

SHRI

SAI LEELA



Happy meeting of two Lizard sisters, predicted by Sai Baba



October

60 Paise

1974

SHRI SAI LEE LA

OCTOBER 1974

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PICTURE ON THE COVER PAGE

Once when Baba was sitting in Dwarkamai, a lizard on the wall was heard tick-ticking. A devotee, who was sitting near by, asked Baba whether it was a good omen or a bad one. Baba replied that the lizard was very happy because her sister from Aurangabad was to meet her very soon. In the meanwhile one man from Aurangabad came there and he put his bag there. Immediately a lizard jumped out and climbed on the wall and met her sister happily. Baba's omniscience is really wonderful !

SHRI SAI LEELA

(Official Organ of Shirdi Sansthan)



VOLUME 53

OCTOBER 1974

No. 7

Asceticism and Spiritual Life

WHAT is the place of asceticism in spiritual life ? There have been seekers of God who have, in their search, tortured their bodies. So Buddha tells us he did for six years, when he realised that extreme asceticism was an error. And when Gautama became the Buddha, the seer and saint of spiritual life, the teacher of wisdom, he gave his message to his disciples in significant words :- "Tune the sitar neither low nor high".

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Annual Subscription Rs. 6.00

Single Copy Rs. 0.60

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EDITORIAL

Dasara

This month we shall be celebrating the Dasara festival on Friday the 25th instant. Apart from the usual religious importance of this function, we Sai devotees give special importance to this day because it is the day of samadhi of Shri Sai Baba. It was on the Dasara day on 15-10-1918 that Shri Sai Baba cast away his human body and from that time his anniversary is being observed every year on the Dasara day.

Shri Sai Baba lived for a long time at Shirdi. He knew very well that his body is perishable and he has to throw it away some day or the other; but he wanted to do this act on a very auspicious day. Hence he chose Dasara for that purpose. As a great saint like Sai Baba chose the day of Dasara for Samadhi, this day must be a specially auspicious day since long. Let us therefore try to find out what led Shri Sai Baba to choose this particular day for taking leave of this world.

Dasara falls on the 10th day of the first half of the month of Ashwin. From the first day of Ashwin the Navratra starts and goes on for nine days. The very meaning of Navratra is nine nights. This festival is celebrated on a large scale both in Bengal and Gujrat as in Maharashtra. By the end of Bhadrapad the monsoon almost gets over. The crops are seen blooming in the fields. The farmers are a bit free from agricultural work as the harvest season starts by the middle of Ashwin. Hence they are able to take part in this festival whole heartedly.

Apart from this social point of view, there is ample mythological background for this festival. Why this festival is

held for nine days can be traced to the defeat of the demon Mahishasur by the Goddess Ashtabhuja (One who has eight hands). The story of Mahishasur, as told in the puranas, says that once upon a time the demon, Mahishasur by name, became very powerful. He started oppression on the whole world. All the Gods got frightened and they approached Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha to free the world from the oppression. When these Gods Knew about it, they created a Goddess with eight hands, who was well versed in the use of weapons, to fight the demon. The Goddess fought with the demon for nine days from the beginning of the Ashwin month for nine days and killed him, thus freeing the world from oppression. It is because of this incident that the Navratra is being observed for nine days before Dasara.

In Bengal the Goddess that is worshipped in this festival, which is called the Pooja festival, is known as Durga. The Bengalis call this goddess a fighter. In their opinion she requires an offering of blood, either in the form of a cock or hen or a goat. According to the traditions of the different places, the goddess that is worshipped in this festival, is attributed different qualities. The Goddess known as Saraswati is also worshipped in this festival and she is supposed to be the goddess of learning. Whatever may be the different ways or traditions of worship, there is uniformity of a goddess in this festival.

Dasara comes at the end of the Navratra festival. This day is also known as Vijayadashmi: i. e. the tenth day marking victory. The word Dasara has come from "Dash" meaning ten. Mythology also tell us that Rama started for the war against Ravana on the Dasara day and became victorious and hence for commemorating this victory of Rama, this day came to be known as 'Vijaya Dashmi'. In Northern India, the "Ramaleela" is held for all the nine days of Navratra and the statue of Ravana is burnt on the tenth day i. e. on the Dasara day. It is because of

this connection of the above incident with the Navratra and Dasara that Ramaleela is acted in the Navratra. Ramaleela is very popular in Northern India and it therefore attracts large crowds

One other story relating to Dasara is also told in mythology. Kautsa was a brahmin lad who went to a sage Waratantu by name for study. After the student i. e. Kautsa finished his studies, he requested his guru to state the "Guru dakshina" that he has to pay to him. As per the custom in those ancient days Waratantu said that he never imparted the Knowledge to him with the expectation of money. He added further that he has got his dakshina in finding that his student has acquired the lore fully; But when Kautsa insisted too much, his Guru said that if at all he intended to give the dakshina, he should give him fourteen crores of gold coins, as he had imparted to him fourteen different lores and that he would charge him one crore gold coins for each lore.

After listening to the above demand, Kautsa repented for having insisted on his Guru for accepting the dakshina; but he knew of one king who would satisfy the demand. It was king Raghu, the ancestor of Rama, whom Kautsa approached for his money. king Raghu was known for his philanthropy and he had a reputation of not sending back anyone emptyhanded; but just before that, Raghu had performed a sacrifice where he had given the last gold coin in his treasury to the Brahmins. He therefore requested Kautsa to wait for three days, when he would arrange for the sum.

King Raghu was not a mere philanthropist, he was an equally brave soldier also. He scratched his head for a while and decided to attack the treasury of the gods, which is maintained by "Kuber". When the Gods came to know about this, as they

knew the bravery and determination of King Raghu, they directed Kuber to shower gold coins on the trees of "Shami" and "Apta" outside the Ayodhya city. The next day in the morning this news was communicated to King Raghu and he in his turn requested Kautsa to take away his fourteen crores of gold coins. In those ancient days, honesty and integrity were valued much more than gold, silver and diamonds. Hence Kautsa only picked up whatever amount he wanted and left the other gold coins on the trees themselves.

When Waratantu was paid his guru dakshina, the work of Kautsa was done and it was a question as to what was to be done with the remaining gold coins. So Kautsa requested the citizens of Ayodhya to loot the gold coins freely. In memory of this incident there is a system in Maharashtra to exchange the leaves of the Apta tree on the Dasara day calling it "Gold".

In Maharashtra there is another custom of worshipping the "Shami" tree and worshipping the instruments, tools and the weapons. This custom can also be traced back to a Mythological story.

From Mahabharata we know that after Yudhishtira lost the gamble, the pandawas had to resort to the forest for twelve years and thereafter remain incognito for one year. So before this one year's period started, the Pandawas kept all their weapons bundled up on a "Shami" tree and on completion of the one year's period, they recovered their weapons from the tree. This they did on the Dasara day. Hence the custom of worshipping the Shami tree and the weapons, tools, machines etc. was started.

We have so far seen the importance of the day of Dasara from the Mythological point of view. This day is important from the historical point of view also. Our country is essentially a country of heavy rains during the monsoon. Upto the end of

the 19th century there were no bridges on any of the big rivers, which could be crossed easily by infantry and cavalry. Because of this difficulty of crossing the rivers, the wars would usually be at a standstill during the monsoon. During the Maratha period, the Marathas had usually to proceed to Northern India for fighting or capturing new territory. In the Maratha army all the soldiers were not professional soldiers. Many of them were farmers also. Hence it was customary among the Marathas to return to Deccan by about May every year and to proceed again by about the end of October. This period used to synchronise with the Dasara festival and therefore there was a custom to cross the border of the village ceremoniously on the Dasara, as this day was considered to be one of the most auspicious days in the year. This ceremony was called seemollanghan (crossing the border). In the Baroda and the Mysore states, the Dasara processions used to be taken out with great pomp and show and people used to go from long distances to see these processions.

Dasara is thus an important and auspicious day from various points of view. Several mythological stories are connected with it and they indicate the importance of this day in many ways. In the historical times also this day has retained its importance and it has been looked upon as a very auspicious day. It is a day for undertaking new responsibilities and for "Seemollanghan". It is therefore no wonder that a great sage like Shri Sai Baba thought of selecting it as a day for crossing the boundaries of this world and going to heaven. Let us therefore celebrate this festival as a social and religious function and while meeting our friends and relatives as men of the world, let us also bear in mind that this is the day of the Maha Nirvana of that great sage and devote as much time as possible on that day in meditating on Shri Sai Beba.



THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By :- Swami Chinmayananda

Work We All Must

We have already found that no one can ever remain without action even for an instant; nature will prompt us, with compelling force, to act. Therefore, as human beings, in our present state of evolution, we have, it seems, no choice at all between a life-of-action and a life-of-inaction. Work we must. The only choice available for us is in determining "how" to act. We can either act to the detriment of ourselves and for the disaster of all around us--- or we can act to bless ourselves, and for bringing at least a ray of smile on the faces of all others round us in the world.

To the undynamic and the stupid, a life of least activity and maximum revelry would seem most attractive. This wrong tendency at a national level spells ruin, and even a total annihilation, of that nation. Members of the community must ever be on their toes to act, to work, to strive, and to achieve --- then alone can they reach rich success, productive prosperity, a valid existence and a rewarding progress.

When everyone employs his ingenuity to publicise their least contribution to national endeavour, and to claim at the same time maximum comforts --- that community starts slipping down the slopes to disaster, to disintegration, and finally to despair.

Work we must. There is no choice. Whether we be on the lowest rung of the social ladder or on the topmost, be we

the governors or the governed, be we the higher or the lower class — everyone of us must work. And it is of no avail to avoid it --- because “nature will assert and make you work: you are helpless in this” (Karyate hyavashah karma sarvah praktijairgunaih). Action is the insignia of life in an organism. So long as we live and breathe in our bodies we have to act and work, which is the final expression of life in its grossest form

So then we must now try to understand how best we may work.

In order to drive home the ideal way of life, the Lord describes the true worker and the despicable type of hypocrites, (III-6) **“He who refuses to work with his limbs, but sits brooding over the sense objects of pleasure in his mind, he, the deluded fool, is called a hypocrite”**. Krishna echoes the conclusions arrived at by the greatest thinkers of all times. Mental immorality and indulgence brings about more dissipation of our vital energies than intelligent physical immorality and sensuousness. One may claim to be morally good, honest, truthful, etc. But if one is mentally entertaining immoral thoughts, dishonest motives, false, pretences, etc. the personality-dynamism in such an individual sinks low, and soon, he, who might have been a person marked for success, slowly and steadily sinks into incompetence and failures, all results of his inner dissipation.

Here Krishna talks about the social parasite who does no service to society --- such a deluded fool (Vimoodhatma) Krishna calls as a **“hypocrite”** (Mithyacharah), because he is one who sits with his mind roaming in sense-objects (Manasa indriyan smaran ya aste)

And as a contrast the Lord paints the picture of the intelligent man who lives the ideal life of higher values : (III-7) **“But who controlling the senses by the mind, unattached, employ**

his organs-of-action in Karma Yoga, "Service-of-all", he. Oh Arjuna, indeed excels".

The sense-organs can be controlled only with the mind. The mind running out through the sense-organs becomes our powers of perception and our inner ideas. **Vasanas** in us, determine whether we get involved with the perceptions or not. The world-of-objects have no power over us. In fact, it is our own "fancy for things" that reflects from them as their "powers to tempt us". At a show window the women's wear cannot tempt a man, nor will a woman be tempted by a shirt or a tie! Temptation for an object is only our reaction to it.

A man who has thus re-educated his values, orders his sense activities by his re-adjusted mind and comes to live a calm life, a master of the outer-world, and no more tossed about by the fluctuating environments. Such a man must thereafter employ his organs-of-action to work with dedication for the **Seva** of the world around him.

He must work in the world with a mind "unattached" (asaktah). This word is often used in the Bhagavad Geeta, and unless we understand its full import we are apt to misunderstand the entire philosophy of the Geeta. Attachment we all have, to many things in life: "I am attached to my mother, wife, children, work, property, etc." What do we mean "attached to your wife"? What is attachment?

Certainly it is not merely physical --- you and your wife are not physically grafted to each other, like the "Siamese twins"!! When we say we are "attached" to our dog we only mean our mental attachment. Whenever I have a strong feeling of "want" for any being or thing, there is attachment. The intensity of attachment is always directly proportional to the intensity of the de-

mand "I want". Here there are two factors "I", the ego, and "want", the desire to possess and enjoy. Thus ego and egocentric desires together constitute "attachment".

Therefore, when Krishna says that a man of self-control who has tamed his sense-organs through his mind, serves the world "unattached" -- it means serving the world "without ego and egocentric desires and lusts". Such an individual excels --- because for him the work-field serves as a theater for the exhaustion of his existing **Vasanas**, without creating any new ones.

The ego and ego-centric desires in us generate **Vasanas**, and when actions are undertaken without "attachment" --- meaning, without ego and ego-centric-desires --- the existing **Vasanas** get exhausted and no new **Vasanas** are created. This purgation of **Vasanas** brings peace and calmness into the bosom. A peaceful mind is not only more creative, and irresistible in the material world of success, but it is again the vehicle to reach us into an ampler world of fuller awareness --- of a larger State-of-Consciousness.

(Courtesy: Geeta Office, Powai)



SAINT EKNATH

By Dr. S. D. Parchure M. A., Ph. D.

(Continued from September 1974)

Literature

It may be recalled here that Eknath's Guru Shri Janardan Swami, had already found out the potentialities of his student and had therefore directed him to write the commentary on the "Chatushloky Bhagwat" when they had gone on the pilgrimage and were staying at Nasik. From that time onwards Eknath went on writing commentaries in Marathi on different Sanskrit books. Along with this literary activity, Eknath also continued to preach about the devotion to God in his Keertans, which he was doing as often as possible.

In course of time Eknath started writing a Commentary on the Eleventh Canto of "Shrimat Bhagwat." when he completed three chapters of his book, the news was received with anger by one head of a Math at Kashi (Banaras). In those days Kashi was supposed to be the seat of Sanskrit learning and many brahmins from all over India used to come there for learning sanskrit. When the head of the Math came to know about the Commentary on the Sanskrit book in Marathi, he was terribly enraged and he sent his students to Paithan to call Shri Eknath to Kashi for giving reply to the charge of writing a commentary in the common language of the people, thus dishonouring the Sanskrit Language, the language of the gods.

Shri Eknath was not a person to get ruffled by such storms. He was as calm as ocean. He received the students with a smile

and welcomed them. On hearing the order of their guru, he showed his willingness to accompany them to Kashi. By this time he had completed five chapters of the book, so he went to Kashi along with the students and his work. After going to Kashi the head of the Math charged Eknath with dishonouring the Sanskrit language and he ordered his students to throw his work into the Ganges. When this was done, the river Ganges came up along with the book and handed it over back to the students. On seeing this miracle, the pride of the head of the Math was found to be completely removed and he begged pardon of Shri Eknath for having troubled him in that fashion. A portion of the book was then read out by Shri Eknath to the gathering and all of them expressed great satisfaction about the treatment of the subject given by Shri Eknath. The versatile expression, the simple way of treatment, the adornment of the language all proved to be superb in all respects and this led the head to request Shri Eknath to complete his work there only. Shri Eknath accordingly completed his work and it was then taken over in the whole of Banaras in procession on the back of an elephant. This was a great feat in the life of Eknath and it brought him fame as well as recognition as a great literary figure of his time. This incident that took place at Kashi gave further encouragement to Shri Eknath and he thereafter wrote his book "Rukmini Swayamwar" at Kashi itself within a short time thereafter. Similar incident of the book thrown in the river not being destroyed is also described in the life of Saint Tukaram.

After thus satisfying the Sanskrit Pandits at Kashi and after convincing them about the need of the Commentaries in Marathi, as he was writing, Eknath started on his journey back to south. On his way to Paithan he met Dasopant, another great sage of his time and had a talk with him on religious and philosophical matters. Dasopant also was a versatile writer and he also wrote a lot in his life time. After a few days, Eknath took Dasopant's leave and went to Paithan. Later on as per the invitation of

Shri Eknath, Dasopant also paid a return visit to Paithan and spent a few days in the Company of Eknath there.

The felicitation of Shri Eknath's work at Banaras (Kashi) was a very important step in the literary career of that saint. This incident prompted Eknath further to continue his literary pursuits. He therefore went on writing further books. His intellect, his power of expression was of such a high level that he used to write at the spur of the moment. His writing was quite spontaneous and effortless; because of this ease in his writing, there are works comprising of over sixty thousand oves, to the credit of Shri Eknath. In addition to the works referred to above, the following works may be cited as his other important works. Bhavarth Ramayan, Anandalahari, Geetasar, Hastamalak, Swatmasukh, Prahlad vijay etc.

Many of Eknath's works are commentaries on Sanskrit books. Eknath, it may be recalled, had studied Sanskrit in his young age and his study of the Sanskrit books continued in his later life also. It is quite clear from his works that he had closely studied Bharat, Ramayan, Bhagwat, Brahmottar Khand, Panchtantra, Hitopadesh and so many other Sanskrit books. In addition to the list of books written by him, given above he has written casual poems and articles, which are also available in good number, which go to indicate that like Sanskrit and Marathi, Eknath had sound knowledge of the Urdu and Hindi languages also.

S A M A D H I

In Course of time Eknath grew old and he knew that his end was drawing near. He therefore went to Kashi (Banaras) and brought his son Hari Pandit from that place. Hari Pandit was staying at Kashi to learn Sanskrit and the Vedas. After coming to Paithan, Eknath initiated his son and instructed him

about all the routine rituals that were to be carried out daily at the house

One old lady took a vow to have 'Sahasra bhojan' i. e. feeding one thousand brahmins; but due to poverty she could not fulfil it for many days. In course of time somebody told her that she should feed only one Brahmin like Eknath and that her vow will be fulfilled. She accordingly requested Eknath to come to her house for lunch. According to her invitation Shri Eknath went to the house of the old lady along with his son Hari Pandit. After the lunch was over, Shri Eknath requested Hari Pandit to help the old lady in picking up the leaves on which they took the lunch. When Hari Pandit picked up the leaf on which Shri Eknath took his lunch, he found that there was another leaf below it. He thought that through oversight two leaves might have been placed there. So he lifted that also and lo! there was a third one below it. He then understood that this must have been a miracle performed by his saintly father in order to help the old lady to fulfil her vow. He therefore went on picking up the leaves one after the other and to the surprise of everybody the leaves went on coming upto the time they mounted to complete one thousand in number. When the old lady saw this she was overwhelmed with joy and she heaved a sigh of relief and had the satisfaction of having fulfilled her vow, which she would not have normally been able to do.

Saint Eknath was a very cool headed person and his motto was to have compassion for all beings irrespective of caste and creed. As pointed out before, he did not also observe the so called untouchability. Once when he had gone to the river Godavari, he observed that one small child of the Harijan Community was plodding in the sandy bank of the river in the blazing Sun. Due to the hot Sun the sand had become so hot that the tender feet of the child were being scorched. Eknath did not wait for a moment. He immediately picked up the child and

carried him to his house.

When Eknath's son, Hari Pandit came from Kashi, he had brought with him holy water from the river Ganges. The custom and belief of the pilgrims is that the water from the river Ganges is to be brought when you go for the pilgrimage of Banaras and you have to bathe "Rameshwar" at Kanya Kumari with that holy water. While returning you have to carry the 'Setu' and offer it to Kashi Vishweshwar at Banaras and then only you acquire full merit of the pilgrimage. According to this traditional belief Hari Pandit was to carry this water to Rameshwar; but when Eknath found that one ass was restless in the sandy bank of the Godawari river, being oppressed by the scorching Sun, he poured that water on that animal and relieved that ass from the heat of the Sun. Hari Pandit naturally was upset at this behaviour of his father and wanted to scold him; but on the same night God Rameshwar himself appeared in his dream and told him that he will get the full merit of the water of the Ganges brought by him for the purpose of the pilgrimage. After seeing the dream, Hari Pandit realized the real value of his father and his mind calmed down.

In his mature old age Shri Eknath started writing the book "Bhavarth Ramayan". He was going at a brisk speed and he completed fortyfour chapters of the "Yuddha Kanda". After this it was time for Eknath to take Samadhi so he told the people that one Shri Gavba, who was staying with him for many years, will be completing the book. When people heard about this, they could not believe in it, because Gavba was an uneducated person. He was moreover a very poor person. He resorted to Eknath's house with the idea of getting good and wholesome food to eat. He was attending to some of Eknath's domestic duties and was making merry for all the other time; but before his death, Shri Eknath called him near his bed. He blessed him giving him his own pen and told him to complete his aforesaid book. Eknath's blessings

completely changed Gavba and he very soon started writing the later part of the book and it is really a wonder how he could write as good as Shri Eknath did; but as the tradition goes the credit of completing Bhavarth Ramayan is given to Gavba. The miracles that the saints perform are really beyond all reasoning!

It may be recalled that the Guru of Shri Eknath, Shri Janardan Swami took his samadhi on Falgun Vadya sixth and that day was being observed scrupulously at Eknath's house. Once while speaking about this day, Eknath had said that this day is at present famous for the following four occurrences:-

- 1) Birthday of Shri Janardanswami.
 - 2) The day on which Shri Eknath got the darshan of Lord Datta.
 - 3) The day on which Shri Eknath met his Guru Janardan Swami for the first time.
 - 4) The day on which Janardan swami took his Samadhi.
- and added that it would be famous for a fifth occurring in course of time. This occurring to which he referred was his own samadhi day. Shri Eknath also took samadhi on the same day, which was the Birthday and the day of the death anniversary of his Guru.

After assigning the responsibility of completing Bhavarth Ramayana to Gavba Shri Eknath felt that it was time for him to leave this world and hence his soul at once left his body. This news immediately spread over Paithan like a whirlwind and people started coming to Eknath's house for his last darshan. Among the people that came, there were some mischievous people who when they saw Eknath said, "He also died like other ordinary people. Many people used to say that he was a saint. A person very dear to Gods. What is special about him? ". No sooner those people uttered these words than Shri Eknath at once got up and told Uddhav to arrange for the "Dindi" and arrange to

inform all his friends about his journey to the other world.

Eknath thereafter started making his preparations. He first of all had a bath with the water of the Ganges. He then took the "Veena" and started Keertan. He also requested the people to repeat the God's name. The whole procession then started through the streets of the city and Shri Eknath was walking with them singing the God's name all along. On the way the people worshipped him with great affection. Some offered him garland of flowers while others offered him garlands of Tulsi. Bukka was all along being showered like rain. Most of the people were watching Eknath very closely with the idea that this saint will not be seen any more. Some people were oppressed with sorrow so much that they were all along shedding tears but Eknath was quite composed and unruffled as usual. When they reached near the Laxmi Tirth on the bank of Godawari, Eknath requested all to sit down. He then did the Keertan in his usual way. As those were the last words from the mouth of the great sage, all the people were attentive and they were spell bound with his advice. He thereafter took leave of all and walked slowly towards the stream. He waded in the water slowly and when he was in waste deep water he cast away his human body peacefully and went to heaven!


On seeing that Eknath has left them, the whole assembly was completely submerged in grief; but a few of them rushed into the stream and recovered the body of Eknath Maharaj from the waters of the Godavari and brought it on the bank. The body was then cremated according to all funeral rites laid down in the shastras. A "Vrindawan" was later on constructed at the place where Shri Eknath's body was cremated and it is since known as his Samadhi. The day on which Eknath went to heaven was Sunday Falgun Vadya sixth Shaka 1521 (1599 A. D.). This death anniversary of Eknath is observed every year on this day and is known as Nath Shashthi in commemoration of the passing away

of that great saint on that day.

GREATNESS

As pointed out in the beginning, the real greatness of Eknath lies in reestablishing the Hindu religion and putting it on a sound footing. In his time he also created confidence in the minds of Hindus in their religion and religious practices. From the point of view of the literary activities, we may say that the books of Shri Eknath are more popular and are better read than his other contemporaries. It is no doubt because of the inherent qualities in the books themselves; but in addition to that the credit goes to the character and personality of Eknath for this popularity. Eknath was a very calm and quiet person. He never offended anyone. On the other hand he always held everybody in esteem and respect. This also added to his popularity.

In the Warkari sect, the literature of Eknath Maharaj is honoured next to that of Dnyaneshwar and his book Eknathi Bhagwat is always named in that sect next to Dnyaneshwari. He always advised the people not to leave the idol worship as that was always within their reach. He had sound intellect, deep study and knowledge, high reverence for his guru, compassion for all beings and a perfectly calm and sound mind. In his books and religious preaching he found a golden mean by unifying the way of Bhakti and Dnyana and that impression about his personality is still maintained on the mind of every Maharashtrian who is conversant with his life and literature.



LORD MAHAVIRA

(Continued from September 1974)

By : Prof. Vaman H. Pandit

MAHAVIRA'S INITIATION

Jainism, though it denies the existence of a Creator but His existence is accepted as undoubted; accordingly, in the account of Mahavira's initiation we shall find many of the old Hindu gods represented as being present.

This initiation, all sects agree, took place when Mahavira was about thirty years of age, some time between 570 and 569 B.C. The Naya clan, to which he belonged seems to have supported a body of monks who followed the rule of Parsvanath, an ascetic who had lived some two hundred and fifty years before Mahavira. It was naturally to this order, probably considered rather irregular by the Brahmans, that the thoughts of Mahavira turned. Its monks had their cell in a park outside the Katriya suburb (Kundagrama) of Vaisali, and in the centre of this park grew one of those evergreen Asoka or 'sorrowless' trees, whose leaves are supposed never to know either grief or pain. The Asoka tree is always associated with Mahavira, for the legends say that in his later life an Asoka tree grew wherever he preached, and it was now under its shade that he made the great renunciation and entered upon that ascetic life, whose austerities were to dry up all the founts of karama and free him from the sorrowful cycle of rebirth.

Mahavira had fasted for two and a half days, not even allowing water to cross his lips, and had then given away all his

property, which can only have been the ordinary possession of the cadet of a small House. But which the love of his followers has exaggerated into the wealth of a mighty emperor. Then followed by a train of gods and men he was carried in a palanquin to the park and alighting, took his seat on a five-tired throne, which was so placed as to face the east. There he stripped himself of all his ornaments and finery flinging them to the attendant god Vaisramana, who caught them up as they fell.

Most Hindu mendicants cut or shave off their hair, but a peculiar and most painful custom of the Jain is that all ascetics, as a proof of their power of endurance, must tear out their hair by the roots. One Jain writer declares in his English book 'Life of Mahavira' that 'only those can do it, who have no love with their flesh and bones'. It is looked on as a sign that henceforth the monk or nun will take no thought for the body.

The Jain mark with great precision the five degrees of knowledge that lead to Omniscience. Mahavira, they say, was born with the first three Mati Jnana, Sruta, Jnana and Avadhi Jnana. He now gained the fourth kind of knowledge, Manahparyaya Jnana by which he knew the thoughts of all sentient beings of five senses in the two and a half continents, and it only remained for him to obtain the fifth degree of knowledge that of Kevala Jnana or Omniscience, which is possessed by the Kevali alone.

The Digambaras, however, do not believe that Mahavira obtained the fourth kind of knowledge till some time after his initiation. According to them, he failed to gain it, though he performed meditation for six months, sitting absolutely motionless. At the end of the six months he went to Kulapura; the king of Kulapura, Kuladhipa, came and did him honour, washed his feet with his own hands and having walked around him three times, offered him rice and milk. These Mahavira accepted and took

them as his first meal (Paranum) after a fast of six months. He returned to the forest and performed twelve types of penance, but still the knowledge was withheld from him. At last he visited Ujjayini (Ujjain) and did penance in a cemetery there, when Rudra and his wife in vain tried to interrupt him, it was only after overcoming this temptation and again entering on his forest life of meditation that, according to the Digambara belief, he obtained Manahparyaya Jnana. Henceforth Mahavira was houseless, and wandered through the land so lost in meditation as to be indifferent to sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure, subsisting only on the alms of the charitable.

Research seems to have established the fact that at first he belonged to the order of Parsvanatha, a body of medicants leading a more or less regular life, and that in accordance with their custom he wore clothes; but many Jains will not acknowledge that a Tirthankara could have belonged to an order even for ever so short a time; they agree, however, that for thirteen months he did wear one cloth.

The question of clothes was a crucial one amongst the Jain. Mahavira apparently felt that the complete ascetic must have completely conquered all his emotions, shame amongst others. A true monk would not feel either heat or cold, and so would not need the protection from the weather offered by clothes, and he would be so indifferent to mere appearance as to be unconscious as to whether he wore raiment or not. Being rid of clothes, one is also rid of a lot of other worries too; one needs no box to keep them in, no materials to mend them with, no change of raiment when the first set is dirty or outworn, and still more important to a Jain, no water is needed in which to wash them.

The Digambara believe that Mahavira abandoned clothes at the time of his initiation; the Svetambara, as we have seen, that

he abandoned them after thirteen months.

It was whilst Mahavira was walking naked and homeless and as the Digambara believe, keeping absolutely unbroken his vow of silence, that he was joined by Gosala, who followed Mahavira for six years but subsequently left him and fell into those grievous sins which so easily beset a mendicant and to guard against which so many precepts in the Jain scriptures are directed

For twelve years Mahavira wandered from place to place, never staying for longer than a single night in a village or for more than five nights in a town. The object of this custom may have been to avoid levying too great a tax on the hospitality of the people, and also to prevent the ascetic forming close or undesirable friendships, which might tempt him to break either his vow of nonpossession of goods or of chastity. The rule was however relaxed during the rainy season. When Mahavira, like his subsequent followers made a practice of remaining for four months at the same place, lest he should injure any of the young life that springs so suddenly and abundantly into being, once the monsoon bursts and the rains, on which India's prosperity depends, begin to fall. During these twelve years, he meditated always on himself, on his Atma and walked sinless and circumspect in thought, word and deed.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND NIRVANA

Mahavira was born with three degrees of knowledge and had acquired the fourth. He was now at the end of his twelve years of wandering and penance, to acquire the fifth degree Kevala Jnana or Omniscience. In the thirteenth year after his renunciation of the world and initiation as an ascetic, Mahavira stayed in a place not very far from the Parasnath hills called Jrimbhakagrama. There was a field there belonging to a farmer

called Samaga which surrounded an old temple, and through this field the river Rijupalika flowed. One afternoon Mahavira was seated under the shade of a Sala tree in this quiet meadow in deep meditation. Just as before his initiation, so now he had fasted for two and a half days without water and as he sat there lost in thought, he peacefully attained supreme knowledge. Henceforth he possessed 'complete and full, the unobstructed, unimpeded, infinite and supreme best knowledge and intuition called Kevala Jnana.' His meditations and austerities had been so profound as to destroy the last of all the karma, the enemies to enlightenment, knowledge and freedom, and henceforth his pathway would be unimpeded. Mahavira now added to his titles those of Jina (or Conqueror of the Eight Karma, the great enemies) from which Jainism derives its name, Arhata (or being worthy of Veneration). Arihanta (or destroyer of Enemies) and Aruhanta or (one who has killed even the roots of karma).

Now, as the conqueror of karma and equipped with supreme knowledge, Mahavira began to teach his way and his first sermon was on the five great vows.

Mahavira's great message to mankind was that birth is nothing and caste is nothing, but karma is everything, and on the destruction of karma, future happiness depends. Mahavira laid the greatest stress on asceticism. In its glow, karma could be burnt up and only through austerities could one become a Tirthankara.

According to the Digambara, the place Mahavira loved most was Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha. Its king Srenika, with his whole army, had gone out to do honour to the saint on his first entry into the country and had been won over by him. The king asked numerous questions concerning the faith and all of them being satisfactorily answered by Mahavira, he entered the Order and became one of the staunchest champions of Jainism.

The Svetambara have recorded the names of the places where Mahavira stayed during each rainy season, and they cover a period of forty-one years. First, they say he went to Asthikagrama (the village of bones). The name of this village, the commentators declare, was originally Vardhamana (the Kathiawad Jain believe it to have been identical with the modern Wadhwan); but an evil demon, Yaksha, collected there an enormous heap of bones belonging to all the people he had killed, and on this heap the inhabitants built a temple, hence the change of name.

Mahavira then spent three rainy seasons in Campa and Pristicampa (Bihar). As a prophet he cannot have been without honour in his own country, for he spent twelve monsoons at Vaisali and Vanijyagrama, doubtless recruiting for his Order, which, having at its head the brother of their king, naturally held out many attractions to the inhabitants. He was also able to win over all the members of the Order of Parsvanatha to which he had originally belonged. He paid even more visits to Rajagriha, where, as the Svetambara and Digambara both agree, he was much beloved and whose inhabitants prevailed on him to return fourteen times. Another favourite resort, Mithila has provided the Jain ascetics with a proverb: 'If Mithila burns, what have I to lose?' and it must have been a place of considerable importance, for Mahavira spent six monsoons there, and its kings, as we know from other sources, were men of high standing and culture. The great ascetic spent two rainy seasons in Bhadraka and then just for one monsoon he went to Alabhika to Punjabhumi, and to Sravasti in turn, and his last monsoon he spent at Papa (or Pampa).

About a year after gaining Omniscience Mahavira became a Tirthankara, one of those who show the true way across the troubled ocean of life. The path Mahavira pointed out for others to follow lay in becoming a member of one of the four Tirtha a monk, or nun, if possible, otherwise a devout layman or laywoman.

We came now to the closing scene of Mahavira's life. He attained Nirvana in his seventy-second year, some fifty years before his rival and contemporary Buddha. Modern research has shown that the traditional dates for his birth and death, 599 B. C. and 527 B. C. cannot be far wrong.

Mahavira's last rainy season was spent in Papa, the modern Pavapuri, a small village in the Patna district, which is still held sacred by the Jains. The king of Papa, Hastipala, was a patron of Mahavira. Sitting in the Samparyanka position, he delivered the fifty-five lectures that explain the results of karma and recited the thirty-six unasked questions (i. e. the Uttaradhyayana Sutra) and having finished his great lecture on Marudeva he attained Nirvana all alone, and cut as under the ties of birth, old age and death.

Legends have gathered as thickly round Mahavira's death as round his birth. One tells how nearly all the ruling chiefs of the country had gathered to hear his discourses, and how the saint preached to them with wonderful eloquence for six days; then on the seventh he took his seat upon a diamond throne in the centre of a magnificent hall, which had been specially built for him on the borders of a lake. His hearers had arranged themselves into twelve grades according to their rank, for all were there from the king to the beggar. It was a dark night but hall was brilliantly illumined by the supernatural glow that issued from the gods who had come to listen to the illustrious preacher. Mahavira preached all night, and towards dawn his hearers fell asleep. The saint knew by his Sukladhyana that his end was drawing nigh so he sat reverently with clasped hands and crossed knees (the Samparyanka position) and just as the morning dawned, he attained Nirvana, and the people awakened only to find that their Lord was dead.

Now at last Mahavira was freed, his forty-two years as a

monk with all their self-denial and austerities had completely exhausted his karma. He had, unaided, worked out his own salvation, and never again could the accumulated energy of his past actions compel him to be reborn, for all their force was spent. The Jains say there are two Terrible Ones who dog the soul, like policemen attending a prisoner; one is called Birth and one Death. 'He who is born must die some day or other, and he who is dead must be born in some form or other'. These two terrible Ones had no longer any power over Mahavira, for the chain of Karma that bound him to them, had been snapped and never again could the prisoner be sentenced to life.

All of Mahavira's disciples were present at his death.

Both Digambara and Svetambara Jains love to visit Pavapuri. There are several small temples there belonging to both sects; but the main temple is the one which contains the footprints of Mahavira, and a narrow stone bridge leads to this shrine over a lake on which bloom white and red lotus lilies.

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बाबा की उदी का चमत्कार

बात दिसंबर १९७१ की है। मेरे भाई की लड़की की शादी में शरीक होने के लिये बहोत से रिश्तेदार आये हुये थे। उनके साथ उनके बच्चे भी थे। कुछ हमारे घरके बच्चे और ये बच्चे सब मिलकर दिन भर खूब ठधम मचाते रहते थे। एक दिन शाम के करीब ६ बजे थे। सब बच्चे छत पर पतंग उड़ा रहे थे। छत से कुछ उपर ही बिजली का तार लगा हुवा था। पतंग उड़ते उड़ते उस बिजली के तार में अटक गयी। मेरा लडका सुनील (उम्र चार वर्ष) वही खड़ा था। वह पतंग लेने के लिए आगे बढ़ा। जैसे ही उसने हाथ आगे बढ़ाया हाथ तार से चिपक गया। वह जौर जौर से रोने लगा। हाथ को खूब झटके मारे लेकिन हाथ छूटा नहीं और रोते हुये वहीं हवा में अधर लटके रहा। यह देखकर बाकी के सब बच्चे भी जौर जौर से रोने लगे। लेकिन घर में जो औरतें थी उन्होंने इस तरफ कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया। उन्होंने सोचा बच्चे वैसे ही लड रहे होंगे, और अपने काम में लगी रही। कुछ देर बाद उनमें से दो बच्चे रोते हुये नीचे आय और कहने लगे कि सुनील तार से चिपक गया। इतना सुनना था कि सब घबरा गये और छत पर भागे। देखते हैं तो बच्चा तार से लटका हुआ है। किसीको कुछ सूझ नहीं रहा है कि क्या करें। इतने में ही बाबा की कृपा से मेरी बड़ी बहन के दिमाग में कुछ बात आयी और उसने पास पड़ा हुआ एक बड़ा लकड़ी का पट्टा उठाकर बच्चे के पैरों पर जौर जौर से मारना शुरू कर दिया। तीन चार दफे मारने से बच्चा नीचे गिर पड़ा। बच्चे का बोली बंद हो गयी। दांत भिच गये और सारा शरीर अकड़ गया। सबने समझा कि बच्चा अब मरने ही वाला है। सारी गली में श्रोगों की भीड इकट्ठी हो गयी। कोई किसी डाक्टर का नाम बताने लगा कोई किसी का। लेकिन तभी मेरी पत्नी ने बच्चे को गोद में लिया और कहने लगी कि “मुझे किसी डाक्टर को नहीं दिखाना है। सब से बड़ा डाक्टर (बाबा) मेरे साथ हैं”। और बच्चे को बाबा के फोटो के सामने लिटा दिया। सारे शरीर पर उदी लगादी। कुछ उदी जल में घोलकर उसके मुंह में डाल दी। और बाबा से प्रार्थना करने लगी। उस समय मैं दुकान पर था। मेरी पत्नी ने नौकर को मुझे बुलाने के लिये भेज दिया। नौकर से मालूम होते ही मैं घर की तरफ चल पड़ा। रास्ते भर बाबा से प्रार्थना करते

रहा। घर पहुँचते ही देखता हूँ तो बच्चा अच्छी तरह बातें कर रहा था। फर्नी ने बताया कि जैसे ही उदी इसके मुह में गयी इसने आंखें खोल दी। और थोड़ी देर के बाद ही सबसे बातें करने लगा। बाबा की यह लीला देखकर मेरी आंखों से प्रेम के आंसू झरने लगे। और बाबा को एक टक निहारते रहा। यह देखकर मेरी माताजी समझी कि इसे बच्चे के लिए दुःख हो रहा है। वे मुझे समाझने लगी कि अब तो यह बिल्कुल ठीक है, अब तुम क्यों चिंता करते हो। मैंने उनसे कहा कि ये दुःख के आंसू नहीं है। ये बाबा के प्रेम के आंसू है। मुझे तो आज इस बात की खुशी हो रही है कि बाबा अपने भक्तों की किस प्रकार रक्षा करते हैं। बाबा की लीला देखकर मेरे आंसू रुकते ही नहीं थे। इतने में डाक्टर आया जो हमारे घर के करीब ही रहता था। बच्चे को अच्छी तरह बातें करते देखकर उसे बड़ा आश्चर्य हुआ। वह कहने लगा कि १० मिनट तक तार से चिपके रहने के बाद भी यह किस तरह बच गया। जब उसने बाबा की उदी के चमत्कार के बारे में सुना तो उसका मस्तक श्रद्धा से बाबा के चरणों में झुक गया। विजली के तार से चिपकने के कारण बच्चे के हाथ में जल जाने से आंधा इंच गहरा गढा हो गया था। मैं हररोज बाबा की उदी लगाकर कपड़े पट्टी बांधते रहा। १०-१५ दिन में हाथ बिल्कुल ठीक हो गया। उस दिन से हमने घर में चाहे कोई भी विमार हो दवाई देनी बंद कर दी। और हरेक बीमारी में बाबा की उदी का इस्तेमाल करने लगे। जो रोग डाक्टरों की दवाई से १५-२० महीने में ठीक होता है वह बाबा की उदी से २-३ दिन में ही ठीक हो जाता है। यह मैं बड़े विश्वास के साथ कह सकता हूँ। क्योंकि उदी की कद के बारे में मुझे बहोत से अनुभव हो चुके हैं। मेरी सब भाई बहनों से यह प्रार्थना है कि वे किसी भी असाध्य से असाध्य रोग में भी बाबा की उदी का इस्तेमाल कर सकते हैं। वस जरूरत है तो सिर्फ दो चीजों की, श्रद्धा और धैर्य की। बाबा को प्रेम से कही भी किसी भी हालत में पुकारिये बाबा आपके साथ खड़े होंगे।

सिताराम महाजन

सीताराम मेडीकल स्टोअर्स
स्टेशन रोड हुवळी जि. धारवाड

HISTORY OF SHRI SAI BABA TEMPLE

AT KURNOOL (A. P.)

Shri Veeraswamy, a resident of Madras before Independence, came to Kurnool as a Jeep Driver. One day while he was sleeping on the banks of River TUNGABADRA, Shri Sai Baba appeared in his dream and directed him to construct a temple for Baba. When he awoke, thinking of Shri Sai Baba, he saw immediately one Cobra (small) spreading its hood in the vicinity underneath the shade, where an ASWATHA TREE intertwined by a Neem tree (the symbol of Lakshmi Narayan) was situated. Afterwards that cobra glided into the ant-hill situated nearby.

Since then, Shri Veeraswamy became a Sai devotee and from that day onwards he spared no pains to secure funds and firmly resolved to construct the temple at the above site. He managed, by the grace of Shri Sai Baba, to purchase a bus and by the windfall of fortune, he became the owner of 16 buses. He started a bus service and named it as 'Shri Sai Baba Bus Service'. Still these bus services are running and are managed by his children.

In between the years 1949-51, Sai Baba temple in Star shape was constructed on the banks of the Tungabadra river, with an expenditure of 4½ lacs of Rupees. A pure handsome Marble Stone Statue of Shri Sai Baba was installed in the temple. There are in all sixteen spacious rooms in the temple. Shri Veeraswamy left his body in 1953 and his body is interred, with a fitting tomb, in the premises of the temple itself.

As in other South Indian temples, regular puja, Archana and bhajana are conducted here and grand functions are celebrated on all important festive days, with huge mass poor feeding.

(continued on page 31)

PRECIOUS STONE WITH OM EMBLEM



In the Matunga area of the Bombay city stays one industrialist whose name is Babulal Jagjeevandas Shah. He is religious minded and devoted to God. He is originally from Rajkot. He has got a business both at Rajkot and Bombay in Motor accessories like Batteries, bulbs etc. For his business he is required to pay visits to Rajkot occasionally. Once when he had been to Churchgate for booking his ticket for Rajkot, he met a Sadhu near the station. He presented a stone to him. He looked at the stone, accepted it and offered to pay the price of the stone, but the Sadhu did not accept the money.

After coming home, Shri Babulalbhai examined the stone

closely and lo! he could see the letter Om in it! In order to confirm his doubt, he examined the stone under a microscope and to his great surprise he could see the letter Om at five different places in the stone.

He decided in his mind to show this queer stone to some experts on the next day and slept on that night with ideas about that same stone. In his dream in that night he saw a saint, who looked like a fakir, and on getting up in the morning on the next day he realised that the saint was none else but Shri Sai Baba. Before that time he was not a Sai Devotee; but since that time he became a staunch sai Devotee.

This precious stone obtained by Shri Babulalbhai is transparent and whitish grey in colour. The Archaeological research centre in Deccan College at Pune expressed the opinion that it was a rare specimen of stone. The experts have opined that the stone might be of a date prior to five to seven crores years. The American National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Institute in Washington has recently expressed their view that the stone must belong to a very very old age. In this stone we are able to get the view in one place of the (1) Sat Brahma Onkar (सत् ब्रह्म ओंकार) (2) Chit Brahma Onkar (चित् ब्रह्म ओंकार) (3) Anand Brahma Onkar (आनंद ब्रह्म ओंकार) and (4) OM ॐ Shri Babulalbhai considers this precious stone as a special "Prasad" given to him by Shri Sai Baba and he worships it daily along with the other Gods in the house. He has got prepared a golden ring and has set this stone in it.

(continued from page 29)

This temple is thronged with surging crowds of Sai devotees on all Thursdays.

(Translated from the TELUGU article 'Shri Sai Baba' of Shri A. V. V. Narasimha Rao, published in Andhra Prabha Illustrated weekly dt. 14/x/70)

YOGIRAJ VASUDEVANANDA SARASWATI

(A Biography)

By :- Shri S. N. Huddar

(Continued from September 1974)

A Singer Becomes a Devotee

Saraswatibai renouncing her profession came to Vadi and lived with devotion. She was a good singer. At the advice of Dikshit Swami, she daily sang 'Karuna Tripadi' composed by Swami Maharaj to lesson the wrath of Shri Datta. Once she sang in the presence of Swami Maharaj. Seeing her devotion Swamiji composed a pad, " भावे नमूं श्री गुहंच्या पदासी " for her and gave her some instructions for meditation.

Devotees desired to have Paduka of Swami Maharaj for veneration at the time of Bhajan etc. On the request of Narsinha Saraswati, Swamiji wore wooden Paduka and gave them to them. When Narsinha Saraswati went to Amarpur (Aurvad), these Padukas were taken there in Amareshwar Math.

Adesh For Going to Rameshwar

On Margashirsh Vad 7, Swamiji came to bow to Shri Datta Paduka. When he got Samadhi he was given Adesh to go to Rameshwar. After alms in the afternoon he came to Datta paduka and told people that he had an adesh to go out of Vadi. The news spread like wind and all people ran to see and take Prasad from him.

He advised, "Serve Datta with devotion. Live united and sing Bhajan of 'Digambara Digambara' you will be blessed "

He then started for sangam and on the way one married woman waved 'arati' to him. All requested swami Maharaj to return from Rameshwar for his children at Vadi. Swamiji said, "My returning depends on your sincere devotion, "Swamiji crossed the river and went to the other side. All shed tears at his departure. At night he halted at kurundwad ghat. 200 to 300 persons accompanied him. The news spread in the city. The chief of kurundwad and others came to have swamiji's darshan even in the night.

Kurundwad

Swami Maharaj stayed at the Datta mandir on the river bank. When at Vadi, Balasaheb Kurundwadkar would come for his Darshan daily. When Swamiji reached Datta Mandir, Balasaheb had been to Miraj. A camel messenger was sent to him. He soon returned and took darshan of swami Maharaj on the ghat. He requested him for alms the next day. All men of Kurundwad and Wadi were also invited. Balasaheb, Dajisaheb and Bhausahab these three brothers cooked separately and offered alms to swami Maharaj. Shrimant and Swami Maharaj took a round in the row of invitees sitting for dinner. After alms, Swamiji proceeded further, took darshan of Shri Vishnu, and Datta and went to Shrimant's residence on his request. Swamiji said, "So far I had been to many states; but it is my rule not to go to the palace and not to accept Royal alms. But today Balasaheb with his devotion has urged me to break this rule." Hearing this Balasaheb was much moved. Swamiji then bowed to Devi and went out of the city. Rajasaheb offered sashtang dandwat and prayed Swami Maharaj to continue his kindness. Swamiji said "Protect cows and Brahmins which is the duty of the Raja's and serve Ganesh devotedly. You will have Blessings."

Swamiji then stayed at the garden of Shri Datta at Kurundwad. Next day he went to Tarwad and stayed at Mukteshwar

mandir and then to Vithal mandir at Sadalge. Bhajan was being sung there “ ननु आदिरूपा । ओंकार स्वरूपा । विश्वात्रिया रूपा । पांडुरंगा ॥

Hearing this Abhang sung melodiously, swamiji got samadhi, which lasted for 3 hours. When he awoke prasad was distributed and Swamiji himself gave a cocoanut and Prasad to the singer of the Abhang. Swamiji said, “Greatness of sant Tukaram is realised while hearing such Abhangas.” He then went to Veda Ganga. Swamiji had started explaining ‘Shatshloki’ at Vadi. He completed it here and asked Vadi people who had accompanied him so far to return to Vadi.

Wherever Swami Maharaj went, he composed stotras in praise of the local deity. He reached Sankeshwar on the Hiranyakeshi river where there is a Math of Acharya. After bath he stayed in the garden of Kalkundrikar. From Shringpur he came to Kangeri, the place of Chidambar Dikshit known from the Peshwa period.

Chidambar Dikshit was known as Shri Shanker incarnate. Hundreds of persons were paid daily by him. He could give any amount anytime from his brass lota. He performed many sacrifices at Gurlhosur. He gave prasad of sacrifice to Bajirao II, the last peshwa, who gave it to his dependent, the result being his powers were taken over by him. Swami Maharaj composed Sanskrit and Prakrit stotras on Chidambar Dikshit.

Ramcandra Kamat of Goa, asked Swamiji some easy means to cherish devotion. Swamiji said, “Namsmaran (recitation of God’s name) is the only means. He then reached Gurlhosur and stayed at Chidambar Math for 9-10 days. He took darshan of Yallamma (Renukamata) on a hill nearby and prayed that Diety.

Then he passed by Ghatprabha and Vishwamitri rivers and reached Hampi on Tungabhadra at Vidyananya Swami Math. Here is a grand Virupax mandir and many big gopurs. Vidyananda

was the founder of Vijayanagar Rajya. Swamiji took bath, darshan, prayed at Rishyamuk Parwat, Pampasarowar, Kishkindha and reached Sheshachal mountains. He took darshan of Kartik Swami and prayed him. He wrote 'Kumar Shiksha' here.

Darshan of Venkatesh

Swami Maharaj proceeded to Bhagava Kshtra, shrirang, Shri Shailya Mallikarjuna and came to Venkatgiri. Here none can touch the murti. But God had told the priest in dream. The priest searched for Swamiji and took him to Venkatesh for darshan and touch. From here he went to Kalahasti, Shivakanchi, Vishnukanchi, Pakshi Tirth etc.

On chaitra Purnima he had Kshour on Pinakini river. There was very little water in the river; but next day when Swamiji stepped in the river, the water increased upto his chest and he could have dips. He immediately composed a poem in praise of Pinakini river.

On the next day he reached Chidambar and prayed Chidambareswar. There lived one Sundershastri who was very proud of his knowledge of Sanskrit. Swamiji stayed with the shastri. Swamiji said casually, "If there is vanity of learning, devotion cannot be there. If there is no devotion, God's blessing cannot be had, and without blessing there is no salvation. So you read Gurucharitra for Datta's blessings. Do not waste time." Hence Sundershastri began to read Marathi Gurucharitra and his vanity disappeared.

Roumour About Samadhi of Swami Maharaj

Some one spread the news that swamiji had taken Samadhi. When this news reached Vadi some devotees went out to test its reality. They first went to Rameshwar and then came to Tanjavar. Swamiji knew this by meditation, started for Chidambar and reached Mayavaram Bazar, where he met these persons of Vadi.

Swamiji told them not to believe in gossips. The time of Samadhi of this mortal body would be known to them beforehand. He bathed in Kaveri, took alms, and asked the persons of Vadi to return home. He then came to Tanjavar on Jesth Shudha Ekadashi. After two days he started for Rameshwar. On the way he passed by Shwetaranya, Kumbhakonam, Madura, Meenakshi etc. He stayed at Rameshwar for a day. Tanjavar persons came here and insisted Swami Maharaj to observe chaturmas at Tanjavar.

He started from Rameshwar on Ashadh Shudha 2, and travelled 250 miles in 10-20 days and reached Tanjavar on Ashadh Shudha 14. He Stayed at Vimlamba Devi's place. Kaveri river flows nearby on which there is the Sandhya Math. The river Kaveri is called 'Venu' at this place.

CHATURMAS - 18 SHAKA 1829 (1907 A. D.)

TANJAWAR

Seeing Swamiji's sound knowledge and staunch following of Shashtra rules, people respected him as God. Swamiji had written 'Shri Guru Charitra' as per Datta's adesh at Brahmavarta. Swami Maharaj was here given an adesh to write 'Churnika' i. e. prose summary of the Samhita. Swamiji wrote it here.

One bright looking Digambar saint came to Swamiji during night. He had discussion with him and in the morning he went away. A Brahmin woman suffering from Asthama for several years came here. Gandabua gave her teerth of Swamiji's feet. After taking that teerth, she had profuse vomiting and she gradually recovered.

Shringeri Acharya's Felicitations.

Swamiji wrote Sanskrit criticism of 'Krishna Lahari'. After Bhadrpad Purnima Swamiji left Tanjavar. On his way he saw Satya Mangal, Jambakeshwar, Kotilinga and Shrirang on Kaveri.

Shri Shankaracharya of Shringeri was here. When Swamiji bowed to the Achrya, he said, "I wished to see you since long, God has fulfilled this desire to day." Swamiji prayed Acharya and Shardamba.

Acharya also appreciated Swamiji by composing a Stotra. After alms, Acharya addressed the people gathered there as follows:- "Dear Disciples, you have not recognised this sanyasi, who has come here today. Shri Datta Prabhu himself has taken birth due to pious behaviour of parents. He is preaching religion just as the first Shankaracharya. He himself is behaving as per Shastra rules strictly and he has induced several persons to follow religion. He has travelled all over Bharat from Himalaya to Setu Bandh on feet and by action, devotion, and knowledge, he has made the lives of several persons full of bliss. I pray God to give him long life to do the work of religion incessantly." Swami Maharaj said, "I am not worthy for all what your holiness has said to me; but it is evident that the glory of this Achrya Peeth is due to your holysself."

Wound in the Nose Cured.

Swamiji came to Satya mangal. Shri Datta asked him to travel on the Bank of Kaveri. Swamiji came to the sangam of Bhawani and Kaveri. He bowed to God and did Kartik Kshour and stayed for 15-20 days. Lakshman Shastri of Amraoti (Dr. Gantur) came to Swamiji and requested for the cure of his son and daughter who had wounds on their nostrils. Swamiji gave him Vakeri Bhate (herb) and asked him to rub on a stone and put the drops in their nostrils. After doing this for some days. the son and daughter were cured.

From Bhavani Swamiji went to Karur on the bank of Kaveri, the Samadhi place of Brahmendra Swami. He bowed to the samadhi place and composed a stotra. Shringeri Shankaracharya had also composed a stotra and narrated his life in his books,

'Brahma sutra vritti' and 'Yogasudhakar'. Swami Maharaj then came to Tanjavar and observed Datta Jayanti at Awadhutrao's residence.

Krishnamata's Assurance.

From here Swamiji went to Amraoti to see Laxman Shastri's son and daughter and arranged to get 'Vakeri Bhate' for him. Via Chidamber he came to Tripur, Kalhasti, Shrishailya giri etc. Thence he travelled by seashore and came to a town on the Krishna river on Falguna Shuddha 14. He inquired about a place to live; but nobody helped him. He then halted under a tree on the bank of the Krishna. He had to arrange for next day 'Kshour'. He prayed the Krishna mata, "O, mother, I have great respect for you, then should you also not care for me? If Kshour is not made tomorrow, I shall not do Kshour hereafter in my life. I shall give up Dand and roam anywhere. There is no reason to obey you from today". "Saying so, he lay down. In his dream Krishna mata said, "Kshour will be arranged tomorrow, I am really proud of you". Swamiji prayed Krishna mata and she disappeared

Krishna mata appeared in fierce form before some persons of the town and told them, 'O you wicked, a great Sanyasi came to your town and you did not give him place for living. Consequently you will have to face calamities. You surrender to him, arrange for his Kshour tomorrow and have his blessings'.

The persons were frightened. In the morning they came to Krishna mata's bank, searched for the Swami Maharaj and when they met him all bowed to him humbly and begged his pardon for their previous day's negligence. Swamiji went into the town and had Kshour as per Shastra rules. He stayed there for 15 days. Thence he went to Kotilinga in Monglai. Thence he came to Muktyala i. e. Muktishwarpur in Nandigarh Taluka, District Krishna in Madras state.

(to be continued)

Guru Poornima Celebrations At Sai Nilayam, Madras.

Guru Poornima, also known as Vyasapoornima, which is considered a very sacred and important day from time immemorial, was celebrated under the auspices of Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam at Sai Nilayam, Shenoy Nagar, Madras-30 in the evening on Thursday the 4th July 1974, in the immediate presence of Guru Dev His Holiness Swami Kesavaiahji. Shri K. S. Narasimhan, I A. S., Commissioner, H. R. & C. E. Deptt. Tamil Nadu participated in the celebration.

There was a record gathering of more than 3000 devotees. Many came from far-off places like Nellore, Nayudupet, Gudur, Vijayawada, Vuyyur, Nalgonda, Ananthapur, Salem, Trivandrum, Chingelpet, Ennore etc. The celebration commenced with the usual Thursday Pooja at the Shrine by Swamiji. At 5.00 P M. there was chanting of vedic mantrams by Pandits at the Shrine beginning with Ganesha Pooja, Lakshminarayana Prathishta in Kalasam, Sri Lakshmi Pooja and Vishnu Sahasranama Parayanam. At 6.00 p. m. there was "Mangala Aarati". The whole atmosphere breathed the holiness and was thrilling with spirituality.

Among the contemporary Sages and saints of India, there is no one more well known and beloved by the people than Sai Baba of Shirdi. He preached no doctrine and set up no religious order. He took upon himself the sufferings of his fellowmen and made their life happier and their faith in God stronger. He wanted men to look upon fellowmen and even animals with equal love. He begged his food till his last day (which he shared with the poor, dogs and crows) though beggars have become kings by his grace. He was omniscient and an ocean of mercy. Sitting in "Dwarakamyi" he would tell devotees to have faith in God to avert or mitigate misfortunes like ill-health or accidents and

give them "Udhi" (Sacred ash). He shamed learned humbugs who believed in exhibiting miracles to demonstrate their super-human powers. Although He is not seen in his mortal form, His spirit remains immortal for the service of mankind.

H. H. Swami Kesavaiahji, the chosen apostle of Sri Sai Baba became a "Kripa Siddha" on 1-7-1939 by the grace of Sri Sai Baba. History of Swami Kesavaiahji is the life of Sri Sai Baba after Mahasamadhi and he explained His leelas (deeds) after that period. Swamiji's pujas of Sri Sai Baba on Thursdays at Sai Nilayam are so popular that thousands of devotees gather on these days in pin drop silence seeking relief for spiritual and bodily worries. This is a simple act of devotion and there is no mystery mongering or magic. Many persons in high status in life, ordinary sceptical and other simple people flock every Thursday in fervent devotion.

H. H. Swami Kesavaiahji, the Founder - President of the Samajam read out his soul-filling message on this sacred occasion of Guru Poornima to the devotees who had gathered for the function. He said that "Guru Poornima, falling on the fullmoon day.....to help us lead a righteous and purposeful life leading to happiness and peace".

Sri K. S. Narasimhan expressed great appreciation of the spiritual work rendered by Swamiji and the Samajam.

Messages, wishing success to the sacred function, were received from President of India, Sri V. V. Giri; Vice-President of India, Sri G. S. Pathak, Governor of Tamilnadu, Sri K. K. Shaw; Governor of Orissa, Sri B. D. Jatti and others.

Sri Sai Baba's Udhi, consecrated coins and prasadam were distributed after the function by Swamiji to all the devotees till about 1.00 a. m, in the night.

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Publications of Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Shirdi

The prices of publications have been changed from 15-11-73, for the convenience of calculation. The new prices are as follows:-

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Naigaum X Road, Dadar, Bombay 400-014.

Published by Shri K. S. Pathak, Sai Niketan 804-B,
Dr- Ambedkar Rd., Dadar, Bombay - 400-014