows, behold and see !
God has given you Shakti
To cure the leprosy
Or command the Sea
To stop its fury,
Or perform any miracle
By your sweet will !
You taught us the lesson of ahimsa
And gave us a golden Mantra
Of love and humility
To conquer the enemy;-
Said you, ' if one slaps you on a cheek
Turn him the other cheek ' !!
Lo ! You 're an eternal Light,
Making our path very bright
That we may not lose the way
And feel gloom and dismay
As we make a difficult journey
To reach our Beloved, the Almighty.
We salute you, Sweet Master,
Full of charm and wonder !

—Bakht N. Moolchandani
29, Shilla House, Sion Circle,
Bombay-22,

VIVEKANANDA

—A Spirited Swami

One of the most remarkable things achieved during the course of the nineteenth century was the spiritual message of the Universal Gospel of humanity delivered by a young Indian at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago (U. S. A.) “ Never forget the glory of human nature, ” he said, “ We are the greatest God. Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which I am. ”

The young man had no credentials with him from any group or society in India. He was overwhelmed when he reached America. He cabled to his friends in India for help and applied to an official religious society that it might make to him a grant. The chief of the society replied, “ Let the devil die of cold. ” But Fate helped him as it has always helped those who know how to help themselves.

The man whom we must thank for his message is Swami Vivekananda. He was a disciple of Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa—a great sage and saint of India. He was his master and he thought of translating his Master's thought into living action.

Naren Dutt

Vivekananda was not his name but his real name was Narendranath Dutt. He belonged to a respectable family of warrior caste. His master always called him Narendra or more shortly Naren. Shri Ramkrishna never gave monastic names to the disciples. He never initiated anybody in the formal ceremony of Sannyasa. On the other hand he said, “ He, who feels a strong detachment from life and an intense thirst for God, can take the Sannyasa alone even without formal initiation. ” This was doubtless the case with Naren. But he gave Naren a cognomen

of Kamalaksha—lotus-eyed. The young man had an aversion for this name and dropped it immediately.

There is an interesting story about his name. During his preliminary travels across this country he appeared under different names in order to conceal his identity. But on the eve of departure to America, the Maharaja of Khetri suggested to him the name Vivekananda. The Maharaja was his great friend and the choice of the name was inspired by an allusion to the 'power of discrimination' possessed by him. It seems Narendra liked this name. He accepted it provisionally, but he could never have changed it even if he had wanted to, for within a few months it had acquired a worldwide celebrity. The name given by the Maharaja has lived long and it will ever live long. The name has made history. The grateful admirers of the Swami have erected a most befitting memorial at Cape Kanyakumari in the far south of this country where the three oceans meet known as Vivekananda Memorial in the shape of a huge image of the Swami blessing and gracing the sacred skyline of India.

At first, Naren hesitated to take up his Master's Mission. His master had foreseen with prophetic eye that the young man of 23 had the necessary strength and energy and constructive genius. "The day when Naren comes into contact," Shri Ramkrishna said, "with suffering and misery, the pride of his character will melt into a mood of infinite compassion." After many months of wandering here and there he saw with his own eyes the miserable body of humanity—his motherland India in all her tragic nakedness.

What was his mission to be? Who was to dictate it to him? His master was dead without having defined it for him. And among the living there was one Pavhari Baba. Naren went to find him during the period (1888) of uncertainty. He visited him daily and was on the verge of becoming his follower and demanding initiation of him.

Torment of Soul

This torment of soul lasted for several weeks. Naren was torn between the two mystic appeals of Shri Ramkrishna and Pavhari Baba. The latter would have satisfied his passion for the Divine Gulf, wherein the individual soul renounces itself and

is entirely absorbed without any thought of return. And he would have appeased the remorse always gnawing at Naren's heart for turning away from the world and social service : for he professed the faith that the spirit can help others without help of body, and that the most intense concentration. What religious spirit has not heard this voice with its deadly attractions ?

Naren was for twentyone days within an ace of yielding. But for twentyone nights the vision of Shri Ramkrishna came to draw him back. In the end after an inner struggle of the utmost intensity, whose vicissitudes he always consistently refused to reveal, he made his choice forever. He chose the service of God in Man.

The Turning Point

During his whirlwind tour across this venerable land, he happened to be the guest of the Maharaja of Khetri near Jaipur (1891) and a little charming dancer gave him all unwittingly a lesson in humanity. When she appeared to dance in court the saffron-robed monk rose to go out. The Maharaja begged him to remain. The little singer and dancer sang in sweet melodious tones :—

“ O Lord look not upon my evil qualities. Thy name O Lord is same sightedness. One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna and another is foul in the ditch by the roadside. But when they fall into the Ganga both alike become holy. So Lord do not look upon my evil qualities. Thy name O Lord is same sightedness. ”

Naren was completely overwhelmed. The confident faith expressed in the humble song was the turning point in his life. His mission was revealed to him by the dancer. Many years later he recalled it with emotion and said to his friends, “ sinners are potential saints. ”

Another event in his young age happened at Cape Kanyakumari which opened his eyes, he viewed the most enchanting panorama of Sunrise—of infinite mystery. Soon he saw the vision of his mission and he felt within himself. Thenceforward he vowed to dedicate his life to the unhappy masses.

Vision Revealed

But how could he help the masses ? He lifted up his eyes to the ocean, to the land beyond the seas. An appeal from India to the Western world began to take shape in his mind. At Porbandar, where he began to learn French a mendicant advised him to go to the West where his thought, "the Gospel of Vedanta" would be better understood than in his own country. He was struck by hearing the remark and began to turn the matter over in his own mind. At Khandwa (M. P.) in the early autumn of 1892 he heard of a Parliament of Religions to be held in the following year at Chicago (U. S. A. 1893) and his first thought was how he might take part in it.

Again he went to Khetri, where his friend the Maharaja listened to him and approved his view point. The Maharaja arranged everything for his western tour. He gave him his Dewan to escort him to Bombay, where he embarked on a ship bound for U. S. A. At the time of departure he put on the robe of red silk and ochre turban and the name of Vivekananda.

In America he never passed unnoticed anywhere but fascinated even while he was unknown. He visited in Chicago the Worlds Columbian Exposition. It exhibited man's material progress. His eyes were dazzled. Again he thought what message could he give to the west ? He made up his mind to give to the West the spiritual message of Vedanta Philosophy.

Parliament of Religions

Amongst all the delegates, this strange young man drew the glance of the assembled thousands. His red robe drawn in at the waist by an orange cord, his great yellow turban accentuated the raven black of his hair, his olive complexion, his dark eyes, his red lips and his noble stature lent colour to the Parliament of Religions.

It was the first time that he had to speak before such an assembly of learned men and women representing each and every faith in the world. Most of the delegates read their speeches from written text but Vivekananda had prepared nothing. But then, when he addressed the gathering his speech was like a tongue of flame.

Hardly had he pronounced the very opening words "Sisters and Brothers of America" then thousands arose in their seats and applauded. Vivekananda was the first delegate to cast off the formalism of the Congress and speak to the masses in the language for which they were thirsty. He greeted Americans in the name of the most ancient monastic order in the world—the Vedic order of "Sannyasins." He presented Hinduism as the mother of religions who had taught them the double precept :

"Accept and understand one another." He quoted two beautiful passages from the sacred books :—

"Whoever comes to me, through whatsoever form. I reach him." All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me."

Vivekananda alone spoke of all their Gods and embraced them all in the Universal Being.

He got a tremendous ovation from the learned delegates and others at the World Religious Congress. Vivekananda the unknown became well known all over the world overnight. It was a most singular achievement in these days of slow communication. He spent the next two years in America travelling across the continent, teaching and preaching and impressing the American audiences with his message of love and the history of India. Thus he became the man of the hour. The Americans called him "the lightening orator."

Thus lived and died a great sage of modern India. Swami Vivekananda, a name to conjure with and whose message of Universal Gospel" of equality and divinity of man—is still reverberating from all the directions.

V. H. Pandit
13, Khatipura Road,
Indore City. (M. P.)



A DEVOTEE'S EXPERIENCE

By Saisudha

Sai Baba of Shirdi is not merely a Sadguru but verily Sri Rama. He has not only been guiding me in both official and domestic work but has saved my life on two occasions.

It was in 1954, when I was in my early twenties. I was undertaking a trip to Tirupati from Madras by the morning passenger train. My uncle, then Post Master General of Madras Presidency, asked one of his clerks to book my ticket and see that I boarded the train. It was a Saturday, and though I did not wish to start from home at Rahu Kal—it was about 9'30 A. M. I had no other choice. When I arrived at the station with Mr. Nair, the clerk, the train was almost about to leave. Somehow he managed to push my big box in the nearest third class carriage and waved good-bye and left. The guard had blown the whistle. When I was about to settle my things, I was horrified at the sight of four gamblers sitting in the compartment which was otherwise empty. They were busy playing cards and obviously did not notice my presence. Young as I was, with no other lady passenger in the train, I was at my wits end. I came and stood at the doorstep praying itently to Shri Ram. I could not get down from the train, nor could I stay within for fear of the gamblers. God verily sends help to those in distress.

The train had just started moving when a young couple was rushing towards me to board the train. I helped them with their luggage. After a few minutes by which time I had gathered a little courage I surveyed the compartment again, for the fear had not totally left me. Lo ! Baba's miracle, the suspicious elements had already disappeared. I then relaxed after sending heartfelt thanks to Baba for thus protecting my life from the goondas.

The second incident took place in June 1971. I was making

an air dash from Delhi to Bhopal to meet my husband, who was about to leave for Hyderabad. I had despatched a telegram 24 hours in advance informing of my arrival by the Fokker Friendship. The plane, already delayed by three hours, took off at about 1'30 p. m. I was just trying to relax with Sai Charita in my hands, for it was my wont to read one chapter daily from the book. As I had not done it earlier, I wished to complete my reading in the plane itself. Hardly twenty minutes had passed since the flight started, I could feel the air getting hotter under my feet. The two air hostesses rushed to the cock-pit. Seeing them emotionally disturbed, I started feeling nervous. My heart began to beat faster when the air hostesses rolled the carpet covering the passage and the co-passengers were busy preparing themselves for any emergency. I was the only lady passenger and I started chanting Sai Ram loudly ! I moved to a front seat, for the tension within me was increasing. After about ten minutes of hard work when the co-pilot, steward and air hostesses rectified the defect, which they alone knew, I could see the crew heaving a big sigh of relief. To relieve the passengers' anxiety soft drinks were supplied to us.

It was smooth going afterwards. The plane touched Gwalior and finally Bhopal. With fond hopes of meeting my husband, I emerged from the plane. Imagine my confusion when I saw no signs of my husband. The Indian Airlines Office staff was kind enough to contact my husband. When he received the telephone call, he rushed to the air-port. He was worried that something had gone amiss, for he felt I could not have otherwise undertaken such a sudden trip. Obviously my telegram did not reach him. It reached after my arrival, i. e. after 30 hours !

I once again thanked my beloved Sai Baba for not only saving my life but the lives of all the passengers. But for this divine help, there could have been a major air-disaster.

Mrs Sita Shri
U. S. Library of Congress
Shreta Theatre Building,
New Delhi-55.



YOGIRAJ VASUDEVANAND SARASWATI

(A Biography)

—By : Shri. S. N. Huddar

(continued).

When at Shinora, a Gujarati woman came to Swamiji and offered a pot-ful of sugar-candy. Swamiji did not look at it nor did he ask anyone to take it. For 2-3 days the pot was there. Ramachandra Shastri asked the reason. Swamiji said : “ Did you see, even a fly or an ant has not touched it ? ” Ramchandra Shastri further asked the reason for it. “ What have you to do knowing this ? ” was the reply of Swamiji. Later the very woman took away the pot. On inquiry it was discovered that the woman was not of chaste behaviour.

Due to advice of Swamiji, Brahmins at Shinora began to do Vaishwadeo and observe other rites. He preached “ Acharah Prathamam Dharmam. (To behave well is the first duty in religion).

After the birth of Ramchandra, a Brahmin gave his maternal uncle a copy of ‘ Gurucharitra ’ and asked him to read it daily. Maternal uncle accordingly read it daily. When Datta Jayanti approached, Swamiji asked the maternal uncle to give his Gurucharitra for Parayana. Swamiji said in joke “ You being a Vedic Brahmin, you may not even look at the Prakrit Gurucharitra. ” He replied that he was reading it daily. Swamiji blessed him with Datta Mantra.

GANDABUWA (later Yogananda Swami of Gunj).

A Gujarati Brahmin with two panchas a stick and a lota came

to Shinora to see Swami Maharaj. He had come leaving all family attachments. For 8 days, Swamiji did not speak with him. He used to bathe in the morning and sit in a corner of the room. When Swamiji went out for alms, he would go out, take his meals somewhere and again come and sit in the room.

One day Swamiji asked him, "Why do you sit here?" He replied, "I believe these holy feet will relieve me from all my worries." He then narrated all his account. He said "I hail from Telangpur. In boyhood, I was a vagabond, so people called me 'Ganda'—meaning 'a mad person.' My name is Kalyan. I was married at the age of 8. After education, I served in a school and at a merchant. I had no peace of mind. So I went to Madras in search of Sadhus. I am a Brahmin and a devotee of Shiva. I wished to have a Brahmin Guru. For some time I served at Pondicherry. I was relieved from that service and returned home. Mother and father are alive and so I cannot go out for penance. Though well financially, I could not have pleasure in anything. Pretending to do business, I went out and lived on the bank of Narmada and served Sadhus and saints. In the guide of a Bairagi, I lived under a Buniyan tree near Onkareshwar. After some days, I met Pandurang Maharaj who collected cereals, ground them himself and distributed breads to those who were doing Narmada Parikrama. Due to his advise even thieves changed their behaviour and became good persons. Narmada Mata was pleased with Pandurang Maharaj's services. He told me to go to Namawar and do Jap in Siddheshwar Mandir and then I would meet Sadguru. On his advice, I stayed at Siddheshwar and started Jap. Some people told me about your holy self and so I have come to you. Kindly give me your blessing." Swamiji simply smiled.

After some days Swami Maharaj went to Nikoda with him and asked him to practise Yoga in Shiva temple and said "As per your devotion, you will have blessings." Swami Maharaj proceeded further. He asked Gandabuwa to go to his parents, beg pardon and with their permission come to him at Dwarka at the time of Chaturmas. Gandabuwa then went home.

KRISHNARAO PENDHARKAR

Krishnarao was a clerk of court at Shinora. He came daily

to Swamiji and showed him the houses of Maharashtrian Brahmins at the time of alms. He kept a pot of water and sprinkled water on the path of Swami Maharaj. Swamiji dipped his cloth with alms in Narmada. Krishnarao would clean the surface with cowdung. The food of alms was placed on this surface, divided into 3 parts, one was given to Narmada Mata, one to a cow and the third was taken by Swamiji himself. If anyone touched him in the way, he would leave the alms in the Narmada and observe fast. But giving of lessons and sermons continued on such days also.

Seeing the devotion of Krishnarao, Swamiji gave him a Mantra for recitation due to which he got better service and later was promoted as Mamledar.

Girnar, Prabhas, Somnath

Swami Maharaj one day went to Girnar and bowed to Shri-Datta Padukas. He then came to Prabhas and wished to go to Somnath. Balambhat Mode, priest of Somnath lived at Prabhas. Diwan of Baroda and others had also come there for Darshan. Due to darshan of Swami Maharaj, there was great change in their behaviour and they became believers in God.

Lord Datta asked Swami Maharaj to write criticism on "Sanhita Dwisahastri." He had no copy of this volume. Yet with divine recollection, he wrote criticism on 9 chapters at Prabhas.

Gajanan Bapu Sabnis, son of Rambhau Sabnis of Sawantwadi was the Mamledar of Dwarka. He came to see Swami Maharaj. His thread ceremony was attended to by Swami Maharaj. He felt great respect for Swamiji and there was great change in his behaviour. He had been to Garudeshwar also when Swami Maharaj was there.

From Prabhas Swami Maharaj came to Prachi Saraswati where Shri Krishna had his end. He bowed at the place and went to Porbandar i. e. Sudampuri. He stayed here for some days and in the month of Jyestha, reached Dwarka, the seventh Mukti Teerth of Bharat.

CHATURMAS 9—Shak 1821 (1899 A. D.) DWARKA.

Swami Maharaj stayed here in the Math of Sharadapeeth

Shankaracharya. Due to scarcity of rain this region was suffering from drought. One she-buffalow could be had for Rs. 5/- only. Even females left their children for want of food. Gaikwad Government distributed 2.5 lakh rupees for food amongst the hunger-stricken.

People were delighted on the arrival of Swami Maharaj and he was requested to observe Chaturmas. As some Maharashtrian Brahmins lived here, there was no difficulty of alms. While coming to Dwarka, he had to pass through Gujarat, where there were no Maharashtrian Brahmins. Hence, he could not have alms for 33 days. He passed these days on palms and cocoanuts obtained from Gujarati Brahmins. Due to this, he began to pass blood in motions and dysentery troubles increased. After taking food or water, the trouble increased. He therefore took butter-milk wherever available. He did not prevent the disease by taking medicine, as he thought that the befallen miseries should be suffered.

Seat of Shankaracharya offered

People here pressed him much to accept the seat of Sharadapeeth but he declined to have the honour. Still for 2 years he was being requested again and again. While in Dwarka he completed the commentary of "Sanhita Dwi-Sahastri" from 10th chapter to the end. As the original book was not there, Swami Maharaj himself wondered how this work could be completed.

While at Dwarka, on the request of a Gujarati Brahmin Swamiji also wrote a "Churnika" on Shri Guru Charitra.

Gandabuwa returns

As advised by Swami Maharaj, Gandabuwa went home took permission of his parents and came to Swami Maharaj, in Dwarka. He told Swamiji that his parents had given him permission on three conditions (1) to be with parents at the time of their end, (2) To do their last rituals, and (3) To get their daughters duly married.

(to be continued)



“SAT-SANT SHRI DOLE GURUJI”

—By : Shri. V. S. Mahabaleshwarkar
Thana.

This is the age of science. Anything and everything has to move on some scientific principle or other.

A common man passes his life according to his capacity and as such he has to undergo a series of calamities. He gets obstructions, many a time in his usual course of life, because of the lack of direction. In the darkest night, even-though we are going by the way which is well known to us, we become blind and we pause or struggle to reach the place, being unable to guide our steps. This life, this Sansara becomes a dark night to the common persons like this.

Guidance of Saints

To learn the principles of marching ahead on the pathway of life, we get guidance from our parents to some extent. Teachers guide us how to read and write and the medical man advises us how to keep physically fit. But the most important factor is art of keeping peace of mind and satisfaction in spite of calamities and difficulties. Those who can lead us on this pathway in such a manner are called Sadgurus, who may be found if one takes the trouble to trace them out. Many times, such Gurus are moving with us or stay amongst us as a common person with simple living. They are to be searched out and when they are found, they deserve worship, irrespective of their caste and social status and our grade and honour in the economic field. Such persons are as :—

जे का रंजले गांजले त्यांसी म्हणे जो आपुले ।
तोचि साधु ओळखावा देव तेथेंचि जाणावा ॥

They feel it their bounden duty on one hand, to help the needy persons to march ahead upon the routine path of life, and on the other hand, with their right perception, walk on the pathway to God by means of devotion. Their prayers are uttered with fervent devotion and they are blessed with the power of the Almighty which blessings they bestow upon all humanity.

Dole Guruji

In the year 1970, I had an opportunity to have a Darshan of Shri. Rajaram Gangadhar Dole alias Dole Guruji. He was from the saintly tradition of Shri Samarth Akkalkotkar Maharaj—Shri. Ramanand Maharaj Bidkar—Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati-Baba Maharaj Sahasrabuddhe—Shri. Dole Guruji. This is the line of spiritual succession.

Born in Medhekar family on 30th September 1907, on Monday in Poona, subsequently he was adopted in Dole family, the family of his aunt and therefore his surname changed to 'Dole' (pronounced as 'Dolay').

He stayed at Ambarnath in Thana District doing meditation and rendering service to mankind and his family consisting of his wife, son, who stays at Poona and two daughters who are well-placed. Hundreds of people flock together at his Ashrama for getting redress—some from sickness, some from restless life, and a few who want the guidance in meditation towards God-realization. Some come seeking confidence and faith.

Once a European Officer of the Ambarnath Tools Factory where Guruji was in service, was deeply anxious as his son was sick and became worst. Specialist doctor from Bombay was called who declared that there was no hope of his survival. Some persons persuaded Shri. Dole Guruji to see the boy. Shri. Dole Guruji went to the sick boy, saw him and declared that he would be all-right the next morning.

Shri Guruji was to proceed on leave for Poona the very night—which he did. As per the words, the boy gained ground, but Shri Guruji was sick for two months thereafter.

A graduate lady from Sydney (Australia) while in India, visited Ambarnath. At the time, she went to have Darshan of Shri. Dole Guruji. After performing the formalities Shri. Guruji drew a plan of her Sydney residence on a plain paper and

explained to her of her home including the furniture etc. at the places. She was wonderstruck and could not imagine how he could tell these details even when he did not leave India at all.

Message

He was always preaching :—

- (1) Do your duties honestly and with zeal because what we all do, is God's work.
- (2) Do not get anxious for anything, but always be busy in "reciting the name of God."
- (3) Remember, 'Experience' is one's Teacher, but "self-realization" is a Siddha Guru, the Perfected Teacher.
- (4) Be liberal in charity and you will get a good return.
- (5) Forget the 'I' and what remains is the 'Salvation.'
- (6) Faith is powerful and if you work with faith you are sure to get success and to overcome the difficulties.

Departure

Holy personalities leave the earth for eternal life no sooner they find that the work undertaken by them is over.

Shri. Guruji, one day declared that he should be ready with beddings. He expressed to the people of Panvel "Now I feel everybody should start doing something by translating the thoughts in action for helping others to overcome difficulties. They may be taken as my Maxim (Sootra). He marked in his diary against the date 21st August 1973 as "Nirvaan Day."

On 20th August, he had a talk with Shri Annasaheb Takle and Shri. Prabhakar Nalavade but did not give any indication to them and thus arranged for his detachment from the followers.

On Monday the 21st August, 1973, in the very morning, he took milk. Dr. Jathar gave him company. Then he took bath as usual, said his prayers, and closed the door of his room. At

7.15 A. M. while doing Naam-Smaran (reciting the name of God) " Hari Om Tat-Sat ", he went to bed and surrendered himself peacefully to destiny and placed his life—the flower of his life—at the feet of the Almighty. He entered the pre-meditated gates of Death towards the greater life.

In the outskirts of Ambarnath, in the Thana District and in many places in Maharashtra, his memories will remain fresh in the minds of his disciples and of those who had benefitted by his wise advice.

“ A PERPLEXING PROBLEM ”

The article “ A Perplexing Problem ” by “ A Thinking Soul ” published in Sept. 73 issue of Sri Sai Leela (English) is interesting.

The answer to this quiz lies in the question itself. The questioner plainly accepts the basic Vedantic truth that the Parabrahman came down to the level of limited Jiva forgetting its true nature of bliss. The Parabrahman created the world, the various attractions therein and the Jiva naturally gets deluded by it and hence the series of sins. The blame therefore lies with Parabrahman only for having created all this and then tempting us in indulging in sins. This is the burden of his logic. The logic is perfectly alright. It is true that the series of sins occurred due to the temptations caused by the world created by the God. But why get tempted at all ? Temptations arise out of ignorance that the body is the Self, the outside world is real and that the real pleasure is derived through the body from the outside objects of the world, when in fact our seers are proclaiming at the top of their voice, that the world and the outside objects are all illusory and the pleasure derived from these objects is also of illusory nature and that the Self itself is an ocean of bliss independent of the objects. The root cause of all the sins therefore is the basic ignorance which makes us to feel the body as the Self and make us run after this bodily pleasure. When once this is clearly known, whither the sins, how and when this false identification of body as the Self began—Vedanta has no fear to accept—has no answer. It describes this as ‘ beginningless ’ — meaning the beginning for which is not known. But all great seers are unanimous in their opinion that this ignorance can be brought to an end by detaching oneself from the body and remaining as the Self all the while simply remaining as the Witness of the bodily events also remembering all the while that the scenery is illusory as dream and hence the fault lies with the individual soul – Jiva – in identifying itself with

the body, taking this world to be real and hunting after worldly pleasures and then getting into misery through this transitory and illusory pleasures – and not with the Parabrahman as the author claims.

The question arises as to why this world was created at all. The Vedanta declares that it is the very nature of the Parabrahman to express itself in the form of various universes and then recede as is the nature of the ocean to express itself in the forms of waves and then subside. But the Jiva is at liberty whether to attach itself to this world or to simply remain as Witness as the Almighty himself is, without getting deluded. Simultaneously with the expression of this illusion, the All Merciful Almighty also made a provision through the divine scriptures to know this Truth and join in his sporting.

Let us therefore not bother about how and why this world was created and why it is giving us all misery and compose ourselves to get rid of this beginningless ignorance and be one with him and join him in his sporting.

—By : Shri. P. V. Bhosekar
Kurla (East)
Bombay-24 (AS)

MAHASAMADHI OF SHRI SAI BABA

—By : Shri. P. S. V. Aiyer,
Sri Sai Samaj,
Calcutta-29.

Mahasamadhi of Sri Sai Baba on the 15th October, 1918 spotlighted the fulfilment of a life of absolute dedication to the service of the present race of humanity, towards its temporal and spiritual upliftment. Even in his earthly life, Sai Baba showed evidence of his presence at the same time in Shirdi and in whatever place or situation his devotees needed him. Now that by his Mahasamadhi, Baba has merged in the Infinite, he makes his presence felt wherever he is invoked or worshipped.

Baba warned his devotees not to take him for the human body of 3.5 cubits he held and clothed in a Kafani. Still for the sake of his less developed devotees he showed fancy for Pural-poli, loved to smoke Chilm in a clay pipe, laughed and cried, showed temper and shared in the joys and sorrows of the simple folk that came to him. These limitations served to mask his divinity in the ordinary human form, and therefore easy to approach. Mahasamadhi set him free of These limitations, and has made him universal and eternal. We now understand what Baba wanted us to learn when he said that he was infinitely more than a man, 3.5 cubits in stature and clad in Kafani.

Sai Baba is a Mahayogi of yogis, Samartha Sadguru, a Perfect Master, and his miracles go on after his Mahasamadhi as before that event. His inspiration spreads far and wide; his hold on us is growing stronger and we are richer by it. The Samadhi Mandir in Shirdi draws crowds of pilgrims of all communities. It is a sight for gods to see when they all stand together in Baba's Darbar, shoulder to shoulder, united in brotherhood in their devotion to

their Master and mingle their voices in singing his glories as the camphor is waved in Aarti, before his image.

Mahasamadhi anniversary reminds us of how Sai Baba lived a life of service, of sacrifice, a life that showed in itself the crowning exemplar of the teachings of the Gita.

He taught us principally to integrate in our life the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual principles. He achieved in Shirdi communal harmony as the first step to universal brotherhood. He taught us to follow Swadharma— the religious duties of the family in which our karmas have caused us to reincarnate, to remain established in our faith in God. This he called NISHTHA. He taught us forbearance which he called 'Sabur'. By his Mahasamadhi, Baba has taught us that death opens the door to enter a higher life.

Mahasamadhi anniversary should be spent in meditating on Baba, in trying to understand his teachings, and in re-dedicating ourselves to follow them and to carry his message to our sisters and brothers everywhere.

SRI NARSIMHA SWAMIJI

(a life-sketch)

Sri Narasimha Swamiji is appropriately known as the Apostle of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. It was he who discovered Sri Sai Baba and presented him to the world of seekers and aspirants.

The year 1973-1974 marks his birth centenary. To celebrate the occasion Saipadananda Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji has brought out, as a votive offering, " Sri Narasimha Swamiji : The Apostle of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi ", to express his immense gratitude to his Guru.

As Sri Radhakrishna Swamiji says in the Preface, to his great regret (and to the regret of all true seekers) Sri Narasimha Swamiji refused to write his autobiography and did not leave a full record of the course of his own spiritual quest.

Thus the present biographer was left with no option but to collect information from various sources and the picture that has emerged is necessarily in the barest outline because of paucity of biographical material. Nevertheless, the personality of the Swamiji emerges with surprising clarity.

Sri Narasimha Swamiji was born on August 21, 1874 in Bhavani in Coimbatore District in a family of orthodox Brahmins. His parents were Sri B. Venkatagiri Iyer and Smt. Angachiammal.

When Sri Narasimha Swamiji was still an infant, his father moved over to Salem and set up practice as second grade pleader.

Young Narasimha Iyer had a brilliant career at school and in college. He passed his B. A. Examination from the Madras Christian College and his B. L. examination from the Madras Law College.

Sri Narasimha Iyer started practice in the Salem Bar in 1895 and very soon reached the top of the profession where he remained

till 1925, when he voluntarily gave up practice in response to an inner call for spiritual quest.

Among his prominent contemporaries were Justice Sundaram Chettiar, Sri C. Rajagopalachari and Sri Muthukrishna Iyer.

Sri Narasimha Iyer interested himself in all public activities and movements of the day. In politics he was considered an extremist, being an admirer and adherent of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His popularity won him, for two consecutive terms, the membership of the Madras Legislative Council which he gave up in 1920 in response to the call to boycott the legislatures.

When Mrs. Annie Besant started the Home Rule League, Sri Narasimha Iyer became an active member. He was one of the three members of a delegation deputed to go to Great Britain in 1917 to present India's case for home rule. This delegation was, however, detained at Gibraltar on the orders of the then British war cabinet and was forced to return to India.

It was when he was still at the peak of his powers, prestige and popularity that Sri Narasimha Iyer decided, in 1921, following a series of domestic calamities, to give up his lucrative legal practice, cease from political and social activities and seek spiritual solace.

In his quest, Sri Narasimha Iyer first went to Sri Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai where he stayed for three years doing sadhana. Later, after intense search and seeking, he found his true master in Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, though Baba had attained Nirvana many years before Sri Narasimha Iyer discovered him.

Thereafter, in an extraordinary surge of energy and incessant activity lasting over two decades, Sri Narasimha Swamiji carried on Sai prachar work throughout India, establishing the All-India Sai Samaj at Madras and Sai Mandirs almost everywhere, carrying Baba's message of peace and love and bhakti.

If today in India there is hardly a town or city where Sri Shirdi Sai Baba is not known, it is entirely due to the remarkable zeal and selfless service of Sri Narasimha Swamiji. The book "Sri Narasimha Swamiji : The Apostle of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi" presents an account of this remarkable saint's life and work.

Publisher : ALL INDIA SAI SAMAJ, Mylapore, Madras-4.

—By : Shri. Saipadanam.

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