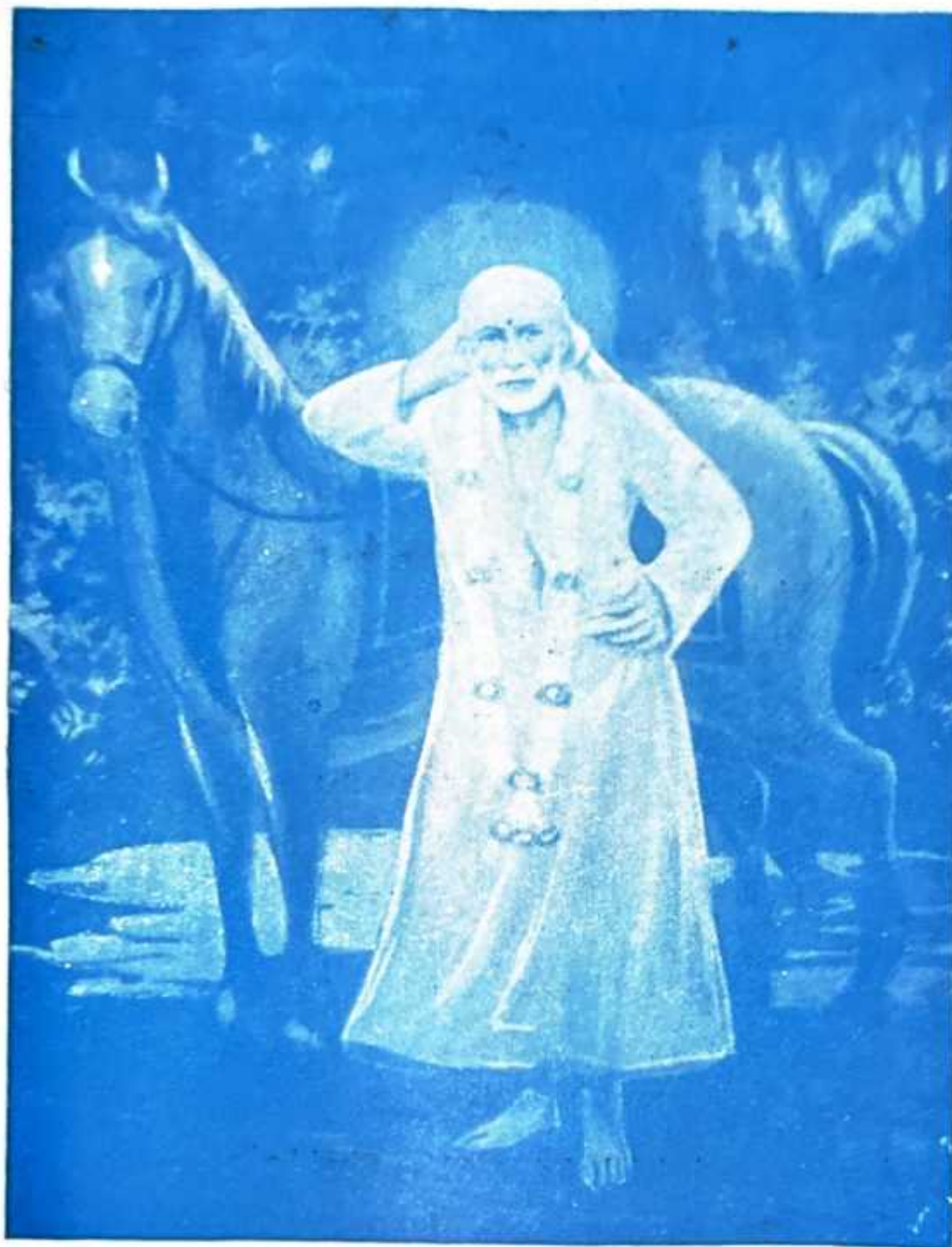


SHRI SAI LEELA



DIWALI NUMBER

NOVEMBER 1974

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SHRI SAI LEELA

(Official Organ of Shirdi Sansthan)



VOLUME 53

NOVEMBER 1974

No. 8

BREAD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Bread and righteousness are inter-related. Would you bring the Kingdom of God in your homes? Then share your bread with others: do not cook for yourself only. Give food to the hungry and you will make him good, and you will grow in virtue and wisdom: for you will begin to realise that you are one with the poor, and the poor are one with you in the One Family of God. The rich are, often wanton and arbitrary, and become slack and gross because they do not aspire and do not share.

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EDITORIAL

DEEPAWALI

Deepawali or Diwali as it is commonly called, is the festival which is most joyfully celebrated throughout India by the rich and poor alike. Other festivals are of short duration and hence no special preparations are made for them; but this festival normally lasts for four days and every day has got a special importance of its own. Hence all the people in the house from young to old take interest in celebrating the festival in their own way and make preparations for the same for days together.

The usual days for this festival are the last two days of the month of Ashwin and the first two days of the month of Kartik. Sometimes according to the almanac, the festival lasts for only three days or sometimes it is extended upto five days. The general tendency of the human beings is to expect joy for as long a period as possible and hence people expect the Deepawali festival to last for a long period. The elders, who have enjoyed this festival for many years are not much worried about the duration of this festival; but the youngsters who are having special holidays for this festival always like to have the Deepawali lasting for the maximum number of days. Whenever the calendar for the new year is received, the youngsters in the house always try to find out from that as to the number of days allotted for this festival. The children also want this festival to last long because when the elders are celebrating a festival, they are usually giving full freedom to the youngsters and they do not mind if they behave a little out of the way.

Like other Hindu festivals, this festival also has a mythological and social background behind it. Though the first day of

Deepawali is known as Narak Chaturdashi, the day preceding this day also has its importance. This day is the thirteenth day of the second half of the month of Ashwin and it is known as the "Dhanteras". The distinguishing feature of this festival is the row (Awali) of lights (Deep) from which the festival gets its name and these lights are actually kindled from Dhanteras. The mythological story behind the importance of this day goes to say that Yama the Lord of death once asked his assistants as to whether they felt sorry any time while performing their duty. They replied that once when they had to snatch away the son of King Haima, only on the fourth day of his marriage, they were pained much to inflict premature death on that young boy. They further requested that in future no such case should happen and make them to suffer from the pangs of grief. Yamaraj agreed and declared that those who will observe the festival for five days from Dhanteras and light lamps will not have premature death. From that time it became a practise to observe this festival by lighting lamps for five days.

The programme for the first day of Deepawali starts early morning with a hot water bath accompanied by ointments, scented soaps and scents of various kinds according to the choice of every individual. This day is the fourteenth day of the second half of the month of Ashwin and is known as Narak Chaturdashi. As usual a mythological story is told bringing out the importance of this day also. Once upon a time, a demon named Narakasur became very powerful. He was having his kingdom in the region south of the present Nepal and Bhutan states. He invaded the territories of the surrounding kingdoms and imprisoned sixteen thousand ladies whom he had captured by force. He had the audacity even to trouble the gods.

When Lord Shrikrishna knew about this disorderly behaviour of the demon, he decided to kill him; but his wife Satyabhama came forward to achieve this task and marched on the demon.

She fought bravely with the demon and killed him before the dawn of the fourteenth day of the second half of the month of Ashwin and freed all the ladies in distress. They all went home and expressed their joy by illuminating their houses. Hence we even now get up early morning on this day and have a bath and have the illuminations by the night.

The second day of the Deepawali festival is the no-moon day or Amavasya. Usually the no-moon day is supposed to be inauspicious for any festival; but this day is supposed to be auspicious, because this was the day when the Goddess Laxmi was freed from the fetters of King Bali by Lord Vishnu in the Waman incarnation. On this day Laxmi i. e. wealth (Cash, Gold etc.) is worshipped in all the houses as well as in all the shops. In old days the merchants and businessmen used to celebrate this day on a very grand scale. They used to have special illumination on that day. They used to entertain their customers with sweets and drinks; but with the scarcity of all things and the sky high prices of all essential commodities, they are not now able to celebrate this day on the same scale as before. However the old practise of worshipping the accounts books etc. is continued by them as before. Their financial year ends on this day. Hence the new books of accounts that they have to open on the new year are worshipped by them on this day, which is dedicated to the Laxmi Pujan.

The third day of the festival is the Padwa. This is the first day of Kartik. The samvat year starts from this day. Many of the business firms who still observe traditional way of keeping accounts, begin their financial year from this day. This way of counting the year is even recognised by the Government, because the assessment of income tax is also done according to this year for so many business firms, who maintain their accounts according to this financial year.

The fourth day of the Deepawali festival is a day of the

brothers and sisters. On this day sister is supposed to entertain the brother, give him a feast and the brother in his turn, has to give a gift to his sister. In all the houses this function is celebrated on a grand scale. Waving the Aarati round the face of the brother by the sister on this day is supposed to be very auspicious and it is scrupulously observed by all. Most of the brothers make it a point to pay a visit to their married sisters even if they are staying far away. A mythological story of Yama, the God of death, and his sister is told in this context which throws light on this custom of fostering the relations of the brother and sister on this day.

Thus ends this great festival of the year. This festival is of the longest duration and there is more of social element in it than religious. There might be some economical background behind the celebration of this festival at this particular time of the year. Since long India is essentially a country of farmers. Our whole economy even today depends on the agricultural products that we procure in the year. Though of late some dams have been constructed and few irrigation works are supplying water for farming, still we are even today mainly depending on the crops which we produce in the monsoon. By the end of Ashwin the monsoon mostly gets over in our country and expectation of a good crop, which is by that time blooming gaily in the field, makes the farmer hilarious. He is therefore in a good mood to enjoy the functions of the festival. The children have got long holidays and they are gay because of the firing of crackers that they do freely in this festival. In good old days stitching of new cloths for the ensuing year was being done on the eve of this festival and buying gold and preparing new ornaments for this festival was being done. As now the purchase of clothes does not require any particular occasion and as we are purchasing clothes throughout the year and as the price of gold has soared so high that gold is hardly purchased unless it is absolutely necessary, both the above practises are mostly abandoned.

We wish all our readers and all Sai devotees a happy Diwali and a prosperous new year.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By :- Swami Chinmayananda

YAGNA SPIRIT----A COSMIC LAW

In order to make the intelligent sceptic in Arjuna accept the philosophy of working in the **Yagna-spirit**, Krishna now shows how it is a universal law of nature. Everywhere around us, from the twinkling stars to the flowing rivers, nature serves the world in the **Yagna-spirit**. The sun shines, but demands no appreciation from anyone. Rains fall; rivers flow; plants flower; trees bear fruit; oceans heave; towering mountains stand ... all serve the world to make it what it is, and none of them seem to demand even a passing recognition from the people populating it. They all do their duties discovering a joyous fulfilment in the very performance.

In the style of a mythology here Krishna sings. Vyasa was a poet-philosopher and therefore, in him poetry, science and philosophy often get mingled to enrich each by the other. This is the style of the Geeta Acharya.

Lord Krishna says, (III-10) "**The Creator (Prajapati) after having created mankind, together with the Yagna, said, 'By this shall you create: this shall be the fulfiller of all your desires.'**" The idea of the **Yagna-spirit** is the universal law of nature and is given out against an awe-inspiring and dignified background. The Creator conceived the **Yagna-spirit** along with the creatures, and as a parting gift, to the best of his creatures, the highest-evolved, the intelligent man, He presented it. Said the mighty, creator, "**Now I give you the Yagna**" ---the power to co-operatively work together for a desirable goal. With this ---

functioning in this co-operative spirit of selfless dedicated endeavour — may you all prosper (Anena prasavishyadhvam) Nay, even if man were to discover any imperfections in nature, or in the scheme of life in the world, an intelligent community can, all by itself, striving in the Yagna-spirit of selfless co-operative endeavour, bring about all improvements and every conceivable progress (esha vastu ishtakamadhuk). The story of the scientific world and its growth during the last 1,000 years; the story of the economic and political revolutions the world goes through from time to time, are all examples. Alas! men co-operate and act as a team more often for destructive wars than for constructive work of creating peace and harmony among themselves! It is due to a weakness inherent in man that he fails in his attempts at co-operative endeavours. We know if all decide and work for a cause, good or bad, we can succeed. We can make a heaven of earth, or a hell of life around us. In order to co-operatively work each will have to sacrifice his ego and his personal desire-gratifications. If any one in a team asserts his ego or grows anxious for his own desire-gratifications the cadence in work is lost, and the co-operative scheme breaks down. Thus for success the entire team must have one single inspiring ideal at the altar of which everyone must readily surrender their personal vanity and greed. A large number of people, coming together to act in unison at the same altar of Grace, for the total glory of all, is the ritual **Yagna**. This **Yagna**-spirit is a gift received from the Creator by man as a community, not as an individual.

The power of changing the world is in the hands of the community though they may draw their inspiration to co-operate and act for its accomplishment from a single individual 'leader'. And they can exert this power only through selfless dedicated team-work the "dynamism of togetherness" can change the world and inaugurate any progress conceived by man.

This "blessing" pronounced by the Creator need not necessarily

work out in life, because we know that we can only strive, but our efforts often do not bear fruits when the environments and circumstances are not conducive. A farmer may work hard but inclement weather can spoil his harvest. Nature also must co-operate in order to make man's efforts a grand success. Will the Cosmic-Forces obey us? Have we any command over them?

To clear this doubt, the Geeta continues, (III-11) **“Cherish the Devas with the Yagna-spirit and those Devas shall in turn cherish you; thus cherishing each-other you shall gain the highest good.”** These words are put into the mouth of the Creator --- it is his command. When men in a community co-operatively strive, without ego and ego-centric desires, the Cosmic-Forces that constitute the environments shall cherish them in turn. In short, when man works in the **Yagna-spirit**, the outer circumstances must miraculously change their pattern to be conducive to the common will of the selfless community striving for the good of all.

When we cherish the outer Cosmic-Forces (Devas), they shall in return cherish us with the fulfilment of our welfare, or whatever is the common demand of the total community striving together. This is a divine Law --- a universal Truth --- a scientific Fact. Thus, mutually cherishing each other, let man, with the grace of the Devas, achieve the greatest prosperity --- (parasparam bhavayantah shreyah paramavapsyatha).

(Courtesy :- Geeta Office, Powai)



YOGIRAJ VASUDEVANANDA SARASWATI

(A Biography)

By :- Shri S. N. Huddar

(Continued from the last issue)

Chaturmas-19 Shaka-1830 (1908 A. D.)

MUKTYALA

Swami Maharaj liked Muktyala very much as there were at this place many learned Brahmins of good behaviour. Females here also knew Sanskrit and showed great regard for Swamiji due to his vast Knowledge. Swamiji observed Vyas Puja on Ashadh Purnima and started his Chaturmas. As few persons came to him, he got time to write 'Yuvashiksha' 'Vridha Shiksha' and 'Stree-shiksha'.

In Bhadrapad Vadya he left Muktyala and Via Tadvai reached Nagesh in Ashwin Vadya. By Diwali he reached Hansladevi, where the Krishna meets the sea. He bathed on Tilsankranti and went about 20 miles. Shri Datta asked him to go to 'Sapta Godavary'. He returned to Nagesh and stayed at the Math meant for Sanyasi. He went to Pedkallapalli near Machhlipatam and proceeded to Sapta Godavary.

Here people showed great regard for a Sanyasi and they were religious minded. Godavari meets sea here by seven streams and hence this place is called 'Sapta Godavari'. They are known by 7 names Viz. 1. Vashishta, 2. Kotilinga, 3. Koushika 4. Vridha Goutami, 5. Bhardwaja 6. Atreya and 7. Turya.

Shri Datta asks to go to Kashmere

In Kartik Vadya, Shri Datta asked Swamiji to go to

Kashmere. Swamiji said flatly that he did not wish to go to Kashmere and if Shri Datta desired, his body may be placed anywhere as Tantuk or Ganganuj. Shri Datta asked "Why do you avoid to go to Kashmere." Swamiji said, "Because gond live there". Shri Datta said, "What is the need of observing Varna, Ashram, caste etc. for a Sanyasi like you?"

Swami Maharaj kept quiet and roamed by the bank of Godavari. He reached Bedavad Palli and observed Datta Jayanti the next day. Then he passed by Kogur Palar, and came to Rajmundri. He did Poush Purnima Kshour here. A Sanyasi named Parmananda Swami was here. On his invitation he went to see him by boat which was rowed by Brahmins. Brahmanand Saraswati, who had met Swamiji at Kogur accompanied him. He said to Swamiji, "I was longing to see you since long. Kindly come to Rajmundri." I wish to instal Dattamurti and Paduka in the Acharya Math by your holy hands." Swamiji agreed.

Peethapur

Swamiji came to Peethapur in Poush Vadya. Shripad Shri Vallabh, Datta incarnate was born here in the 13th century. His birth place was shown to the local people by Swami Maharaj. So far they did not know this. He installed Paduka at this place.

From Peethapur Swami Maharaj went to Kokonda and had Amavasya bath here. Some persons of Vadi had come here to ask Swami Maharaj to come to Vadi. They were roaming, reciting, "Digambara Digambara Shripad vallabh Digambara" in search of Swamiji. Hearing the familiar voice, Swamiji stood under a tree and said "Narayan Narayan," loudly. Vadi persons heard Swamiji's voice and approached him. They fell straight before him and bowed to him. Swamiji had samadhi and Shri Datta said to the Vadi people, "Swami had told you to

improve your behaviour several times, but you are not improving. I am asking Swami to go to Kashmere." Hearing this, the persons bowed humbly and prayed, "We are your children. Forgive us for our faults and allow us to serve you. We shall obey you." After awakening Swamiji warned the priests to behave well and told them to return to Vadi.

Shri Shankaracharya of Shringeri had great regard for Swami Maharaj. When he met Swamiji, Shri Acharya asked Swamiji to give him some books written by him. But as Swamiji had none, he wrote a Stotra and gave it to Shri Acharya by which he was much pleased. Later on Swamiji managed to send Datta Mahatmya, Gurucharitra etc, to Shringeri.

Rajmundri

Swami Maharaj came to Rajmundri and stayed at the Acharya Math. On Magh Purnima he installed three headed Shri Datta Murti and Paduka in the Math ceremoniously at the request of Brahmananda Saraswati. This Datta Murti is known as 'Bhakta Vatsal'.

Ramchandra alias Ramappa is the first name of Brahmananda Saraswati. He was born in Govind Raju family of Mangalgiri in Bezwada District. Before taking sanyas he had been to Vadi and had met Swami Maharaj. After taking sanyas he visited all the holy places of Bharat. He had been to Garudeshwar at the time of Swami Maharaj's samadhi.

When at Kogur, Swamiji received the news about the samadhi of his guru Narayanand Swami. He took Dand-Snan as per rules. He crossed the river and proceeded further and saw Ichcheshwar, Bhimeshwar etc.

Shripad Appashastry's sister often became senseless. Medical

treatment was of no use, she was brought to Swami Maharaj, who said that she had been affected by a spirit. Shastri said, "I believe in spirits, but I do not believe that a spirit can affect human beings." Swamiji said, "See this yourself." He wrote a mantra on a brick and asked the Shastri to burn Dhooop and recite the mantra 21 times daily and also told that after 21 days the spirit would speak.

Shastribua did as advised. After 21 days the spirit told why he had become a spirit and why he had affected the woman. He further told, "If you do certain things for me, I shall go away." After doing that the woman was relieved of the spirit trouble.

Sitaram shastri, younger brother of Swamiji, came here in search of Swami Maharaj. He expressed his desire through Brahmanand Swami that he wished to take Sanyasa. Swamiji did not agree.

From this Sitaram Shastri realised that Swami Maharaj would not give Sanyasa to him.

After Falgun Purnima, Swami Maharaj came to Bezwada. He found that more and more persons were coming to see him. To avoid this botheration he preferred to travel through forests. Thus he came to Manthan Kaleshwar early in Vaishakh. Here Shri Datta again asked him to proceed northwards. But Swamiji was thinking of having Chaturmas at this place as it was safe from people's botheration. Shri Datta again told him, "There is yet time for chaturmas. Proceed further." Swamiji persisted to live there.

Shri Datta approached in the form of a Saheb riding a horse and with a cane in hand. He angrily said to Swamiji, "Don't live here' Go away, else you will be caned." Seeing this, Swamiji prayed,

O Rudra, Bow to your Anger,
O Bhadra, Bow to you.

Swamiji said, "I will proceed further as you wish." Then Shri Datta became calm and disappeared. On the way in a village, there was only one Brahmin's house. Swamiji was anxious to have alms. The woman in the house said to him that she would cook at three places and then he should take alms.

From Manthan, Swamiji came to Nagbhir Talodhi. He observed rituals and was sitting under an Audumbar tree. A Brahmin woman came and asked Swami Maharaj that she desired to instal a murti in the Balaji Mandir. She asked, "Will this be accomplished?" Swamiji said, "If your son gives up ganja, this will be achieved." The woman asked her son to give up ganja; but he said, "I do not like anyone to advise me in this matter." The woman reported this to Swamiji who said, "Then the murti will not be installed."

At the end of Jestha, Swami Maharaj reached Pawani on the Bank of Vain Ganga. Swami Maharaj stayed in the Vithal mandir and Gandabua in the Muralidhar Mandir.

Chaturmas-20 Shak 1831 (1909 A. D.)

Pawani (Dist Bhandara)

Vyas Puja was performed here on Purnima. In the beginning as Swami Maharaj was not known to the people, they did not behave well with him and did not arrange for his alms. Pawani was known as Padmavatipuri in ancient times. Swami Maharaj composed 'Vain Gangastotra' which is published in the 'Stotradi Sangrah.' For chaturmas Swamiji stayed here for 2 months and devotees from long distances came here to see Swami Maharaj. Sitaram Shastri arranged for their feeding. Those, who acted against religion are not allowed to sit in the rows of Brahmins for dinner. Swami Maharaj did not even like to see such persons.

There was Plague in towns and villages round about. One day a rat was seen in the Muralidhar Mandir where Gandabua was staying. Swami Maharaj prayed Shri Datta, "With your permission, I have started chaturmas here. Many families with children have come here. If any one dies, the blame would be on me and I shall have to leave this place before completion of chaturmas." Shri Datta Assured that no one would be affected during Chaturmas. Local persons as Nana Shastri Dashputre, Vithalrao Kalikar took pains for arrangements of the guests.

On the first day Swami Maharaj went for alms to Naik. But knowing that he was a Gujrati, he did not take alms. Next day also he had a fast. On the third day he went to Bhat who began inquiry putting many questions. Swamiji said, "It is the duty of a grahasta to offer food to an Atith. Sundry inquiry should not be made." In the mean time Umabai, daughter of Bhat, came there and recognised Swami Maharaj as she had seen him at Brahmavarta. She told all about Swami Maharaj. She would even go to Swamiji's residence at Vithal mandir and swept and cleaned the place.

Nana Shastri read Purana in Vithal Mandir. Once he could not explain one Shloka. Swami Maharaj explained it to him. He told 2-3 meanings and also said "the book giving these meanings is in your house." Nana Shastri searched and he found it. Due to this, his respect for Swamiji was heightened more and he told the citizens about his greatness.

Balshastri son of Nana shastri did Kirtan. Swamiji wrote some new Akhyan (Tales explained in Kirtan) for him and told him that Veda Suktas should not be spoken in kirtan. Once he uttered Veda sukta, Swami Maharaj at once stood up and saying 'Guru Deo Datta' began to go out of the place. Balshastri bowed to him and begged apology for his fault and then only Swamiji resumed his seat.

People applied sandal paste to the body of Swami Maharaj and did his Mahapuja. Once a blind Brahmin came here with his keep. He went alone to Swamiji and requested to suggest means for eye-sight. Swami Maharaj told him, "Give up the keep and then come to me".

A person came and requested Swamiji to take him beyond the Bhava-sagar. Swami Maharaj was going to the river for bath. He asked the person to come with him. Swamiji entered the river and asked the person to follow him and not to be afraid of drowning. But he had not the courage to enter into the water. Swamiji came up and said, "If you cannot go beyond this small river, how will you cross the vast Bhava-sagar? To have this ability you have to serve God with devotion."

Husband returns after 12 years

A person of Pawani had left home in anger. His wife came to Swami Maharaj and said, "My husband has left home 12 years before. Even his whereabouts are not known." Swamiji looked at her and said, "you recite this mantra in mind. He will return soon." Swami Maharaj wrote a mantra on a piece of paper and gave it to her. Within one month she received a letter from her husband about his coming. Later he came and lived at home.

Bhairav Prasad of Mandla Mahapur on the bank of Narmada, came to Swamiji and told him that he got sons but all of them died in childhood. He further said, "As the fifth son died at birth, a man with locks of hair came and took away the corpse of the child and disappeared. Kindly bless me." Swami Maharaj said, "Someone of your family has become a spirit. He does not allow your issues to survive. That very spirit has taken away the corpse of the 5th child. You do Narayan bali, recite Vishnusahasranam (one thousand) times and take prayashchitta. Then your issues will survive."

Widows with hair on head denied Darshan

Once some Madrasi widows with hair on their heads came to see Swami Maharaj, but he at once turned his face. They inquired of the reason, Swamiji said, "I do not see persons acting against religion" The women said, "we do not have kumkum and hair after marriage. They are with us from our childhood. So why they should be given up after the death of the husband?"

Swami Maharaj said, "At birth a child is small, why that form is not continued in later years. There is difference in form, behaviour and knowledge in childhood and adult age. You come in the form which you had at your birth and I shall see you." This influenced the women so much that the next day they came after taking off their hair. Then they could have darshan of Swami Maharaj-

Rich and Poor alike

A rich person of Umrer, Balwantrao Naik requested Swami Maharaj to take his services. Swamiji did not say anything. Through some one Naik again requested. Swamiji said, "There is difficulty of drinking water here. Arrange for this." Balwantrao took a bucket and brought water from the river. He asked his family members-sons, daughters-in-law also to do the service.

Gold Mohur came out of the cocoanut

A lady came for darshan of Swami Maharaj. She offered a cocoanut and instead of 8 anna coin a gold mohur was given unknowingly. She could not replace the coin. Swamiji, realising her mental uneasiness, asked her to take back the Mohur. But she did not take it. Swamiji gave her cocoanut as prasad. She went home and broke the cocoanut. A gold mohur came out of it. And the lady was astonished at its sight.

Members of Gulavani Family Blessed

Shanker Bhat Gulavani of Kolhapur side wished to come to see Swami Maharaj, who wrote him that he himself would be coming there. In spite of this Shankar Bhat came to Pawani. He got high fever. Physicians said that it would last for 40 days. Shankar Bhat prayed Swami Maharaj to forgive him. Swamiji gave him angara and teerth and he felt better. His mother Umabai, sister Godavari and younger brother Vamanrao also came to Pawani and on Bhadrapad Shuddha 14 (Anant chaturdashi), Swami Maharaj blessed all these three with mantropadesh.

Vaman Dattatreya Gulavani is one of the few well known disciples of Swami Maharaj, who is continuing the mission of Swami Maharaj of Propogating religion to this day on extensive scale. He later had also the blessing of revered Shri Loknath Swami Maharaj, who was wellknown for advocacy of Shaktipat Yoga Diksha' also known as 'Shri Datta Yoga. Being pleased with the progress, efficiency and pious behaviour, Vamanrao was given by Shri Loknath Swami the 'Parisatva' meaning authority to give this 'Yoga Diksha' (also called Vedha Diksha) to the deserved -Sadhakas. Thousands of persons including women, children, and youths of different castes and creeds have been blessed by Shri V. D. Gulavani Maharaj so far. Some of his disciples are in U.S. America, England and other countries also. Being born on 23-12-1886 he is running 86.

His disciples and admirers have got constructed a modern edifice, on Karve Road, Poona-4 for his residence. But due to his regard for his Guru Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati, Tembe Swami Maharaj, this edifice has been named as Shri Vasudeo Niwas On the eve of 85th birth day. Roudri Mahashanti festival was celebrated most gracefully in May 1971 and he was weighed with silver and the cash value thereof i. e. about Rs. 30.000 was distributed amongst the Brahmins knowing Veda-Shastras.

continued on page 20

NONE BESIDE ME SAI BABA I HAVE THEE

Thou has given me eyes, that I may see
All beauteous splendour created and governed by thee.
That I may look at every sea, brook and tear
Hoping that these stupendous and small may draw me near.
Nearer yet nearer to you Sai; my Creator, my Maker
Thou blest me thus, so I mayn't be a forsaker -
To Thee; my Lord, my King, my life,
Oh! that I may live, to see, Thee in all and thrive
having none beside me Sai Baba I have Thee.

Thou has given me hands, so that I may labour,
For Thee; never for feeble praise or greed or favour;
Oh that I may make coarse mine hands, with toil -
For Thee and find beauty even in the barren soil.
And for Thy love; I may when need arises and cries -
Wipe another's tear and make him see Thou never denies
So make him reason with a clearer mind,
That Thou are the purpose of life; the blissful Divine
For having none beside me, Sai Baba, I have Thee.

Thou has given me a mind that, I may reason,
and see the aim of each day, month and season.
The mind, which may if wholly good and pure
Seeing Thy Love; pain and suffering endure.
And doing so may with more certainty see,
That here I stand. Thou caused me to be
Oh were it not, my Sai Baba for Thine wonderful ways
I would never have existed here, nor breathed this day
Having none beside me Sai Baba I have Thee.

Thou had given me a heart, that I may love,
 All that surrounds me and in doing this love Thee
 That my tender heart may overflow unperplexed and free,
 Flow with adoration, devotion and love for Thee.
 Oh that it may outline, the sinister Death's knock when Life's done
 And see the Kingdom of Glory, when from earth's door I return.
 May love be perpetually burning or none can cause its light -
 To fickle, dim, perish die or take flight
 Having none beside me, Sai Baba, I have Thee.

Had I none of these gifts but just one -
 To be thine worshipper, Thine ardent slave alone
 so taking away all these, give me but a soul,
 A soul-unstained, righteous, white. Oh! give me this,
 such that it may take its path, the path of light and bliss.
 Like the restless waves which clasp and meet,
 Like a young rider sure of his steed
 Like a faithful hound returning home without doubts
 Like the high mountain embracing the clouds
 Like the silvery lines of streams meeting the river duly
 Like the bird returning to its nest so freely
 Like the earnest river gushing forth to mingle with the ocean
 May my soul too meet Thee Sai and thee abide in true devotion
 Just as thee aim, so rightly and find so true.

Show me a way Sai Maharaj
 Lest I may lose my path or go astray
 And at life's end find Thy doors shut; Nay!
 Best I should be but a puppet with broken strings
 Which is useless without purpose or means
 Having none beside me Sai Baba, I have Thee.

Give me soul, possessing which, I may at life's end find -
The paradise of Eternal Bliss and remain to be only Thine
For having none beside me Sai Baba, I have always Thee.

Zarine Adi Sahukar

Zarine is the beloved daughter of Brig. Adi K. Sahukar (retd) who has now settled at Jaykay nagar in West Bengal. Miss Zarine was a very good devotee of Shri Sai Baba and it was His will that she had to pass away into heavenly abode on 22 December 1970 at a young age of 22 - Editor.

(continued from page 17)

He has done a great service by publishing all valuable blessing literature, written by his gurudev in Sanskrit and Prakrit, most of which is poetic, in 12 volumes of 500 to 600 pages each in 1954. From April 1971, he has sponsored 'Panthraj' a Marathi Quarterly devoted to propogating shaktipat Yoga Diksha.

(to be continued)



WE WISH ALL OUR READERS,
WELL WISHERS AND ALL SAI DEVOTEES
A HAPPY DIWALI AND A PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR—EDITOR.



CONTROL OF ELEMENTS

BHISHASMAD VATAH PAVATE, BHEESHMODETI SURYAH,
BHISHAASMADA- GRISCHENDRASCHA MRITYUR
DHAVATI PANCHAMA ITI.

(TAITTEREEYA UPANISHAD)

Through fear of Him blows the wind. Through fear of HIM rises the Sun. Through fear of Him again Fire and Moon shine. Fifthly, Death runs to fulfil its duties.

In canto XVI and XVII of Srimad Bhagavata, we read that after driving Kaliya Nag from the waters of the Yamuna, Lord Krishna and the inhabitants of Braja with their cows spent that night near the bank of Kalindi, oppressed with hunger and thirst and worn out with fatigue. While they were all asleep fire broke out in the forest dried with summer heat and began to burn down Braja. The fire surrounded the sleeping inhabitants. The inhabitants found themselves helpless and sought refuge at the feet of their Lord Bala Gopala. Observing the perturbation and helplessness of His people, the Lord, in the abundance of His compassion for His devotees, immediately swallowed up that fierce conflagration, possessed as He was of unlimited energy (Anantha Sakthi dhriti)- It is no wonder that as the creator of the universe and the elements, Lord Krishna had controlled and swallowed the encircling forest fire.

H. H. B. V. Narasimhaswamiji of revered memory, in his Preface to Vol. II of Life of Sai Baba observed "WHAT SRI KRISHNA WAS AND WHAT HE SAID PUZZLED THIS AUTHOR AND PUZZLED SO MANY OTHER PERSONS; AND AFTER SEEING WHAT SAI BABA SAID AND DID, ALL

THESE PUZZLES DISAPPEARED AND CLEAR LIGHT DAWNED UPON EVERY ONE" etc When that is the case with a devout and religious minded soul like our Swamiji it can better be imagined how the sceptics and atheists respect the above mentioned incident in the life of Lord Krishna as unbelievable and as a figment of the imagination of the author, sage Veda Vyasa. Let us now see how Lord Sai in his own ingenious way proved the veracity of the above phenomenon.

One day at noon the fire in the dhuni began to burn brightly and the flames were seen to be reaching the rafters of the mosque. The people who were sitting in Dwarka mai did not know what to do. It was not for them to ask the omniscient and omnipotent baba to do something to quell the rising flames. Baba was then evidently in a transcendental mood. But the feelings of the devotees reacted on him and he came to his normal condition. He immediately went to the Dhuni and with his Satka (Small stick) struck on the pillar nearby saying "Get down, Be calm" several times. The fire obeyed immediately and resumed its normal condition.

Commenting on this incident in his Sri Sai Satcharitra, that great devotee Sri Hemadpant says "This is our Sai, an incarnation of God. He will bless any man who will prostrate and surrender himself, to him" as did the inhabitants of Vraja on that fateful night referred to above.

Again on a midsummer day one of the hayricks at shirdi caught fire through accident. There were many hayricks nearby. The wind was blowing fiercely and the other ricks were in the imminent danger of being caught fire and reduced to ashes. One of the residents ran up to Baba and craved to save them and their cattle. Baba immediately went to the burning stack and drew a thin line with water round that stack and said "Only this stack will be burnt, and no others". Only that stack was burnt, though other stacks were near and a wind was blowing.

(B. C. S. 342)

Baba was occasionally preparing Meetha Chaval (Sweet Rice) or Pulava and feeding the people that came to him. He used to personally attend to the cooking business. To test whether the food was properly boiled or not and to ensure for its proper condition, Baba used to thrust his bare hand into the boiling cauldron and churn the whole mess from side to side and up and down. Strange to say that Baba's hand was never burnt in the process. This fact also evidences his absolute control over the fire and its attributes.

In this connection, it is worthwhile recollecting what Sri Sai Saran Ananda Swami (Vamanrao P. Patel in his poorva Ashram) says on this aspect of Baba's supernatural powers, in his "Shri Sai, the Superman". "The idea that He is an entity apart from God has entirely left Him. He lives, moves and acts in God and when any of the Supernatural Powers is being exercised or used by Him He never thinks that He has been doing anything extraordinary, the exercise of these Powers being so natural to HIM".

In St. Mathew, Chapter 8, verses 24-27 it is stated that when Jesus the Christ was asleep in the ship, there arose a great tempest in the sea and the ship was tossed up and down with the winds and waves. Then the disciples woke up Jesus and implored him to save them. Jesus then rebuked the winds and the Sea and there was a great calm. The men marvelled saying "What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him".

We find a similar incident in the life of Sai Baba. Rao Bahadur Moreswar V. Pradhan, B. A. L L. B. recounts in his statements of experiences how in 1910, there was a severe storm and heavy down pour of rain in Shirdi and how Baba controlled it saying, "O God! Enough, stop the rain. My children have to go back home. Let them go back without difficulty". Immedia-

tely the storm stopped and Mr. Pradhan was enabled to return home that night.

Similarly in 1914 Baba controlled a fierce storm through his divine powers. He continues to exercise his supernatural powers for the benefit of his devotees, which evidences his God-head. Here is an instance.

In 1951, I was working as Stationary Sub-Magistrate, Kalkur. There is a Sanskrit School there. As a devotee of Sanskrit Language, I was closely associated with the activities of the School. The teachers arranged literary meetings on 13th and 14th October, 1951 in consultation with me. I attended the Mahasamadhi Day on 10-10-1951 at the Sai Mandir, Ventrapragada. At the time of departure on 11-10-51, I earnestly prayed Baba to make the function a success.

Kavi Samrat, Padma Bhushan, Kala Prapoorna Sri Viswanatha Satyanarayana Garu (Receiptient of Jnana Peetam Award of Rs. One Lakh) Kalaprapoorna, Pandit Penumatsa Satyanarayana Raju garu and some ten eminent scholars were invited and they attended the conference.

The opening session was held on the morning of 13-10-1951. At 3 PM the evening session began. Soon there was a gale and drizzle. The sky was cast with clouds and was threatening. The Pandal appeared to be in danger of being blown off by the wind. I felt nervous and mentally prayed to Baba. Soon the gale and drizzle subsided. Everything went on well according to Schedule. When we returned home the court yard of my house was very damp and wet. When questioned I was told there was a heavy downpour of rain at 4 PM that day as a result of which the side canals were flooded. And the whole area overflowed with water. My further enquiries revealed that beyond a radius of 2 furlongs from the meeting place there was fierce gale and heavy downpour of rain. The absence of gale and rain near and at the meeting

place was entirely due to the kripa (mercy) and divine powers of Prabhu Sainath. This happened thirty three years after the Mahasamadhi of Baba which confirms the following assurances given by the benign Sai.

BABA'S CHARTERS

&

SAYINGS.

50. I shall be active and vigorous from the tomb also.
51. Even after my Mahasamadhi, I shall be with you the moment you think of me, at any place.
52. As soon as a devotee calls unto me with love, I will appear. I require no train to travel.

This is our Sai who is Krishna and Jesus rolled into one. The same divinity indeed. It is due to accumulation of merit of several births that we have become the children of Mother Sai and receive his constant care and protection. Let us repay our debit to our Prabhu through constant remembrance of HIM and through repeating His Holy Name 'S A I' always.

P. V. Satyanarayana Sastry, B. A.
Retired Thasildar,
Krishna Lanka,
Vijayawada - 2 (A. P.)



SAINT GORA KUMBHAR

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

Caste system is a distinguishing feature of Hindu religion. It naturally follows that some castes are considered to be higher than others. The so called higher castes always got reverence from the low castes. They had free entrance to the temples. They were only supposed to have the access to the Vedas and learning; but inspite of this there were a number of persons born in the so-called low castes, who were highly esteemed and sincere devotees of the God. These persons were so highly devoted to God that irrespective of their caste, they were recognised as saints and history has given them an honourable position among the saints of Maharashtra. Hence though generally speaking we find that the majority of the saints in Maharashtra belong to the Brahmin caste, the other castes also have got their representatives among them. For example there is a tailor like Namdeo, a gardener like Savta Mali, a barber like Sena Maharaj, an untouchable (Harijan in the modern terminology) like Chokha Mela and a potter like Gora Kumbhar in the galaxy of Maharashtrian saints.

Due to our natural apathy towards maintaining the historical records, the authentic birthdate of this great saint is not known. In one book known as "Bhakta Katha Kalpatatva" (भक्तकथाकल्पतत्व) the year of birth of Goroba (as he was commonly known) is stated as Shaka 1189 (1267 A. D.) This year is not corroborated anywhere else while giving the information of Goroba. However, the time of writing of Dnyaneshwari viz. 1290 A. D. is not disputed by anyone and Goroba is said to be the contemporary of Dnyandeo and Namdeo. Hence looking to the life span of both these saints, the above year may not be far from correct, though it cannot be said that it must be the correct one.

Though the authentic date of birth of Goroba is not known, still he is traditionally known to have lived in a village named Satyapuri alias Ter. In some places this village has also been mentioned as Terdhoki. No detailed history of the parents and the childhood of Goroba is available; but he was known to be a pious and religious minded man. He no doubt attended to his business of manufacturing earthen pots from mud; but even while attending to his work physically his mind would all the time be meditating on his favourite god Vithoba or Pandurang. He would also be chanting the name of God when his hands would be busy in work.

FAMILY LIFE.

In course of time Goroba was married. The name of his wife was Santi. Soon after, his wife gave birth to a son and her joy knew no bounds; but the philosophically minded Goroba, who had little interest in worldly life, was not much perturbed by this event. His concentration on god continued as before. In the absence of any elderly person in the house, once when his wife Santi had to go for fetching water, she left the child to the care of Goroba, who was very busy in his usual work. Goroba was working in the ditch. He was pounding and mixing the earth in the ditch with his feet for preparing the mud. The child, that was kept nearby by Santi, crept slowly and fell into the ditch. Goroba, who was as usual busy in chanting the name of god, was almost in a trance and he never noticed the child and trampled it to death under his feet!

On her return Santi started looking about for the child here and there, but when she could not find the child anywhere she peeped into the ditch and finding the mud fully red with blood, understood what had happened and started crying bitterly. In her sad bereavement she started putting all the blame of the loss of her child on Vithoba, in whose 'bhajan' Goroba was spending most of his time. As Goroba had strong faith in god Vithoba,

he got angry at the words of his wife and ran at her to thrash her. Seeing the wrath of Goroba Santi got frightened and requested on Vithoba's oath not to touch her.

The above incident may not be thought to be plausible if we look at it from the point of view of reality. If the wife tells her husband to look after the child, how is it that the husband (Goroba) forgot about it so soon? When the child came to the ditch and fell in it, it must have made some noise or cried when it fell in the ditch, where Goroba was preparing the mud. How is it then that Goroba did not come to know about the movements of his child, however much he might have been engrossed in the bhajan? These and some other questions similar to these, are likely to be raised by modern scientific thinkers, who are likely to question the bonafides of the above incident; but these lives of saints have come to us by tradition through generations and there is at present no data to verify the authenticity to such incidents, which are very common in the lives of the saints all over the world. We have to look upon them with faith; as all saints are supposed to have some supernatural power.

To revert of Goroba's life, we see that there was nothing more holy to Goroba than the name of God Vithoba. He therefore accepted the word of his wife regarding the oath and threw away the stick in his hand and again got fully engrossed in the bhajan of Vithoba, forgetting totally the incident about his son. Santi, who was a devoted Hindu wife, got reconciled after some days and one night when Goroba was lying down, she went near him, to rub his legs. On seeing his wife near him, Goroba reminded her about her own oath not to touch her and did not allow her to touch him.

Knowing Goroba's faith in God Vithoba fully well, Santi had no argument with her. However remembering the death of her only son, she thought that their family would come to an

end, if Goroba would continue to behave in this fashion and refuse to touch her under the pretest of the oath, which she once proclaimed in her sad bereavement.

The ladies in India, in those days, were not much enlightened. They were depending throughout their life on somebody or the other. In the childhood they would depend on their father, after the marriage the husband would take their care and in the old age the sons would take care of the old lady. In the present case when the husband, Goroba started behaving in this fashion, Santi went to her father for help. She told her father the incident that took place on that day and the adverse effect that her oath had on her husband. She suggested to her father that rather than seeing the end of the family in this way, her younger sister Rami may be given to Goroba in marriage so that the family will have a successor. This suggestion was accepted by Santi's father and he accordingly approached his son-in-law and requested him to accept Rami, his second daughter, as his wife. Goroba agreed to the proposal and the marriage took place. After the marriage was over the father-in-law requested to treat both his daughters alike. Goroba acceded to his father-in-law's request and started behaving towards his younger wife also in the same way as he was behaving towards the elder one. He interpreted the request in such a way that the second wife should be treated in the same way as the first one was being treated. He therefore avoided both his wives and did not touch either of them. When this was learnt by Santi from Rami, the latter started lamenting her lot and both again thought that in spite of all their efforts the family would come to an end due to want of an offspring. A sort of a despair thus overtook both the sisters.

The sisters then scratched their heads for a long time to find some way out of the difficult situation in which they were thrown by destiny; but ultimately they hit out a plan and carried it out on the same night. When Goroba was asleep that night, they went and slept on either of his sides and kept his hands on

their breasts. Goroba very soon woke up and found that the oath of Vithoba has been broken and that his hands are instrumental in doing this.

He was a staunch devotee of Vithoba and was not therefore able to tolerate this disorderly behaviour of his hands. In order therefore to punish his hands he hit them on a sharp instrument and chopped off both his hands. Both the wives of Goroba saw this and felt very sorry to find that their remedy has proved worse than the disease and has recoiled on them. However when both of them started lamenting for what had happened, Goroba consoled them saying that God Pandurang (Vithoba) was their protector and well wisher and that he knew what was good or bad for them. He further told them to wait and chant the name of Pandurang, so that he would do away with all their calamities.

Goroba was a devotee of Vithoba from the bottom of his heart. He did not advise his wives outwardly. He really meant what he spoke. He was passing his days in that condition in perfect contentment. After a few days came Ashadhi Ekadashi. This is a unique day for all the devotees of Pandurang belonging to the Warkari sect. Hence like a true Warkari, Goroba started for Pandharpur and reached that place on the Ekadashi day. He took with him both his wives. No sooner they reached Pandharpur, they took a bath in the sacred Chandrabhaga river and according to the custom paid a visit to the Pundaleek's temple. Thereafter they came to Vithoba's temple and bowed down to him from the main gate thereof.

While they were thus busy in paying homage to Pandurang they heard a song and at once recognised the voice of Saint Namdeo. Yes. It was the voice of Namdeo. He was doing Keertan at the place known as 'Garudpar' near the temple. When an illustrious saint like Namdeo was doing the Keertan, the audience too was of an equally high rank. Most of the saints of that time inclusive of Dnyanadeo Nivrittinath and others were

listening to the Keertan attentively. At certain stage of the Keertan, it is a practise of the Haridas (i. e. the person doing the Keertan) to request the audience to perform bhajan and keep the rhythm by clapping. Similarly while the Keertan was in progress Namdeo requested his audience to sing Bhajan and clap. Goroba, like a true devotee, forgot that his hands were chopped off and moved the stumps of his hands emotionally because of the usual habit and lo! what a surprise? Both his hands grew as before and he was able to sing the bhajan with the rhythm of clapping his hands. When this miracle was seen by the gathering, they were all overwhelmed with joy and they all gave a loud applause. They all were convinced of the true devotion of Goroba on God Pandurang.

Looking at this miracle, Santi repented for blaming god Pandurang on the former occasion when she was sorrow-stricken. She then prayed Pandurang, begged his pardon and requested him to give her child back to her and what a wonder! The child rushed towards Santi, creeping as usual and laughing gaily. Santi hurried to meet the child, lifted it, embraced it and kissed it with emotion. This union of mother and the child was an occasion of joy for everybody and the whole atmosphere became gay. On this happy occasion, Rukmini the wife of Pandurang, reminded Goroba of the oath of his wife and said that the oath was now over and that he should accept both his wives and live happily with them.

CONGREGATION OF SAINTS.

After the above incident, Goroba was fully reconciled with his wives. They also understood him in the proper perspective and never interrupted him in his bhajan. On the other hand, they also joined him occasionally in the bhajan. After some days he decided to call all the saints of his time to his home and hold their congregation. The idea was cherished by his wives and all the saints were called accordingly. Goroba received all the saints,

honoured them, worshipped them and stood them a good feast. Among the saints that had gathered for the occasion, Nivrattinath, Dnyandeo, Sawatamali, Sopandeo, Namdeo, Muktabai, Chokha Mela, Vithoba Khechar etc. were the prominent ones. When they were just chitchating after the feast, Dnyanadeo said, "Goroba you are a potter. Just by a tap you are able to know a baked and unbaked pot. Hence will you please tap the heads of all the saints that have gathered here and let me know your observation?" On this request, Goroba went on tapping the heads of the saints one by one and all of them coolly stood the test. When Goroba came to Namdeo he did not like the idea and said, "What is this queer way of welcoming the guests who have come to your home?" Hearing this query of Namdeo Goroba said, "Yes, here is a pot which is not properly baked."

This remark of Goroba was received by all with great interest, but most of them kept quiet. Muktabai, however could not keep silent. She immediately said, "Goroba, your examination is quite correct." Namdeo, who had the ego that he had achieved a high degree of saintliness, felt hurt at this remark and went to God Vithoba at Pandharpur and complained to him about this remark in spite of his Saintliness. God Vithoba told him that this very feeling of ego was the main defect in him and in order to do away with it he should go to some Guru. The story as told further says that ultimately Namdeo went to Visoba Khechar and bowed down to him. He, in his turn, accepted Namdeo as his disciple and initiated him. After this incident, Namdeo got a very high place in the congregation of the saints of Maharashtra.

This incident has also been narrated at length in the lives of Dnyanadeo and Namdeo, but the venue of the incident is quoted slightly different. In the life of Namdeo this incident is depicted to have taken place in Dnyanadeo Gumphra at Alandi, while as stated above in Goroba's life, it is stated that this incident took place in the house of Goroba, that means at

Terdhoki; but as the incident is narrated in identical manner it must have happened. As regards the difference in the place of the incident, we may say that these lives of the saints were not written during their life time or even within a short time after their death. Their lives have been passed on orally for generations before they were committed to writing and hence such anachronisms might be pardonable in these cases. Anyway this incident shows that Goroba was treated with honour among the saints of his time and the uncle's (Goroba was known as uncle [Kaka] among the contemporary saints) word carried weight in the gathering.

ABHANGAS

In the Sarvasangraha gatha there are only forty three Abhangas in the name of Saint Goroba; but it appears that most of them have not been composed by him. The first test in this case is the language. Dnyanadeo, Namdeo and other contemporaries of Goroba have left lot of literature behind and their language is a sort of a standard for comparison. On comparison of these Abhangas with those of Dnyanadeo or Namdeo, we find that their language is not as old as that of these two authors.

The next consideration is the internal evidence in these Abhangas. We find the mention of saint Kabir and Suradas in these Abhangas. The time of these two saints is definite. Saint Kabir's time is round about Shaka 1520. Surdas was blind from his birth and he lived and composed his book Sursagar in the reign of Akbar (about Shaka 1500). As against this Goroba's time is round about Shaka 1220. Hence the mention of the saints that have been born later cannot come in the Abhangas composed at an earlier date. It is therefore clear that these Abhangas are not composed by Goroba.

After the incident of testing the heads, referred to above Namdeo got angry and some of the Abhangas are composed to

advise and pacify him. Similarly twentyone Abhangas out of the forty three are biographical. In these biographical Abhangas Goroba has been praised a lot. From the aforesaid incidents in the life of Goroba, we will see that he was very umble and free from any sort of ego and it was because of these qualities and his seniority in age that Goroba was requested to test the heads of the saints. It is therefore not possible that such a man will praise himself so highly in his Abhangas. All this evidence goes to prove that the forty three Abhangas that are traditionally supposed to be those of Goroba are not mostly his.

It is perhaps possible that Goroba had really composed a few more Abhangas; but due lack of care, they might have been lost in the years that elapsed. It may also be possible that Goroba was a saintly person of pure and pious behaviour and a staunch and honest devotee of the God. It is not always possible that a staunch devotee will necessarily be a poet. Hence he might not also have composed many Abhangas. Anyway in the absence of any direct evidence, we are left to guessing things and drawing conclusions without any sound base.

The Samadhi of this great sage is at Terdhoki a place which is about fifty miles away from Pandharpur, in the Usmanabad district of Marathwada. There is also a temple near the Samadhi. Unfortunately the exact date of the Samadhi of this sage is not available. There are also no decendents of Goroba now existing in this village. However, the place where he lived and the place, where the incident about trampling of the child took place, are shown even today in the aforesaid village.



कृष्णभक्तशिरोमणि सूरदास

सूर सूर तुलसी शशि, उडुगन केशवदास ।
अब हूँके कवि खद्योतसम जहँ तहँ करत प्रकास ॥

महाकवि सूरदासजी कृष्णभक्तों में अग्रगण्य हैं । वे प्रथम श्रेणीके गायक थे । उन्होने अपने आराध्य श्री कृष्णचंद्रजीके बाल व श्रृंगारिक रूप का जिस तन्मयता व नवीनतासे गुणगान किया है, वह विश्वमें अद्वितीय है । उनकी काव्य प्रतिभाने वात्सल्य रस का सृजन किया जो उनके पहले हिन्दी जगत में अज्ञात ही था । श्रृंगार रस वर्णनमें वे जिस ऊँचाईपर पहुँचे हैं वहाँ तक अभी कोई कवि पहुँच नहीं पाया है । अतः उन्हें अपार काव्य जगत का प्रजापति कहना अनुचित न होगा । आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदीजी सूरकाव्यकी विशेषतायें वर्णन करते हुये अपने हिन्दी साहित्य में लिखते हैं कि, “सूरदास जब अपने प्रिय विषय का वर्णन शुरू करते हैं तो मानों अलंकार शास्त्र हाथ जोड़कर उनके पीछे पीछे दौड़ा करता है । उपमाओंकी बाढ आ जाती है, और रूपायोंकी वर्षा होने लगती है । संगीत के प्रवाह में कवि स्वयं बह जाता है । काव्य मे इस तन्मयता के साथ शास्त्रीय पध्दति का निर्वाह विरल है ।” बाद में उन्होंने इसकी सम्पन्नता एक ऐसी वनस्थली से की है जिसका सौन्दर्य कृत्रिम न होकर स्वाभाविक है ।

ऐसे हमारे महाकवि व कृष्णभक्त शिरोमणि सूरदासजीका जन्मकाल वल्लभ संप्रदायकी मान्यताओंके अनुसार संवत् १५३५ माना जाता है । इनका जन्मस्थान बाद विवाद का विषय रहा है । हरिरामजी के कथनानुसार वे ६ वर्षकी आयुमें घरसे बाहर निकलकर दूर एक तालाब के किनारे पीपल के नीचे बैठ गये । वहाँ वे अठारह वर्ष की आयु तक रहे । इनके ज्योतिष ज्ञानके कारण कई भक्त इकट्ठे होने लगे । अतः वैराग्य में विघ्न पडनेके भयसे वे वहाँसे चुपचाप निकल गये । चमत्कारी और निष्ठावान गायक होनेके कारण लोग इनकी ओर स्वतः आकृष्ट हो जाते थे । मथुराके गौ घाटपर इनका परिचय श्री वल्लभाचार्यजीसे हुआ । वहाँ उन्होंने आचार्य को, “हौ हरि सब पतितनको नायक ” और “प्रभु हौ सब पतितन को टीका ” ये पद सुनाये । आचार्यजीने उनकी दीनता

देखकर प्रबोधित कीया और पुष्टिमार्गमें दीक्षित किया। उन्हे 'भगवत् लीला वर्णनम्' का आदेश दिया। डॉ. हरिवंश लालजी के अनुसार वे उस लोक में पहुँच गये- "जहाँ निःसार होकर भी संसार संसार है। बंधन है पर बाधक नहीं, स्पन्दन है किन्तु हलचल नहीं। वृन्द का अनुभव होता है किन्तु निर्द्वन्द्वता के साथ। भक्तके हृदय के कपाट खुल गये, किन्तु भगवान उसमें बंद हो गये"। लगभग ३२ वर्ष की आयु में दीक्षित होने के बाद सूरदासने गोवर्धन पर्वतपर श्रीनाथजीकी मंदिरमें 'कीर्तन का मंडन' सवैया गाया। यहाँ पर रहकर उन्होंने कृष्णलीला के असंख्य पद रचे। सूर का गोलोकवास सं १६२८ से १६४२ के मध्यतक माना जाता है। अंतकालमें इनकी सभी वृत्तियाँ कृष्णमय हो गई थी।

सूरदासजीने अपने जीवन कालमें कृष्णभक्तिरूपी सरीता प्रवाहित की। उनकी भक्तिभावना, उनकी वाणी व पदोंमें कूटकूटकर भरी है। वे कृष्ण के सगुण रूप के उपासक थे। सगुण भक्ति के नौ प्रकार होते हैं यथा - श्रवण, कीर्तन, स्मरण, पादसेवन, अर्चन, वंदन, दास्य, सख्य व आत्मनिवेदन। यद्यपि उनमें नवविधा भक्ति विद्यमान थी, परन्तु उनकी भक्ति प्रधानतः सख्यभाव की थी। उनकी भक्ति किसी कामना को लेकर नहीं थी। निष्काम भावसे वे कृष्णलीला के पद बना बना कर कीर्तन किया करते थे और अपने आराध्य देव की सेवामें उन्होंने अपने आपको अर्पित कर दिया था। निर्गुण निराकार की उपासना की अपेक्षा वे सगुण साकारकी उपासना श्रेष्ठ मानते थे जिस का उन्होंने अपने पदोंमें उल्लेख किया है —

अविगत गति कछु कहत न आवै ।

ज्यों गूंगे मीठे फलकौ रस अंतरगत ही भावै ॥

जहाँ सगुणोपासनासे परमेश्वरकी प्राप्ति सरल व सुलभ है, वहाँ निर्गुण, निराकारकी उपासना कष्टप्रद व कठिन है। गीतामें भगवान श्रीकृष्णचंद्रजीने सगुण भक्तिको निर्गुणोपासनासे श्रेष्ठ बतलाया है —

"मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ १२-२ ॥"

[अपूर्ण]

दीनानाथ टी. गुप्ता

रेल्वे कार्टर्स नं. आर. बी. २/२५७/५

रेल्वे स्टेशनके सामने जबलपूर (म. प्र.)

BLESSINGS OF SHRI SAI BABA

Who is Baba? A very delicate question and an appealing question which is very very difficult to answer. To describe Baba one needs a lot of potentiality and stream of words. Hearing the very word 'BABA' I am not only thrilled but a kind of love is created within me.

It was I think round about in the year 1955 October when I first brought Shri Shiv Samadhi picture and thereafter in the year 1956 or so my Dady brought a picture of Shri Sai Baba. Seeing Baba's picture a kind of love, loyalty and respect was created in me by which I clapped my hands and my parents were overjoyed and praised me for my innocent attitude. I was too young to distinguish between the material and spiritual life because at that time I was only five years old.

My father is a devotee of Baba and he visits yearly his shrine at Shirdi. Oh yes, now I recollect one small incident that took place during my school days when my Daddy had booked tickets for us to go to 'Baba's shrine at Shirdi but ill-luck befell upon me. I was down with high temperature; even then my daddy proceeded as per his plan leaving me with my sister and my mother. But lo and behold; the day passed into night. I was restless, sleepless and tossing about in the bed. It was, I think mid-night when I saw a Sadhu, clad in robe, sitting close to my bed side with a hand raised, I was about to shout due to fear, but my throat was choked and I soon fell fast asleep. Next day my Mummy was surprised. I was well the next day, my fever had come to normal. So dear readers the description given by me must have made your notion clear. It was no other than our 'Baba'. I was asked by my mother to light a Nanda-deep to our holy Baba. It was my daily work to stand before his photo and to ask for forgiveness for whatever I do. His eyes are my destination. I always take his permission whenever I do anything, whether good or bad. I leave it to Baba, he is there with me and is guiding me in all my daily routine. He

smiles when I do good and gets angry when I do a wrong thing.

Oh! No! dear readers it was not I alone who had such an experience; my daddy too had the similar kind. He was blessed by Baba and brought out from a number of difficult circumstances. My daddy is working as a cost accountant, a middle income man and beside a very holy man. His only say is do your best to others, and harm no one, work hard, blessing will be there.

Prior to the present service my father was working in Poona Mills and he used to join us once in a week, that is, on holidays we were worried about him and he was worried about us. There were often tears when we thought about him. But it was with Baba's grace that after two years or so he got a job in Bombay, our joy knew no bounds. We prayed and thanked God Shri Sai Baba as he heard our prayers, we also offered him what one could. Baba, helped us in many ways, and the most important one was my sister's marriage. My daddy was financially poor. He got no help from the relatives; but it was thought Shri Sai Baba's grace that he got the aid from his office. The Marriage ceremony was simple and decent. Shri Sai Baba helps those who help themselves and this quotation is best referred to by my daddy. He says "Do your best and leave the rest to Almighty Shri Sai Baba he is there. He will do the rest. Shri Sai Baba has helped us in the past and we hope that he helps us in future too. I am now studying in Inter Arts, by his grace and hope that his blessings will always befall upon me, to become a graduate very soon so that I can thank God one day with tears of joy, hoping also to be blessed throughout my life.

Dear readers, with these words I have expressed my full loyalty, respect and obedience to God Shri Sai Baba. He says, "if you look to me, I shall look to you." This is exactly what Shri Baba has done to us, and is doing at present and will do in future also.

Miss Shobhana Rao.

MY EXPERIENCE AT SHIRDI

During my very first visit to Shirdi (in 1964) how I had the good fortune of having Baba's Darshan in live form has been described in my article in Sai Leela (Special 'Experiences' issue-October 72). In this article it is my pleasure to share with co-devotees, how Sai showered His affection on me when I visited Shirdi for the second time.

Round about Diwali 1972 our son became ill and his temperature rose to more than 104° F. It was then that we prayed to Baba to come to our rescue and we also took a vow that we will make a pilgrimage to Shirdi within a year. By Baba's grace our son was soon restored to good health. Due to some reason or the other we could not make a trip to Shirdi. As Diwali 73 was approaching we decided to go there as otherwise the stipulated period of one year would be over. Though we were somewhat afraid of undertaking the long journey with our new born 3 month old baby, we put faith in Baba and reserved the tickets ten days in advance. But the baby started suffering from diarrhoea and to our great concern she would not respond to the best medication. After waiting for 5 days, as there was no improvement in her condition, I had to cancel the reservations reluctantly and with a heavy heart. Miraculously however, purgings stopped within a couple of days. I once again booked the tickets for the same date and due to Sai's grace we not only had a very comfortable journey to and from Shirdi but also spent the happiest three nights at Shirdi. How much peace of mind we gained there, is not easy to describe


We reached Shirdi on Tuesday. On Wednesday night before I retired, I prayed to Baba that He should enable me to wake up at 4 A. M. (Thursday) so that I may finish bath etc., and get

ready to go to Samadhi Mandir before 5 A. M. in order to participate in Kakad Arati and Abhishek to Baba's Samadhi. I had most peaceful sleep and I was in deep slumber when all of a sudden I felt somebody's hand pushing my back and made me sit up on the bed. I was amazed and got up from the bed and put on the light. My wife and children were in deep sleep. Then lo! The temple bell struck four!! I checked up my watch and it was exactly 4 A. M. to the minute!!! Who else other than Baba could have waked me up? This experience of mine proved conclusively that, if we sincerely pray and surrender to Him, Baba will personally come down to render any kind of help to devotees. If the readers recall my earlier article, this is the author's second experience to the effect that Baba gives His Darshan in physical form to His devotees even now, 55 years after Maha-Samadhi.

As a further shower of His affection on us, Baba enabled us to secure the very first ticket for Abhishek, that is, we were the first to perform Abhishek and Archanana to Baba's Samadhi on Diwali day. On that night we had the good fortune to participate in Palki Seva (i. e., carrying Baba's Padukas and Satka in a palanquin from Samadhi Mandir to Chavdi and back). It was a wonderful sight to see some young men dancing with ecstasy in Dwaraka Mayi.

I consider myself to be very fortunate that Baba has been showering His most loving grace on me continually.

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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:-

1. Shri Sai Sat Charita (Marathi)	Rs. 8,00
2. Shri Sai Sat Charita (English)	Rs. 5.00
3. Shri Sai Sat Charita (Gujrati)	Rs. 4,50
4. Shri Sai Sat Charita (Hindi)	Rs. 4,25
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6. Shri Sai Baba Jeevitacharitam (Telugu)	Rs. 8,00
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16. 'Shri Sai Leela' Monthly (Marathi or English)	
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17. Mulanche Sai Baba (Marathi)	Rs 0,50

Available at :- 1. Receiver, Shri Sai Baba Sansthan,
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2. Sai Niketan, 804-B, Dr. Ambedkar Rd,
Dadar, Bombay - 400 014.