



SAI LEELA



Tiger gets Salvation



SHRI SAI LEELA

DECEMBER 1974

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Picture on the Cover Page

One "Darveshi" was moving from place to place with his tiger. This tiger became mad and started attacking everybody. The Darveshi came to Shri Sai Baba with his tiger. The tiger was chained; but Baba told the Darveshi to release it. When the tiger came to Baba he patted it on the back. The tiger bowed down before Baba and breathed his last. The tiger thus got salvation at the hands of Shri Sai Baba.

SHRI SAI LEELA

(Official Organ of Shirdi Sansthan)



VOLUME 53

DECEMBER 1974

No. 9

Kingdom of Salvation

Mahatma Gandhi bore witness to the ideal of compassion and sacrifice "I am striving", he said, "for the Kingdom of Salvation which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation is through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. I want to live at peace with friend and foe."

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Annual Subscription Rs. 6.00

Single Copy Rs 0.60

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EDITORIAL

Shri Datta

The Hindu religion recognises quite a number of gods. Some are confined to certain regions, while some are confined to certain communities or sects. Certain gods are worshipped only in certain areas, while gods like Khandoba or Mhasoba are not commonly worshipped by all; they are worshipped only by certain castes; but barring these exceptions, there are a number of gods like, Vithal, Rama, Krishna, Shankar, Datta, Vishnu and goddesses like Laxmi, Gauri, Saraswati and Bhavani, which are commonly worshipped by all Hindus. The birth-days of some gods are celebrated publicly every year. The Jayanti (birth-date) of Rama is known as Ramanavami, the birthday of Krishna is known as Janmashtami while the birthday of god Datta is known as Datta Jayanti and it is celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Margasheersha. This year, Datta Jayanti falls on the 28th instant and all the devotees will be celebrating it on that day.

In order to protect the world from time to time and to kill the sinful, who oppressed the earth, Lord Vishnu is supposed to have taken a birth in different forms. These incarnations of Lord Vishnu are ten in number and they are commonly known as "Dashawatar". Though the very popular gods, Rama and Krishna, are having their place in these ten incarnations, Datta does not directly get a place there, though he is also known to be an incarnation of lord Vishnu.

Though the devotees of god Datta consider their god as omnipotent, omniscient and having neither beginning nor end, still the history of this deity is not older than two thousand years.

In Mahabharat we find the mention of Shri Datta, In many of the Puranas also we find the mention of fragments of the life of this deity; but we do not come across the complete life of god Datta in any of these books. However, we can gather the following information about Shri. Datta from the Puranas:-

Shri. Datta is the son of the great sage Atri and his wife Anasuya. For getting a son, this sage performed severe penance on the Trykshakula mountain. Being satisfied with the austere penance, the three gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva appeared before Atri & asked him about the reason of the penance. On knowing the cause of the penance, all the three gods agreed to be born as his son. Accordingly, because of the grace of Brahma, the moon was born to Anasuya. Due to Vishnu's favour, Datta was born and Durvas was born to her because of the favour of God Shiv (Lord Shankar)

At present, Datta Guru is depicted as having three heads, six hands and only two feet. Behind him is shown the cow and round about him are four dogs; but this was not the original form of this god. In five Upanishads, which were composed prior to 1000 A. D., we find the mention of god Datta; but nowhere he is mentioned as having three heads. The first clear mention of the three heads is seen in the "Gurucharitra". Changadeo Raul, who lived in the twelfth century, was a devotee of Datta and the idol of Datta at Mahur, which he worshipped, is having only one head and two hands. It therefore appears that during the hundred or two hundred years, that followed 1200 A. D. god Datta came to have these three heads and six hands. In the Agnipurana, god Datta is described to have only one head and two hands. The devotees of Datta who belong to the Mahanubhava sect also describe this God as having one head and two hands. A number of other modern devotees like Dasopant, Niranjan, Raghunath, have described lord Datta as having only one head, but at the same time, having six hands. Yogiraj Vasudevanand Saraswati,

whose life-sketch is being published serially in this magazine, was a great devotee of lord Datta. He also described lord Datta as having only one head and two hands.

In the Brahmapuran, it is stated that as per the orders of sage Atri, his father, god Datta prayed Shankar on the banks of river Gautami and obtained the knowledge of Brahma from him. Because god Shankar is called Adinath in the Nath sect and because Datta called god Shankar as his Guru, hence Datta came to assume importance in the Nath sect also.

Apart from God Shankar, Datta is said to have adopted twenty-four Gurus. In the Bhagwat composed by saint Eknath, these gurus have been described in minute details.

After obtaining the knowledge of Yoga and Brahma from god Shankar, god Datta is said to have put up an Ashram in Prayagwan near Sinhachala. God Datta is not supposed to be stationary at one place. He is always on his legs and is fond of wandering from place to place. He is thus called "Sanchari" in Sanskrit. Mahur, Panchaleshwar and Kolhapur are the main three places connected with god Datta. The oldest of these three places is Mahur and it is supposed to be the place of rest at night of god Datta. It is also belived that he takes his bath at Panchaleshwar and begs alms at Kolhapur.

God Datta is supposed to have reincarnated sixteen times for different reasons. In his book written in Sanskrit (Shree Dattatray-Shodashavataarah), Shri. Vasudevanand Saraswati has narrated in detail the stories of all these incarnations. Shri. Shreepad Shree Wallabh, Shri. Narsinha Saraswati are the incarnations of god Datta in recent years. The Swami Maharaj of Akkalkot and Shri Manik Prabhu are also considered as the incarnations of Shri. Datta.

The cow and the dogs that are usually seen along with

Datta have been interpreted to have different significance by different devotees. One opinion says that the cow is the symbol of the earth and the four dogs represent the four vedas. All the four vedas followed Lord Datta like a dog, is supposed to have been suggested by the presence of the dogs in that picture. There is another opinion that the brahmins following the Vedas and the sages who composed the Vedas, do not both consider dog as a sacred animal and hence the presence of these animals indicates that this deity may be a non-Aryan one; but considering the modern view about showing sympathy towards all living beings and taking pity on them, we may say that god Datta preaches love, pity and sympathy towards all living beings even though they may be quite insignificant.

The devotees of god Datta consider the tree known as Audumbar quite sacred because there is a belief that this God stays at the foot of that tree. The book known as Gurucharitra is very popular among the devotees of Datta and very often they observe the Saptaha (reading the whole book in seven days) of that book. In cities, there is no facility of having the Audumbar tree nearby, but in the villages where there are Audumbar trees, the reading of Guruchaitra under this tree is supposed to give you added merit. Why the tree of Audumber came to acquire so much importance among the followers of god Datta can be traced to the historic stay of Shri. Narsinha Saraswati for four months under this tree at Bhilavdi, near Miraj, in South Maharashtra.

As mentioned before, the three places viz. Mahur, Panchaleshwar, and Kolhapur are considered very sacred by the devotees of Datta as the god is believed to be staying there, but in addition to these places a few more places are also considered to be sacred by the devotees of god Datta as the incarnations (Awatar) of Datta have purified these places by their stay. Shri. Shripad Shree Vallabh and Shree Narsinha Saraswati,- these two recent incarnations of Datta- stayed at Audumbar, Narsoba-wadi and

Ganagapur in South Maharashtra and hence these places came into importance and are considered sacred by the devotees of Shri, Datta. Manik Prabhu and the Swami Maharaj of Akkalkot are also believed to be the incarnations of God Datta. Shri. Janardan Swami, Shri. Eknath Maharaj, Dasopant and Vasudevanand Saraswati made lot of efforts to spread the worship and faith in this Deity in recent years and because of them, the number of devotees of god Datta has increased in Maharashtra.

Girnar in Gujrat state is also a sacred place of worship for the Datta devotees. There is a Datta temple on a peak in the Girnar mountain near Junagad. This is a very old sanctuary famous throughout Gujrat state and it is a very good example of the spread of the worship of Lord Datta at far off places through the medium of the Nath sect.

Shri. Sai Baba is also considered by some devotees as an incarnation of God. Datta. In the Datta Sect, the Thursday is a day of special worship of god Datta and even today it is observed as a special day of worship at Shirdi. During the life-time of Shri Sai Baba, a procession with all pomp and splendour used to be taken out from Dwarkamai and it used to go to the Chawdi every Thursday. Shri Sai Baba was an incarnation of God. He was seen by different people in the form of their favourite deity or their Guru. For the devotees of Datta, he was, therefore, an incarnation of Datta. Because Shri. Sai Baba always insisted on everybody to meditate on his own favourite god, and he did not like to distinguish between god and god, hence on the coming Datta Jayanti let us all bow down to God Datta and at the same time to Shri. Sai Baba as his incarnation.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By :- Swami Chinmayananda

Hindu Socialism

Krishna rightly warns here against those who try to misappropriate the profits created by the common endeavour of all, when all have served in a spirit of **Yagna**. He says, (III-12) **"The Devas cherished by the Yagna-Spirit will bring to you all your desired-for objects. So he who enjoys objects given by the Devas without offering to them is indeed a thief.**

Nature blesses every truly co-operative endeavour with complete fulfilment and rewarding success when it is selfless and desireless. All such communal profits and successes are really gifts from Nature —blessings of the **Devas**. when any profit accrued thus as a result of the total dedicated efforts of the many is misappropriated by a man (*tairdattan apradayebhyo yo bhunkte*) then he is verily a thief (*stena eva sah*). No single member of a team has the right for even a "larger" share in the total wealth created out of the team's dedicated co-operative efforts. He who misappropriates, he is a looter, a common thief, degrading disgusting, despicable. Equal distribution is the Krishna-ideal.

Hindu Socialism stems forth from the recognition of the Supreme Divinity that is at once the core of all and transcends the universe of name and forms. It is the Infinite Factor whose multiple expressions that constitute this wide universe and so all must live a healthy life of mutual love, consideration and charity. The community is sure to succeed in progress and welfare when it has learned to live and strive as one entity, as a single unit in essence. The more the tensions among members, the more gross becomes each separate ego and, thereafter, each in

his selfishness cheats, loots, misappropriates, arrogates that which belongs to all. Soon disparity in wealth is brought about...from then on growth of class and classbickerings, race and racial problems, national and international pulls and counter-pulls come into play. Peace is broken easily and readily first in the hearts of people, then within the community, immediately followed by national disintegration and international wars.

According to the Hindus, the entire universe is a House and all creatures belong to it. In brotherly love, striving together gather the profits and distribute them equally to all not according to needs -- it is a blind and ready equity in distribution. Some are "producer"; the many are "consumers" in any community, in any period of history. Few create wealth many are there to share, and share they must **equally**. Together produce, together enjoy.

One may wonder if this is just. we may ask, "why should then the few produce? what benefit do they derive for their extra exertions?" Our scriptures answer very reasonably that theirs is the privilege of feeling happy that by the Lord's Grace they have the extra ability to produce and serve all others who have not this capacity. The Industrial Organiser, The Scientific Research Scholar, the Agricultural Producer etc. are privileged--they are the few who have the extra knowledge and ability to serve a larger number of their brethren.

Again, (III-13) "**The good eating the 'remnant of Yagna' are freed from all sins, but those who cook for themselves are sinful ones, eating but sin.**" The verse is a typical example of the veiled language of all scriptures. The mataphor of the **Yagna** ritual is continued. In a religious ritual "what is left over" after the worship at the altar (**Prasad**) is called in Vedic literature as **Yagna-shishtam**. This is distributed to all as "communion" This is equally distributed to all who are present in the sacred hall, during the auspicious function.

Krishna using this term says, "the good eat the **remnant of Yagna**" meaning the healthy members of a dynamic society producing and progressing under the irresistible dash of their togetherness, each receives, "what is left over", from the **Yagna** --- "**Yagna**" meaning the co-operative endeavour undertaken with a spirit of selfless dedication, and without any selfish desires.

Such persons who serve the society with all their abilities (yagnashishtashinah santah) "are freed from all sins" (muchyante sarvakilbishaih). They have no more any obligations in life --- they are not indebted to society --- they are not thieves in the community. When actions --- obligatory duties (niyata Karma) --- are undertaken without ego and ego-centric desires, the existing **Vasanas** are exhausted and no new **Vasanas** are created. To live this in society is Hindu Socialism.

Each is to strive hard, sincerely, producing as much as he can for the welfare of all, and himself to receive from the society only his humble share (yagnashishtam). He who thus gives and enjoys upon his share in the community has no more any obligations : he is free to enjoy his share. This is Hindu Socialism based upon the guidance for the evolution of man to God-hood.

"Those who cook for themselves" (ye pachantyatmakaranat), meaning those who organise and run productive centres for their own personal gains, this, of course, includes all activities springing from selfish motives, activities catering to the aggrandisement of wealth and power. Such persons who are cooking for themselves (ye pachantyatmakaranat) are described here by Krishna as "sinners eating but sin" (Bhunjante te tvagham papah). In spiritual science people who act in the world with ego and ego-centric desires gather to themselves more and more "sins" --- meaning, negative **Vasanas**, which will rake up future restlessness, mental worries, regrets and anxieties.

Hindu Socialism is thus preached to the Hindu Prince by the Lord in these four simple-looking verses.

(Courtesy : Geeta Office, Powai)

YOGIRAJ VASUDEVANANDA SARASWATI

(A Biography)

(continued from November 1974 issue)

By :- Shri S. N. Huddar

Vadi Person,s Resistance at Dinner

Being distressed due to difficulties, priests of Vadi had come to Pawani. Once at the time of dinner the priests said, "Unless swamiji agrees to come to Vadi to remove our difficulties we cannot accept food today and instead of going to Vadi we shall go anywhere else. "Swamiji requested Shri Datta, who told, "After completing Chaturmas go to Vadi." Swamiji told this to the priests and then they had meals.

While reading Bhashya, Swamiji had samadhi and he said loudly "what is to be done after going to Vadi bazar?" Swami Maharaj looked red with anger.

Ukidve of sawantwadi asked Swamiji to do Swahakar of 'Dwisahashri'. He had seen a dream in this respect. He told this to Subjudge. He offered his full cooperation for this function. Swami Maharaj informed him "Swahakar is to be made of volumes of Rishis (i. e. आर्षग्रंथ) and not of one written by a human being. Then how can I allow you to do Swahakar of 'Gurucharitra,' the authorship of which also cannot be claimed by me. Narayan."

At Pawani many sacrifices as Laghu Rudra, Maha-Rudra, Feeding of thousands etc. were celebrated. Bhajan, Kirtan, Puran, Parayan (reading a volume in a week or less number of days) were arranged. Shastri, Puranik, Hardas were liberally paid for their services. Huge amounts were received, most of which were spent as stated above, some was reserved for Vadi Festivals and the balance, was spent in purchasing. Sadis, khan,

dhoti etc. and they were distributed amongst the Brahmin couples.

On Bhadrapad Purnima, Swami Maharaj started for "simollanghan". He was seated on a boat decorated with flowers and taken to the other side of Vainganga. He was worshipped. Then he read 11th chapter of Geeta. After Arati and mantrapushpa, Swami Maharaj distributed prasad to all. About 15000 persons had gathered this time. Next day Vithalrao Kalikar did Brahmin samaradhana and offered alms to Swami Maharaj. After this swami Maharaj distributed prasad and gave his blessings and proceeded to Bori.

Shar Bhang Ashram Mahur

After Swamiji's departure Plague infested Pawani and took away many lives. On the request of Gandabua, swami Maharaj agreed to go via Mahur. Fifteen miles from Mahur, there is an Ashram of sharbhang Rishi. Near the Ashram there an Unakeshwar mandir and two tanks, one of hot water and the other of cold water. It is said that these tanks were created by Shri Ram by throwing arrows. Sharbhang Rishi was relieved from Leprosy by bathing in these tanks. Swami Maharaj bathed at Matri Teerth, at Mahur, took darshan of Renukamata, Shri Datta and Atri-Anasuya on the Mahur hill and then came down to Fulsingi village.

Swami Maharaj was told by Shri Datta here that he should proceed Northwards instead of going to Vadi. Swamiji did not act as asked. He had therefore sciatic trouble due to which he could not even stand and walk. He prayed Shree Datta, "The priests of Vadi were assured of my going to Vadi by you. So I must go there, whatever befall on me. If you don't agree you can do whatever you wish of this body. But breaking of promise is not fair." In the very condition he walked 16miles. Swami Maharaj, had high fever. After 25 days Shri Datta said,

“If you do not obey me, you will be served with a warrant as you proceed beyond Godavary.”

Hingoli

Swami Maharaj reached Hingoli in Kartik. There were many disciples here. He then went to Ajegaon. Krishnarao Deshmukh's villages were confiscated by the Nizam Govt. Krishnarao narrated this to Swami Maharaj, who asked him to do anusthan of Shri Datta Malamantra. Krishnarao did this through some best Vedic Brahmins. A European officer released the villages and delivered them to Krishnarao.

Krishnarao's son Shankarrao was affected by tuberculosis. The Physician declared his case fatal. Swami Maharaj asked him to take 'Sitopaladi and some other medicines and also practise 'Dhouti' Within 3-4 months he was cured.

Once Gulabrao Maharaj of Amraoti sent a message to Swami Maharaj that he intended to come to see him. Swamiji informed him, “We have love at heart for each other. No necessity of coming to me”. Gulabrao Maharaj belonged to Sakhi Sampradaya in which God is treated as husband by a devotee who wears woman's Sadi and ornaments. Swamiji did not like to see a male devotee in female dress.

Ranapur

Swami Maharaj came to Ranapur accompanied by many devotees. Shri Datta jayanti was observed here. Some Brahmins had left Vadi due to harassment by non-Brahmins. Some such distressed Brahmins met Swami Maharaj here. He told them to recite a mantra with devotion. After doing this the non-Brahmins struggled amongst themselves, the leaders were arrested and sentenced.

Drowned man made alive

Swami Maharaj proceeded further and reached Gangamasla on the Godavary. Swamiji warned all the persons not to enter the river. In spite of this some persons took bath. One of them was drowned. His body was taken out of the river. When Swamiji knew this, he sprinkled on him the water from his bowl. The person started respiration and after some time came to senses. All were astonished to see this miracle.

Now the warrant was served on Swamiji as told by Shri Datta. This means Swamiji began to pass blood in motion due to dysentery. Even in this state, Swamiji came to Barsi, took darshan of Ambarish Varad and Shri Bhagwant and proceeded further. He reached Pandharpur on Makar Sankrant. He bathed in Chandrabhaga and took darshan of Shri Pandurang.

Swamiji Entered Vadi in Procession

From here, he proceeded to Vadi. This news had reached Vadi and many persons including Dikshit Swami, with Music parties, came to receive Swami Maharaj. When Swamiji reached this place, all bowed to him. After bath and dinner, they all started with music and reached Vadi in the evening on Poush Shuddha-13.

Sanhita Swahakar

Swami Maharaj stayed in the Brahmananda Math. After Arati all bowed to Swami Maharaj. 'Sanhita Swahakar' was proceeded by Vedic Brahmins with the permission of Swamiji. The balance of the amount received at Pawani was spent for this sacrifice. Thousands of persons were fed and the Brahmins received good dakshina.

Vasudeo Shastri Dhoopkar of Goa had been here. He did Kirtan on “दृष्टान्तो नैव दृष्टः—” and “सगुरु वाचोनि सांपडेना सोय” and Swamiji was much pleased.

An Officer Cured of Dysentry

An officer of Baroda had come here as he was very sick. He was first asked to go to Nasik with Gandabua. He could not get leave then and the result was that his wife died and he lost his services. He was suffering from Dysentry and was passing about 2 seers of cough daily.

Hearing his account Swamiji asked him to do Maha Rudra Abhishek on Paduka and told Gandabua to give him medicine. Gandabua asked him to take butter-milk mixed with chitrak root paste with rice. After doing this for some days, he was cured and later on he joined his service.

TRANSFORMATION OF A GIRL INTO A BOY

A clerk, residing at Satara, was a devotee of swamiji. He and his wife served God and hoped to have a good son. They had a daughter who had no genetic organ, when she grew up she was married. But she began to feel that she was a male and not a female. She was taken to miraj and was operated and proved to be a male. The parents with the son came to see Swami Maharaj, who asked them to do all the rituals before the thread ceremony and also performed his munj (thread ceremony). Later he was married.

What can Angara Do?

Datta Shastri Bawdekar expressed doubt about the efficacy of Angara (Bhasma, Vibhuti). Swami Maharaj said, “It does not become you to say this.” Datta Shastri had severe pain in the

Stomach in the night. Swamiji said, "that was the result of his expressing doubt regarding angara and also said that now take angara and you would be relieved. He begged pardon and took the angara and his pain vanished.

Bavadekarbua lived at Akkalkot. A shastri of Shringeri came there and said to Bavadekar, "Instead of living with this mad person, come to Shringeri to learn shastra. "When he slept closing the door from inside, Swami Samarth of Akkalkot entered his room as the door opened at the touch of Swamiji's hand. He looked so bright that Bavdekar could not look at him. Swamiji asked him in Sanskrit, "when are you going to learn Sanskrit? Have these shastris controlled passions?" So saying he disappeared. Bavadekar repented and Swami Samarth gave him some toys which he kept with his God of worship.

Datta Maharaj of Ashta

Narahari Diwan (8th generation of Eknath from maternal side) of Vathar came to Vadi and lived with Swami Maharaj. When Maharaj left Vadi, he went to Gangapur. He had Shri Datta darshan in dream. He took mantropdesh from Harihar Maharaj of Pandharpur. After taking Sanyas, he was called Vasudevananda Saraswati. Harihar Maharaj was a gurubandhu of Swami Maharaj.

Harihar Maharaj asked Narahari to study Yoga from Swami Maharaj. Swamiji gave him instructions in Yoga and asked him to be at Paithan and practise Yoga. When at Paithan, one Agnihotri asked him to learn Sanskrit from him. When he met Swami Maharaj again he asked him. "Who told you to learn Snskrit? You do as directed by me and attain Mukti." Hereafter he concentrated his mind on Yoga. He visited holy places on foot. He read Swamiji's 'Datta purana' and 'Datta Mahatmya'. Later on he was known as Datta Maharaj of Ashta. It is near Sangli where he had his samadhi.

Child becomes Alive

While at Tanjavar, many persons came to see Swami Maharaj. A woman placed her dead child, covered by clothes, in a corner and stood at a distance. When Swamiji knew this, he said, "The child is not dead. Mother might have gone somewhere. Apply this Bhasma to the body of the child." After applying the Bhasma, the child began to cry. Mother came and took it away. She said, "I have lost my two sons and hence I placed this child here."

Leprosy cured

One person named Maratha had witnessed this and so he lived with Swamiji to get relief from Leprosy. Swamiji asked him to rub sand to his body and bathe in the Krishna Panch Ganga Sangam. By doing this his body looked better and after 6 months Swamiji looked at him and blessed him. Then his fingers also became quite normal.

How cholera will be wiped off by Abhishek?

Cholera was spreading at Vadi. There were two fatal cases. People requested Swamiji to do something. Swami Maharaj asked to have Abhishek on Shri Datta Paduka. Some one asked, "How will cholera be wiped off by Abhishek." Swamiji explained, "Plague, cholera etc. are shaktis of God of Death. If the God of death is cooled by Abhishek these Shakti's will also be cooled."

Hearing this Maharudra Abhishek was started and the cholera was wiped off.

Swamiji Brings Angara of Kashi & Rameshwar

Swamiji went for bath on the sangam. He took a long dip. After much time when he came up he brought in his hands dry angara and told people that he had been to Kashi and

Rameshwar and had brought angara from there, hence he took so much time.

Departed from Vadi

On Vaishakh Purnima Shri Datta asked Swami Maharaj how long he would live in Vadi. Swamiji said that he did not wish to live any more. When Adesh is given he would leave Vadi. After two days he was asked to go to Shrinagar. Swamiji did not disclose this to anybody. He gave his books to Gandabua. After alms he took Dand-Kamandalu and came for the darshan of Shri Datta, went beyond Panchganga and stayed at Eksambe. Knowing this, all including Dikshit Swami went to Eksambe and said to Swami Maharaj that they expected that the chaturmas would be observed at Vadi that year. Swamiji said, "I have started at the Adesh of Shri Datta. You all serve God, be united, give up vices, I shall come again."

Passing by Takali Belgaum, he reached Gurlhosur. He stayed at Chidambarnath mandir on the request of Kaivalyashram Swami of Dharwar. Vadi persons had come here to see Swami Maharaj, who gave them भूत प्रेत पिशाच stotra and told them to recite that daily thrice after bath with purity. There would be no disease after reciting the stotra.

Dharwar

Swamiji then came to Dharwar and stayed at the Datta Mandir. Swamiji told Gandabua that he would not be able to complete one lakh jap of Gayatri, as asked by Shri Datta to him, due to crowds of persons here. So he should go to Bharoach and feed Brahmins after completion of the jap Dhundirajbua Kavishwar of Vadi lived with devotion taking dry alms. Swamiji asked him to be a Grahasthashrami and do Parmarth. Besides he was asked to do an anusthan of a Mantra. He read Purana and gave sermons on religion.

(Continued on page 25)

SAINT CHOKHA MELA

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

The Hindu religion observes the caste system very scrupulously. Persons belonging to different castes are proud of their own caste. They do not usually have a feeling of respect for other castes because they think that their caste is the most superior in all the castes. These circumstances have given rise to a feeling of suspicion and hatred, to a certain extent, in the minds of the Hindus at large, for other's caste, but in spite of this, the Hindu Society has given recognition to good and the pious behaviour, to the staunch devotion to God and to the benevolent nature of a person irrespective of his caste and creed. It is because of this that persons belonging to the so-called low castes of potter, gardener, tailor and shoe-maker, have risen to the rank of sainthood in the Hindu Society. CHOKHA MELA, who belonged to the "Mahar" (now called Harijan) caste, could get a place of honour in the galaxy of the Hindu saints because of this tolerant nature of the Hindu society.

As in the case of many other saints, the exact date of birth and the place of birth of Chokha Mela is not known. Mahipati, who has sketched the biographies of many Maharashtrian saints, has mentioned Pandharpur as the birth place of this saint. Shri. V. L. Bhave, who was a research scholar of old Marathi literature, refers to Mangalwedhe town as the birth place of Chokha Mela, while Dr. Ambedkar has expressed his opinion that Chokha Mela was born somewhere in Berar (Vidarbha).

Even if so many diverse opinions might have been expressed about the birth place of Chokha mela, still there is an agreement among all, about this fact that he was a contemporary of Dnyaneshwar, Namdeo, Gora Kumdhar and Savta Mali. All

these saints lived in the second half of the Thirteenth century of the Christian Era. The year of Samadhi of Chokha Mela is stated as Shaka 1260 (1338 A. D.) and hence if we consider his life-span as sixty-eight years or so, we may fix up the year of his birth as round about 1270 A. D.

Due to our general apathy towards maintenance of records and the tradition established by our authors of the Sanskrit books and kept up by the Marathi authors of the historical age, Chokhoba (as Chokha Mela was usually known among contemporary saints) also has written very little about himself. It is therefore not possible to give a consistent history of the childhood, early life and the family history of this saint; but from whatever little information is available, we know that though Chokhoba was a Harijan by caste, still he had great liking for cleanliness. His house, though humble, was kept quite clean. Everyday in the morning he used to perform all his duties and then have a bath. At midday he would worship God Vithoba with great devotion and then take his food. Though the people of his caste were allowed to eat non-vegetarian food, still Chokhoba never touched it. He was a perfect vegetarian, eating simple food. His clean and simple living, modest behaviour and staunch devotion to God attracted all the saints of his time to Chokhoba and though they all belonged to the so-called higher communities, they never hesitated even to take food at his place. While writing about Chokhoba, Eknath had particularly mentioned this fact about him.

After attaining youth, Chokhoba started on a pilgrimage in order to achieve peace of mind, which he could not get since his childhood, being addicted to the God. He thought that as per the custom of his time, the pilgrimage of the holy places will be able to bestow upon him the peace of mind; but he could not achieve it. From his childhood, he had a special attraction for lord Vithal of Pandharpur and therefore whenever he used to meet any devotee of the Warkari sect, he was attracted

towards him. He would give him special respect and used to bow down to him, thinking that a devotee of Vithal was as dear to him as the God Himself. So, after visiting all the holy places in his reach, he came to Pandharpur and no sooner than he saw God Vithal, he felt that this was the moment for which he had been waiting in his life for a long time. Ultimately, he forgot his separate existence and became one with God and he said to himself that he had found what he had longed for so long a time in his life. He forgot all his worries with the Darshan of god Vithal and his mind became full to the brim by nothing else but unblended joy and peace. After this first experience at Pandharpur, Chokhoba became a confirmed devotee of God Vithal and from that time started his regular visit to Pandharpur on the Ekadashi day every year in the months of Ashadha and Kartik.

Observance of untouchability is a very bad curse on the Hindu religion. Mahatma Fule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and others tried hard to remove this blot on the Hindu religion. Due to the strenuous efforts of these great personalities, Bharat has passed, after getting independence an Act removing untouchability at all levels; but in spite of the Act, we hear reports in the newspapers how it is still fostered in the villages. From this state of affairs even today, we have to imagine what must be the conditions prevailing some seven centuries ago when orthodoxy was ruling the whole country. Hence Chokhoba, who was a staunch devotee of the Vithoba of Pandharpur, was not allowed to enter the Vithoba temple because of his caste. Chokhoba, who had accepted the current traditions of the society in which he lived, never grumbled about this and always remained satisfied with seeing the idol of Vithoba only from a distance.

The Pujaris of the Vithoba temple never allowed Chokhoba to cross the door of the temple and Chokhoba also never tried to transgress his limits and force his entry into the temple. However,

God Vithoba did not like to keep this ardent devotee out of the temple. Hence when Chokhoba had once come to the temple for Darshan, God Vithoba wanted to acknowledge Chokhoba's faithful devotion to Him. He, therefore, called him inside the temple and allowed him to touch His feet. He also gave him his own diamond necklace as his blessing (Prasad) and put it round Chokhoba's neck. Because of this incident Chokhoba was never elated nor was he proud that God Vithoba gave him Darshan and his necklace. In fact he was not at all conscious that he had the diamond necklace with him. Chokhoba, as usual, left the temple and was resting under a tree before setting out for his village. In the meanwhile the Badawas (Pujaris of the Vithoba temple are known by this name) who came to the temple, found that the necklace of the God was missing. A search was immediately started all around the city and the necklace was found round the neck of Chokhoba. The Badawas suspected that Chokhoba had stolen the necklace and they started thrashing him, considering him to be a thief. In one "Abhanga" written in relation to this incident, Chokhoba has pathetically prayed to God Vithoba as follows. "Oh! God Vithoba, run fast to the rescue of your devotee. Do not be slow in your movement. These Badawas are beating me hard and I do not think that I will survive unless you rescue me. They are charging me with the theft of your necklace; but I am quite innocent as you know fully well. So, Oh God! Come to my rescue early." It is said that God Vithoba expected all this trouble and the marks of the beating given to Chokhoba became visible on the back of Vithoba's idol and the thrashing had no effect whatsoever on Chokhoba's back. The Badawas were then convinced of Chokhoba's innocence and they stopped thrashing him. They were, however, so greedy that they were not prepared to leave the necklace and snatched it away from him. Chokhoba was so much devoted to God that his intellect had become steady and to him Gold and Earth were alike. Hence he was not at all sorry to part with the necklace. He, on the other hand, thought that the future calamity of this

type would be averted by giving away the necklace.

Unlike other saints, Chokhoba was lucky in having a wife, who also was devoted to God. She always stood by him and joined him in his worship and Bhajan of god. Other saints like Namdeo, Goroba, Tukaram etc. were not so lucky to have wives who co-operated with them and hence they had to take great pains in passifying and convincing them; but the wife of Chokha Mela was not only a devotee but she was also composing "Abhangas". The Abhangas of Soyrabai, the wife of Chokha Mela, are meant for giving advice to other ladies who were junior and senior to her. Her "Abhangas" are simple and appealing.

Chokha Mela was also composing "Abhangas". In the Gatha, there are nearly three hundred and fifty Abhangas, supposed to be written by him. After examining their language, contents, etc., we find that a few of them might have been inserted by other people under Chokhoba's name. Still a majority of them appear to be written by Chokhoba himself. The language of his Abhangas is very simple and sweet. They are also full of affection for God. From these Abhangas we find that Chokhoba was not only literate; but he appears to have acquired lot of knowledge by conversing with elderly people and learned people of his time. According to the custom of his time, he must have also been listening to the Puranas and Keertans of learned Brahmins that were being held in almost all the temples. Chokhoba appears to be very well conversant with Dnyaneshwari and it might be natural as the author of that book was his contemporary and a close friend. On a close study of the Abhangas of Chokha Mela, we find in them many parallels to Dnyaneshwari. A number of similies that we come across in the Abhangas appear to have been picked up directly from Dnyaneshwari. The flow of language in the Abhangas is quite natural and easy. It does not indicate any strain on the part of the author. The philosophy

and thoughts embodied in the Abhangas are of a high degree. They indicate clearly the knowledge acquired by Chokhoba.

Chokha Mela had no issue for a long time. Though he and his wife were running a household, still they were devotees of God and as such they were leading a life wherein the attachment to worldly life played a very little part, but in spite of this, as is natural for a lady, Soyarabai, Chokhoba's wife, sometimes longed for a son and God Vithoba decided to fulfil her desire. Once the God came to their house in the form of an old Brahmin and asked for food. When Soyarabai saw a Brahmin at her door, she told him that they were Harijans and hence it would not be proper for her to offer food to a person like a brahmin belonging to the superior caste. The Brahmin however insisted on having the food. Hence she reluctantly gave him the rice, that was in her house. After eating the rice hurriedly the God asked Soyarabai as to what was her wish. She said that they were satisfied with their lot as they thought that it was the wish of God. However as he was asking for her wish, she said that in her house there was no son and hence she would like to have one. God then told her to eat the remnant of the rice and that on doing that her wish would come true. Soyarabai was a lady who was keeping full faith in the words of brahmins and sages. So she did as directed by the old Brahmin, not knowing that he was none else than God Vithoba, and according to the blessings of the old brahmin, she got a son.

Because of his staunch devotion to God Vithal, it is said that, God used to give Darshan to Chokhoba, in human form. He used to talk with Chokhoba and used to ask him about his difficulties. Like Gora Kumbhar, Chokhoba also used to command great respect among the saints of his time. Like Chokha Mela, other saints like Raka and Banka, though coming from the low caste, were being esteemed highly by other saints like Eknath, Namdeo and Tukaram who belonged to the so-called higher

castes. Their devotion to god, pious and good behaviour and lack of addiction to this worldly life, earned respect for them from many saints who have unequivocally expressed it in their writing.

Samadhi

In the town known as Mangalwedhe, which is situated on the south-east side of Pandharpur, a stone wall was proposed to be constructed around the town. In those days the Mohomedan rulers used to collect labourers by force and extract work from them at very low wages, when such major works requiring a large number of labourers were to be carried out. The officers of the Sultan, therefore, went round and collected a number of labourers from the surrounding places. Chokha Mela was also drafted in this forced labour and he was doing the work ungrudgingly along with others keeping faith in his God Vithal. When, however, the work of the wall was in progress, there took place a very serious accident and the halfconstructed wall collapsed suddenly on the people constructing the wall. A number of people belonging to the Harijan class were killed in that accidental collapse of the wall and Chokha Mela also met his death there along with his colleagues.

This accident took place on the 5th day of the dark half of the month of Vaishakha in Shaka 1260 (1338 A. D.) No sooner than this incident took place, God Vithoba came to know about it. Saint Namdeo, who was a great friend and Guru of Chokha Mela, was ordered by God Vithoba to go to the site and collect the bones of his favourite and staunch devotee. In order to find out the bones, Namdeo was asked to examine the heap and find out which of them were giving out the name of God Vithal. He accordingly went to the site of the accident and tried to find out the bones of Chokha Mela from the debris. The site was ghastly. Many persons engaged on the construction work were killed and

their relatives had collected there to find out whether their man was alive or was killed in the accident. Even a man like Namdeo, who had seen the sunny and rainy days and had renounced the love for all worldly things, was moved at the site and tears stood in his eyes. However he remembered the order of the God and did the work of collecting the bones as per the orders after testing them in the manner in which they were supposed to be tested. When Namdeo came with the bones to Pandharpur, God Vithoba took them with affection and regard in his silken garment (Pitambar). The bones were then buried at the main entrance of the Vithoba Temple at Pandharpur and a Samadhi was put up thereon, which can be seen even today at that site.

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Dhundirajbua came to Dharwar and wished to offer alms. He could not get an opportunity as there were many pressing invitations. However before leaving Dharwar, Swamiji asked him to prepare food for alms. Dhundirajbua was delighted to offer to Swamiji. Dhundirajbua had gone to Garudeshwar also to Swamiji who had great affection for him and he did not allow him to go early. Later Dhundirajbua came in Marathwada and is staying at Deolgaon Raja. He has many disciples.

From Dharwar Swamiji started and reached Havnur on the bank of Tungabhadra. He stayed at Tripuratankeshwar Mandir and praised the deity and the river Tungabhadra.

(to be continued)

DEVOTION TO 'SAI'

Devotion to SAI is a gift. It is not all that can turn to Sai. Sai chooses His devotees. A living consecration to Him, with the heart desiring Him, the mind ceaselessly remembering Him, the will seeking and obeying His guidance at every moment and the limbs of the body eager to serve Him, constitute devotion to Sai.

A critic can be made but a poet is born. Similarly a learned man may be made but a devotee is born. Spontaneous love to the Lord is due to His grace. Upanishads say He reveals Himself only to those whom He chooses. The Gita says that the darshan of the Lord cannot be had by study of Vedas, by austerity, or sacrifice or charity but by exclusive Bhakti.

At early stages worship, chanting of hymns, pilgrimage, japa, meditation are disciplines but when Bhakti ripens every one of these become expressions of divine joy.

Bhakti is Siddhi, Bhakti itself is Mukti. After tasting the nectar of Bhakti the Bhakta is not tormented by any desire. He does not care for heavenly pleasures even. He does not care to escape from the cycle of birth and death. He does not mind being thrown into hell provided bhakti is not snatched away by the Lord. This is what Kulasekhara Alwar says in Mukunda Mala.

The joy of supreme Love confers the vision of the All-Beautiful, as Andal experienced Ranganatha and Mira experiences Lord Krishna. The Bhakta sees the Lord not only in His adorable form but even in the ugly and the terrible. Did not Mira find the cobra packed and sent to her as a 'saligrama'? A devotee prepared sweet cakes for Sai but before they could be offered to Him a number of small ants swarmed around them.

He prepared fresh ones and took them to Baba, who at once questioned, "Have I not already eaten in the form of ants?" The Lord is not only with form, but is the indweller in the hearts of all beings. All Deities are he, when a devotee for the first time went to Baba, he was asked to go round Shirdi and visit all the temples. The world, to the Bhakta, is a play-ground of the Lord. A true Bhakta sees beauty not only in the playing child Krishna (Nandalal) but also in the hideous Kali. Mira saw her Beloved, Lord Krishna, in the cup of poison she had to consume.

The joy that the devotee enjoys during his devotional practices is really indescribable. At times his hairs bristle with joy. At times tears of joy roll down his cheeks. Praising or singing the glories of the Adored, his voice is choked and he trembles. At the heights of ecstasy Chaitanya Prabhu used to become still and motionless. Narada Bhakti sutra has it 'when the devotee perceives his Beloved Lord, he becomes 'stabdha' motionless, becomes intensely intoxicated (Matho Bhavate) and revels in his Bliss self. (atmarmo bhavati) His mind embraces the All Blissful and is absorbed in Bliss Absolution. The knowledge of the Absolute is the result of this experience.

The Bhakta becomes convinced that the Lord dwells in the hearts of all, - He is not only in beings but in inanimate objects too. Did not Nara-simha emanate from a Pillar? Did not a lady devotee of Sai hear His voice from a nail in the Wall? The Bhakta knows that the supreme is the sole doer. All events and happenings are His will at work, therefore the devotee accepts pain and pleasure, joy and grief, praise and blame, birth and death as divine movements, in fact grace of the divine and therefore never grieves.

The devotee is ever ready to abandon his kith and kin if it becomes necessary for the sake of Lord. Vibhishana fell away
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TRUST IN GOD AND DO THE RIGHT.

Courage, brother! Do not stumble,
Though thy path is dark as night;
There's a star to guide the humble --
Trust in God and do the right.
Let the road be long and dreary,
And its ending out of sight;
Foot it bravely - strong or weary -
Trust in God and do the right.
Perish Policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light;
Whether losing, whether winning,
Trust in God and do the right.
Trust no party, church, or faction,
Trust no leader in the fight;
But in every word and action
Trust in God and do the right.
Trust no forms of guilty passion -
Fiends can look like angels bright,
Trust no custom, school or fashion --
Trust in God and do the right.
Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man and look above thee -
Trust in God and do the right.
Firmest rule and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward light,
Star upon our path abiding -
Trust in God and do the right.

By Dr. Norman Mcleod
Kalyana - Kalpataru Sep. 72

My Pension Commutation Miracle.

It was in January 1973 that I visited Shirdi. It was awfully cold. I suffered from severe cough and cold due to unusual chilly climate at Shirdi. One Sri T. L. Ramakrishna Iyer alias Swami of Shirdi took me to a private Doctor but with no effect. I then went to Sri Sainath Samsthan Hospital where R. M. O. Dr. Pinto, who knows not me, took great care and pains to examine my chest, blood and urine. I take it, R. M. O. was directed by Sri Sai to do so, to reveal that I had Blood sugar to a very high degree which was a surprise to me and thus forewarned me to achieve my commutation issue since I had no symptoms of Blood Pressure or Sugar. Immediately on my return to Madras I got myself treated by rigid diet control that within 1 month it showed NIL and I continued to maintain it till December 1973, when I applied for commutation of my pension and got my amount on which alone I shall eke out my living as a poor pensioner.

It is not for the fact that I got commutation amount that I am writing this. The points to bear in mind are worth noting as to How Sri Sai guides His devotees in time.

1. Why should I go to Shirdi in Jan. 1973 just a month before my retirement?
2. Why should I get cold and cough just then?
3. Why I should change from private doctor to R. M. O. Sri Pintoji of Sainath Hospital?
4. Why should the R. M. O. examine me so thoroughly when I went to him as a commoner for some ordinary mixture for cough and cold. I took no recommendation or influence. I was a commoner among commons, not a VIP or a wealthy man too or State native.

What point I want to drive home here is that had the Doctors, who examined me for commutation, known that I am a sugar patient they would have outright rejected or disqualified me and I would have lost the benefit of Rs. 6000/- on which I depended for my living.

Is it not a miracle? Emphatically too a Bhakta would say that Sri Sai's hand was there to guide and help the Bhakta. It is nothing but by instinct and direction of Sri Sai that all this happened.

So what I humbly place before Sai Bhaktas and like minded persons is that Sri Sai will not and shall not let down his Bhaktas who surrender to **HIM**, meditate on **Him** and dedicate his entire life to **HIM**. This is a standing example.

Bow to Sri Sai — Peace to all. He again proved “when He is there why should you fear”. Cast your burden on **HIM** and He will look after you. This is my third miracle.

B. Ramanadharao

“Sri Saikutir”

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from his mighty brother Ravana and took refuge in Sri Rama. Mira forsook her kith and kin in her extreme devotion to Krishna.

Devotees enkindle devotion in the hearts of those who come in touch with them. The grace of Saints is a potent factor in promoting bhakti.

“If selfless service is a foundation and Jnana is the magnificent structure, bhakti is the gold dome set with precious jems” said a saint.

C. S. Rama Swami

कृष्णभक्तशिरोमणि सूरदास

[गतांक से आगे]

संगीतके योगसे उनकी भक्तिमें और निखार आया है। उनका संगीतका ज्ञान पूर्ण व असाधारण था। काव्य और संगीतका मणिकांचनयोग उनके गीतोंमें मिलता है। उनकी रचनायें सहजही आत्माकी गहराईसे फूटकर वाणीके माध्यमसे प्रकट होती है। उनके पद किसी न किसी रागपर आधारित है। उनकी भक्तिभावना व तदानुकूल राग व भाषा उनके पदोंमें ऐसा माधुर्य व दिव्यानंद उत्पन्न करते हैं कि श्रोतागण आत्मविभोर हो उठते हैं और अलौकिक आनन्द का रसास्वादन करने लगते हैं। भावके अनुरूप पदावलीकी रचना सूरदासजीकी विशेषता है। नादसौंदर्य उनके गीतोंकी अपनी विशेषता है। उनके गीतोंमें भाषाका स्वाभाविक प्रवाह विद्यमान है। उपरोक्त गुण और मधुर संगीत मिलकर उनके गीतों (पदों) में ऐसा सामर्थ्य उत्पन्न करते हैं कि वे हृदयको आन्दोलित कर देते हैं। “सूरसागर” संगीतप्रेमियोंके लिये एक भारी खजाना है जो रागरागिनियोंसे भरपूर है।

ऐतिहासिक प्रमाणोंके अनुसार ऐसा माना जाता है कि उन्होंने पच्चीस ग्रंथोंकी रचना की है जिनमें अनेक अप्रकाशित हैं। डॉ. रामकुमार वर्मा उनके ग्यारह ग्रंथ मानते हैं। वर्तमानमें उनके तीन ग्रंथ अधिक प्रसिद्ध हैं यथा “सूरसागर” “सूरसारावली” व “साहित्य लहरी”। सूरदासजीने सवालाल पद रचनेका संकल्प किया था और इसमें संदेह नहीं कि उन्होंने सवालाल पद रचें होंगे। परंतु अभीतक सूरसागरके आठ हजार के लगभग पद उपलब्ध हुये हैं और बाकी कालांतरमें नष्ट हो गये होंगे। साहित्यलहरी सूरके ११७ दृष्ट कूट पदोंका संग्रह है। पुष्टिमार्गी भक्तिभावनाका इसमें अभाव जान पड़ता है। इसमें नायिका भेदोंका वर्णन है और अलंकारोंका क्लिष्ट शब्दोंकी सहायतासे प्रयोग हुआ है। सूरसारावली ११०७ पदोंका एक स्वतंत्र ग्रंथ है। इसमें कृष्णसंयोगलीला, वसंतहिंडोला, होली आदिका विस्तृत वर्णन है। सूरसागर महाकविका प्रमुख ग्रंथ है। यह भागवतके आधारपर लिखा गया है और उसकी भांती इसमें भी बारह स्कन्ध हैं। परंतु इसमें भागवतके दशमस्कन्धकी कथाही विस्तारसे कही गई है।

इसमें कृष्णकी बाललीला, गोपीकृष्ण, राधाकृष्ण की प्रेमलीला, गोपीविरह और भ्रमर-गीत मुख्य है। पदोंकी संख्याके हिसाबसे भी विनय और श्रृंगारके पदोंकी आधिक्यता है। उपरोक्त ग्रंथोंमें ब्रजभाषाका उपयोग हुआ है।

ब्रजभाषा ब्रजमंडलकी लोकभाषा है। ब्रजकी चलती बाली होते पर भी मूरके ग्रंथोंमें वह एक साहित्यिक भाषाके रूपमें मिलती है। इस प्रकारकी भाषाकी सबसे पहली साहित्यिक कृति मूरसागरही है जो अपने काव्यवैभव और भाषा-प्राचुर्यमें हिन्दीके किसीभी काव्य ग्रंथके पीछे नहीं है। इसमें जो प्रगल्भता और काव्यांगपूर्णता मिलती है वह अनुपम है। भक्तिभावकी अभिव्यक्तिमें यह भाषा पूर्ण समर्थ रही है।

मूरदासजीका हृदय कृष्ण भक्तिसे ओतप्रोत था। उसमें जो भाव प्रकट हुवे वे भी कृष्णलीलामय थे। अतः उनकी कल्पनामें स्वाभाविकता, मधुरता और रमणीयताके दर्शन होते हैं। अविवाहित व स्त्रीसंतानरहित होने पर भी उनकी वात्सल्य व श्रृंगार की कल्पनाये अनूठी हैं। वात्सल्य एवं श्रृंगार रसकी रचनायें यह प्रमाणित करती हैं कि उनकी कल्पनाने इन रसोंके विस्तृत क्षेत्र को कहींभी अछूता नहीं रखा है। कल्पनाकि न्यासके अनुरूप अलंकारविधानभी रहा है। उनके काव्यमें अर्थालंकारोंकी प्रचुरता है। उपमा, रूपक, उत्प्रेक्षा व सादृश्यमूलक अलंकार उनकी रचनाओंमें पल पल पर मिलते हैं। कविने अलंकारविधान विशेषकर उपमाओंके प्रयोगमें मौलिकता का परिचय दिया है। परंपरागत उपमाओंका प्रयोग करते हुयेभी कविने स्वकल्पित उपमाओंके अनूठे उदाहरण दिये हैं। श्लेष और यमकका अधिक प्रयोग उनके कृत्योंमें मिलता है।

मूरदासजीके प्राणाधार श्रीकृष्णही थे। उन्होंने अपने आपको श्रीकृष्ण चरणोंमें समर्पित कर दिया था। उन्होंने विनती और आत्मनिवेदन के पदोंके सुमन आराध्यदेवके चरणोंमें अर्पित किये हैं। विनतिके पद पूर्ण भावावेश और तन्मयता ग्रहण किये रहते हैं। श्रीकृष्णकी कृपासे पंगु भी पर्वत लांघ जाते हैं, अंधे को ज्योति प्राप्त हो जाती है, बहिरा मुनने लगता है और भिखारीभी राजा बन जाता है। असंभवभी संभव हो जाते हैं। ऐसे कर्षणावहणालय स्वामीकी मूर बारंबार वन्दना करते हैं।

[अपूर्ण]

दीनानाथ टी. गुप्ता

रेल्वे कॉर्टमें नं. आर. बी. २/२५७/५ रेल्वे स्टेशनके सामने जबलपूर (म. प्र.)

THE TECHNIQUE OF PERFECTION

The desire to seek help, to search for light, to look up to higher powers, is inborn in all beings. The incapacity to achieve the ideals of the aspirations that spring from the heart, the anguish which accompanies such incapacity, and the knowledge of the existence of superior powers, obliges the individuals to take shelter under those that are endowed with the ability to lift them up to higher levels. The world is a dramatic scene of dependence of beings on others that can fill up what they lack. Love of God means the yearning to reach the highest, to become perfect, and this is not easy for all who wish to be so.

Perfection has its centre in the core of the seeker himself and hence, the difficulty of knowing the exact technique of realising it, which is God, Self, and all that is best. The key to the door, that opens into the realm of truth and perfection, does not lie in those who see through intellect, but those who intuit the reality in integral comprehension, not as an object lying outside but as rooted in the very meaning of the subject. These are called the seers or the sages, the Brahmanishthas who can communicate the spiritual consciousness even through a glance or a touch or through a single command. They are the Gurus or the Masters who teach the truth to and shower God-consciousness on the mortals. Patanjali Maharishi says that Ishwara himself is the greatest Guru, for he is the most ancient and is omnipresent and being the seed of omniscience, he is the teacher of all teachers, unsullied by the changes of time. To surrender oneself to God is, therefore, to seek shelter under the origin of knowledge, the source of power, the Lord of creation itself.

Guru is not the human personality. Guru is the Divine Being, the immortal essence that shines through the human person. The perishable body constituted by the physical element should

not be mistaken for the Guru. The real teacher is the one Brahman that manifests itself as and when it likes. Man can learn only from a man and hence God teaches man through a human body. The human body of the Guru is an occasion to worship his universal nature of supreme Light, a nail to hang the shirt on. The human side of the Guru is not what is important, it is the unseen, but the only real Atman, the ubiquitous principle that underlies it, that is the true Guru. When we pray to God, we pray not to a body. When he resorts to a Guru, he does not do so to a material form. The dignified substratum of life, light and joy, the grand consciousness that soars above the paltry grandeur of the universe, that is what is to be seen in a Guru! "Hit it, O Somya", says the Upanishad. That is the target of meditation and the object of devotion, the teacher and saviour, the support and the goal. Lord Krishna says "Know me 'IN TRUTH!'" where he emphasizes on the fact that his form, the body is not to be mistaken for the Eternal, Guru is God and God is Guru, and the Svetaswatara Upanishad says that the truth is revealed to that great-souled one who does not consider God and Guru as two different beings.

The sacred relation of Guru and disciple is a very ancient one. Even from the Vedic times we hear of the necessity of the aspirants seeking Brahma-Strotrivas and Brahmanishthas being stressed upon. "Examining the worthless nature of the action-bound world, the wise one should get disgusted with it, for the eternal cannot be reached through action. For the sake of knowing that he should resort to a Guru, well versed in spiritual lore and also established in Brahman-consciousness", says the MANDUKYA Upanishad. Though the Guru does not actually give anything not already possessed, he becomes the means which digs out the spiritual wealth that is buried under the ignorant mind of the aspirant. Since all experiences in the world are the effects of the interaction of the knower and the known, the spiritual experience too is in a different way the

effect as it were of the union of the subjective endeavour and the object presented before it, be it physical or purely psychical, be it embodied teachers or bodyless mental forms or ideas.

It is from the Guru that the seeker gets the influx of spiritually and divine bhava. What the aspirant receives, he intensifies and multiplies a thousandfold through Sadhana. This is the duty of all aspirants. The Guru is the gateway to the transcendental Truth-consciousness, but it is the aspirant that has to enter through it. The Guru is a help, but the actual task of practical Sadhana falls on the aspirant himself.

In truth the Guru dwells in your heart. The Guru is ever by your side. You have only to think of him with real bhava and you will at once feel his spiritual presence without fail. In proportion to the effacement of the lower ego does the Guru manifest in you and appear before you. Therefore be ever ready to receive him and empty yourself of all contents so that he may fill himself in you.

Guru Purnima is the moment for you to invoke the Sadhana Shakti in you through an intense renewal of Guru Bhakti and by sincerely surrendering afresh the impure selfwill and ahamkara. Even as Sannyasins take to the study of the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads during the "Chaturmasya" or the four months beginning from the day of Guru Purnima or Vyasa Puja, those belonging to the other Ashramas too should study their religious texts like the Vedas, the Bhagavadgita, the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, the Yogavasishtha etc., and contemplate upon their central theme that the Absolute Brahman is the only reality which the Vedanta so boldly proclaims.

Sai Baba has proved to the devotees, that he is God, Avatar, and also Guru. He gave Darshan to the Devotees, as Rama, Anjeneya, that shows that he is God. As a Guru, he gave

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THE HOLY MAN IN HONGKONG

[His Holiness Swami Shri Gangeshwaranandaji Maharaj Udasin recently toured in South East Asia with the active collaboration of the world-wide cultural organisation, "The Vishwa Hindu Parishad" for the establishment of "Ved Mandirs" in the various cities in all these countries. The revered Swamiji's Hongkong visit has gone a long way to cement Indo-chinese friendship on sound cultural foundations. It is hoped that the following report about the Swamiji's visit will be found interesting by our readers - Editor.]

"The world is divided into five continents and five people as referred to in the Vedas by the word Panchajana (Rig. 10.53.5). In Asia, one of the most ancient races, the Chinese, make a majority. When I think of China and the Chinese, I feel the name is derived from the virtue of the people namely, 'Chayan or Chetana', observed His Holiness Swami Gangeshwarananda in his small but very revealing talk on the occasion of the presentation of Veda Bhagwan to the Buddhist Association of Hongkong on 24th September 1974 in the Buddhist Association, down-town, and to the University Library of the Chinese University of Hongkong.

Rev. Kok Kwong, Chairman, and Mr. Wong Wan Tin, Vice-Chairman of the Association welcomed Swamiji at the gates and expressed their sense of gratitude for the gift of the Sacred Veda. In the University Library which is the centre of studious research and use of over 3000 students, Swamiji was greeted regardfully by Dr Miss L. B. Kan and members of the Staff.

Swamiji in his enlightening revelation of the possible derivation of the race-name 'Cheena' had said, "Cheena has been referred to in very intimate terms in regard to the silk which was

the speciality of Chinese art of weaving. The relation between Bharat and China goes back to much older times than Bhagwan Buddha, who, of course, reinforced the same with bonds of common Dharma. Chinese people have been renowned for their art, science and the virtue of collecting and assimilating good things. It must be because of this, their character of 'Chayan' that they came to be called 'Cheena'. The renowned Chinese visitor to India, Hsuan Tsang took with him loads of Sacred Sanskrit works which were translated in Chinese. From these Chinese versions we learn of so many Granthas, Sanskrit origins of which are not available." Referring to the universally accepted fact that it was the Chinese people who invented the art of manufacturing writing paper, Swamiji guessed that they must have felt the need to do so for communicating their ideas and reaching their sense and sentiments 'Chetana'- to their brethren. Because of these, their excellence in art, science and their great love for literature that they must have acquired the name 'Cheena'.

"After the advent of Bhagwan Buddha of course there were greater and faster binding ties between Bharat and China because of the common culture and civilisation. When China accepted Buddhism, the relation bound the two people more. I am very happy that Chinese have welcomed the Veda, which is the common source of our faiths and systems of philosophy. I am sure the Veda will help maintaining the unity of our people, brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God, which the sacred book teaches".

On his landing in Hongkong on 23rd September 1974 Swamiji was received by a very large number of elite of the town. It took almost an hour for him to leave the air-port through the large crowds that had assembled to welcome him, in this tiny but almost modern Crown Colony which is the hubub of industry and commerce. It may be remembered that, what was a 'bare island with hardly a house upon it' in 1841, when it was ceded to the British, with an area of about 400 square miles, has today

become the most densely populated territory with 3800 heads per sq. kilometer; 98 per cent of the population is Chinese. Hongkong was occupied by Japanese from December 1941 to 1st May, 1946. If all goes well, as it is, Hongkong will remain as a Crown Colony upto 1998 as per treaty.

In the ten days of Swamiji's stay in Hongkong which were tightly engaged in the visits of Swamiji to half-a-dozen homes of his devotees every day, including the Houses of Harilela, Daldas and others, and talking engagements with different groups and associations of Gujaratis, South Indians, Women's Association, and Gita Class and so on, the most unforgettable congregation was in the Hindu Temple of the Hindu Association, on 1st of October 1974 when Swamiji presented the sacred Veda. Never before in the memory of Hongkong Indians so many devotees hailing from different provinces of India, including the Indian Commissioner, Shri Madhavan, Shri Harilela and Daldas Brothers, as also the Parsi priest and representative of the Buddhist Association had assembled for the unique function to have the sight of the Sacred Book and the blessings of Swamiji in terms of the Vedic teachingg. The ceremony began with the chanting of the Ved mantras by Dada Apte and concluded with thanks giving by Shri Harilela. Swami Gangeshwaranand explained the purpose of his taking this long and tiresome journey out of the country at this his ripe old age, namely according an opportunity to the people of the World, to have the 'Darshan' of the Sacred Veda, which is the prime source of all Dharmas., Sanskrits and Systems of Philosophy and which is the one sacred book, not only the most ancient and earliest, but the one which comprehends the whole human society, and advises it to accept the brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God. As the Sacred Veda will ever remain in the temple for the 'Darshan' and inspiration of all the people of Hongkong, the ceremony will never be forgotten by those who participated in it.

Arrangements for the ceremonial presentation by Guru Gangeshwar Chaturveda Sansthan of the Sacred Book containing all the four Vedas were done by Messrs J. Mulchand, T. Dayaram, S Arunadri Ram, V. J. and R. J. Balanis and others of the Hindu Association under the direct and personal supervision of Ratan Ben. Swamiji made the most cherished suggestion that Vishva Hindu Parishad should start weekly Hindi classes in Hongkong, as in every other place outside India, for boys and girls. He exhorted social workers to start the classes and the affluent to cooperate and support this undertaking which will not only acquaint our young generations with Hindi but will instil devotion and desire for implementation of Hindu Dharma and Sanskriti in their lives.

Amongst the large number of the elite of the town who called upon Swamiji to offer their respects and have his blessings, mention must be made of the Indian Commissioner Shri Madhavan, Rev. Father Russel and Rev. Tai Kwong. Two Journalists representing local papers interviewed Swamiji each over for an hour, and wrote in very eulogistic terms about the 'Holy Man and His Saintly Mission'. Every one who met him admired Swamiji's faculties, so alert at this age, and his physical fitness as also the sense of his wit and wisdom, despite his total blindness from early childhood. Every one remarked in amazement that they had never seen such a great Holy Man before.

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spiritual advices to many. Sai Baba, by appearing as Rama, Anjeneya, etc. has proved that he is God's Avatar. Sai Baba preached spirituality to devotees, is the proof that he is a Guru. So let us believe, that Guru is also a God and God is also a Guru.

May the grace of Bhagvan Sai Baba and of all the Brahma-vidya Gurus, be upon you all! May you attain Self realisation through Guru Bhakti and faithful and sincere practice of the teachings of your preceptor!

A. V. K. Chari SAI BABA MISSION P. O. COIMBATORE - 11

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Published by Shri K. S. Pathak, Sai Niketan 804-B,
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