



SAI LEELA



"I am looking for my lost horse."
"Oh, there it is beyond the fence. Look."



D. MERRY

April

60 Paise

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SHRI SAI LEELA

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VOLUME 52

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No. 1

To put men on The Right Path

*This is our Arati, Oh Baba of Shirdi Shrine,
Give us shelter at thy Feet Divine.*

*To every Bhakta thy Form is manifest,
According to his feeling thou appearest.*

*Thy mere name dispels adversity,
Such is thy Power, supreme and mighty.*

*Verily thou art Datta, the Trinity,
Descended on earth from Eternity.*

*Thy Avatar is for Peace and Bliss,
Which thy Bhakta can never miss.*

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EDITORIAL

SAI LEELA IN ENGLISH

“The Sai Leela” Monthly was started in 1923 with the object of propagating the philosophy of Sai Baba, who lived in Shirdi (Dist. Ahmednagar, India) from 1854 to 1918.

Sai Baba, a man of very few words and almost no needs, came to Shirdi in 1854 as a young lad of sixteen. A few people recognised the Divine Light in this lad and became his devotees. They gave him a dilapidated mosque to live in, and that dusty and dingy place he occupied till he passed into Samadhi in 1918. He did not perform any ‘miracles’ as some mystics did and are still doing. All he did was to manifest certain powers of God on certain special occasions, and this he did almost involuntarily. All the stories told about him go to show that he was undoubtedly a God on Earth—God with His principal qualities of All-pervasiveness, Knowledge and Power. Sai Baba neither practiced nor preached any particular religion. His only Religion, if it can be so called, was that of Humanity. He did not worship any particular God too, and yet he was a Man of God—the Almighty. To every Bhakta (devotee) who approached him, Sai Baba taught the love of this One God—made him God--Oriented—and thus bound them all together in a bond of Love. This was the great transformation he brought about in his Bhaktas by his mere presence and, as he has promised, his Samadhi in Shirdi does this even today.

Till Baba’s Samadhi in 1918, his fame had not spread far beyond a few places in Maharashtra. But a great miracle happened after his Samadhi. As he had foretold, thousands and thousands flocked to Shirdi, not because anybody had told them to go there, but because they felt an inner urge to do so; and once they went there, they felt immensely happy and free from worries. This

happens because the great Soul of Sai Baba, when freed from its physical sheath, became much more powerful than when it was inhibited by worldly appendages. So the Bhaktas of Sai Baba felt that His message must reach far and wide, so that more and more people could come to Shirdi and receive His blessings. It was for this purpose that the Bhaktas were prompted to start this magazine, which has served all these years as an instrument for spreading His message. Since its inception, the magazine was published in Marathi only. During the last two years, an English section was introduced in order to cover a wider range of readers. This section proved to be so popular that there has been an ever-increasing demand for enlarging it, and, if possible, even to separate it. Owing to this popular demand we have now decided to publish a separate English Edition from this month.

The world today is on the brink of disaster, owing to internal dissensions between nations and nations, communities and communities, and even between brothers and brothers. The only cementing force which will save the world is a feeling of brotherhood, of love, of humanity, irrespective of religion, caste or creed. This was exactly the central theme of Sai Baba's teachings. The twin objectives of today's Bharat, namely, secularism and socialism, were not only mouthed, but actually practised by Sai Baba in Shirdi, more than 100 years back. This is the fountain of inspiration of Shri Sai Leela. This is Sai Baba's Voice (Bani), emanating from His shrine, advocating the oneness of all religions, of all communities and of all mankind. This magazine is devoted to religious, spiritual and cultural topics. It eschews politics and polemics. We invite writers from all quarters to contribute articles in keeping with these aims. Readers are also invited to send us their personal experiences, not only about Baba, but about any allied topic.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI RAMA NAVAMI

By :- Saipadananda Radhakrishna Swamiji.

In Srimad Ramayana, Ravana represents the Prince of Darkness, while Sri Rama represents the Prince of Light. In respect of character they are, as is to be expected, poles assunder.

Sri Rama is the very embodiment of Dharma, while Ravana is Adharma in flesh and blood. The one would not hesitate to make any sacrifice to uphold the cause of Dharma, while the other would light-heartedly violate every canon of decency to gratify his lust and vanity.

Sri Rama's sole interest in life was to set lofty standards of conduct for others to follow, while the chief aim of Ravana was to aggrandize and bend others to his will by show of physical might.

Sri Rama's path was the steep and thorny one of self-denial and renunciation, while Ravana's was the primrose path leading to eternal damnation. The contrast between these two leading figures of Srimad Ramayana is as sharp and striking as any in history or fiction.

Sri Rama's heroic qualities are set forth in Narada's reply to poet Valmiki. They are numerous and rare. Sri Rama can speak the truth and yet be nice and pleasant; he can be firm and unyielding without appearing to be a stickler; he can be kind without being sentimental or soft; he can be brave without being a bragger; he can be correct and even meticulous in his conduct without giving an impression of being inhuman. When he is angered, not even the Gods can stand against him. But by his nature he was patient and gentle.

Only truly great men can strike the mean between opposites and bring them into harmony. It is the living spirit that reconciles all contradictions. Valmiki's conception of Sri Rama is that of

the hero as the perfect man. He is great in war and equally great in peace; he is a soldier as well as a statesman; he is learned in the sastras and equally well practised in arms. He could shine in any company. He punished evil doers and rewarded the virtuous. His anger and his sympathy always meant something. Just as his arrows were never shot in vain, even so his words never failed of their purpose. He never equivocated. He meant what he said.

Such is the picture of the great hero that Poet Valmiki has drawn for the benefit of the generation of men to follow and to emulate. No one has read the Ramayana and has not risen from the study a sadder and a wiser man. As one reads and re-reads it, laying himself open all the time to its sweet and mellowing influence, one's inner nature undergoes a silent change, sometimes even revolution, and he acquires a new dimension of being, namely, spiritual. He attains new altitudes of greatness, new and unsuspected heights of heroism. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the Ramayana as a force which makes for righteousness. It breathes Dharma everywhere and the readers cannot but imbibe this wholesome influence.

If the masses of the Indian people, in spite of their illiteracy and grinding poverty, are still peaceful and law-abiding, their behaviour is due to a large measure to the influence exerted on them by the popular exposition of the Ramayana through the ages.

We now come to the other point of view, namely, the religious. According to this view, Sri Rama is God descended on earth, an Avatar of Lord Sri Hari. The object of the descent is to punish the wicked and restore the eternal Dharma to its rightful place of pre-eminence. God is therefore the ultimate guarantor of Dharma. By listening to the stories of His mighty achievements in putting down the forces of evil, we acquire religious merit and qualify ourselves eventually for Liberation. The pious reading of the Ramayana is therefore enjoined as a religious exercise on the devotees.

Ramayana presents two views. One—the possibility of the **ascent** of man to divinity, and the second—the **descent** of God to the world of human beings. The author blends in a happy way the above ideas—that God fulfils himself in the best man Sri Ramachandra, and that man, as King Dasaratha's son, rises to his full stature by pulling up his manhood to the level of Brahmahood. According to both views there is the meeting of the Human and the Divine in Srimad Ramayana which Bhagvan Valmiki has bequeathed to the world.

In remembrance of such a noble Avatar like Sri Ramachandra, Baba himself lit the lights with water instead of oil and celebrated Sri Ram Navami Punya-tithi at Shirdi by setting up the path of righteousness for us to follow.

Oh ! Devotees of Baba, I am sure you are very well aware of this great incident which has created a stir in the hearts of all of us to remember Baba Sai as "RAM" himself in guise to bless the humanity to refresh themselves once again to set our steps on the right path to preserve Dharma at all costs. The rejoicing at Shirdi and at all centres of our country on this Punyatithi day will never be forgotten.

May "Sri Sai Ram," the spirit of Truth and Love in the form of Dharma, be invoked on this Auspicious day to bless the humanity with peace, good will and prosperity on earth at all times.

Jay Sri Sai Ram

PRECEPTS IN SADHANA

By :- Swami Sivananda.

(Our readers have had many thought-provoking and instructive articles from Swami Sivananda. The simple and practical teachings from the inspired pen of this great Yogi, Saint and Sage of Himalaya have given the much needed peace, solace and happiness to many an afflicted soul and transformed their lives.

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshita and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind. Though born in an orthodox family, Swamiji was broad-minded and catholic, pious and devout.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to those parts of the world which most needed his services. Malaya claimed him. He had also commenced editing a Health Journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify himself for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 he started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born the Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 he undertook a lightning tour of India. In 1953 he con-

vened the World Parliament of Religions. He is the author of over 200 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read his works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme and grow spiritually to be immortal and eternally peaceful and blissful. He entered Mahasamadhi on the 14th July, 1963.

In these days of rank materialism, the following precepts from Swamiji's pen will be of immense use to the Sadhakas, who as, Sai Devotees, must be aspiring to emulate the Master, the Sage of Shirdi. —Editor.)

Sadhana or spiritual practice should make you ever cheerful, more concentrated, joyful, balanced, peaceful, contented, blissful, dispassionate, fearless, courageous, compassionate, discriminative, reflective, unattached, angerless, I-less, disireless, mineless. Sadhana should give you rich inner life, introspective inner vision and unruffled state of mind, under all conditions of life. These are the signs of your spiritual growth.

Only that man who is chosen by the Lord attains the Supreme.
— Kathopanishad.

Sincerity in Sadhana is the key to success. Self-realisation has to be attained only through rigorous Sadhana. Sadhana should not be merely a routine.

Regular concentration and repetition of Lord's name will remove scepticism and infuse faith and devotion.

When the attraction towards external objects ceases, you will attain peace. The mind will become firm and steady and you will have wonderful power of concentration.

A long discipline and an intense struggle have conferred upon Saints and Sages the power of seeing that Reality which the worldly people cannot see. Therefore, take to strenuous spiritual discipline.

Constant remembrance of the Lord, constant recitation of His Name, will fill your heart with Sattwa or purity and immense strength and peace to face the most trying conditions of life with perfect calmness and serenity.

Japa is the best of all spiritual practices in this modern age. It is the easiest too.

Om Tat Sat is the most excellent of Mantras. One becomes a Siddha by the Japa of this Mantra.

That man who is sweet, kind, free from irritability, who is adaptable, humble, who knows the science of how to enter into the hearts of others (through constant service with love and humility) can be happy and peaceful.

It is very easy to control the mind if you know the right technique. You must have strong faith in God. Analyse your mind and your own nature. Watch your Vrittis and pray. Study your own nature and try to remove the defects therein by suitable methods.

The spiritual path is doubtless beset with various difficulties. It is the razor path. You will fall down several times, but you will have to rise up quickly and walk again with more zeal, boldness and cheerfulness. Every stumbling block will become a stepping-stone to success or ascent on the hill of spiritual knowledge.

Give up arguing. Become silent. Do not indulge in sundry talks and miscellaneous thoughts just to ease the mind. Be serious. Think and talk of God and God alone.

It is under the influence of egoism (*ahamkara*) that man commits evils and wrong actions.

He who is free from desires alone reigns supreme, be he a king or a beggar. One who has many desires is really a most miserable being on this earth. Passions make one beggar of beggars.

Anger is a modification of passion. If you can control lust you have already controlled anger. Control of anger will bring in its train supreme peace and immense joy.

Whenever there is a little irritability, stop all conversation and observe Mouna or the vow of silence. Practice of Mouna daily for one or two hours is of great help in controlling anger. Always try to speak sweet or soft words.

Man lives in vain if he is selfish and miserly. Man lives in vain if he has not got a generous heart, if he has no mercy and sympathy, if he does not lead a life of virtue, austerity and meditation and if he does not **help and serve religious institutions and religious teachers** with uniform and artless courtesy and devotion

Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise.

Be good; do good; be kind; be compassionate.

Enquire "Who am I?" Know the Self and be free.



THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

— Swami Chinmayanandji.

THE SPIRITUAL QUEST

(Need for Religion)

We found in our previous talks that from the very dawn of time, the religious urge has been strong in man. The primitive man had a religion all of his own to follow — entirely divorced from philosophy. It was based mainly on superstition, on fear ! Primitive man saw the Hand of God in the thunder that pealed across the skies, in the lightening that flashed across the heavens, and even in the illness that visited his own body ! Thus he lived in fear, trembling at that awful power which would strike him — he knew not when, and for what end ! If the thunder-storm came, he was sure that the Wrath of God was upon him. He recognised his God in all the powerful forces of nature. In order to propitiate this Mighty Awful Power, he used to make sacrifices, and, the bigger the sacrifice, the better was the deity pleased — according to him. So far he saw God only in the frightful part of the fierce Nature.

Later on he evolved into what is known as the 'Pantheistic stage.' Here God is perceived to be equivalent with matter. Matter was to him God. From the brilliant canopy, which is spread in the night by stars, to the smallest ant, crawling over the sand, he recognised as the work of his beloved God.

From the earliest age, man has felt a void in himself, which can only be filled up by his concept of a God. As a philosopher has clearly put it "even if there is no God, yet, man will have to make one." For, man by himself is a meaningless entity — a half circle which has yet to find its fulfilment. Human life is like the flight of a bird. It comes from nowhere; for one songful second we see its brilliant flutter of wings and the next moment it has disappeared. If we neither know where we came from, nor

where we are going, and can only taste and live each second as it comes, then, life becomes meaningless and empty of all purpose. No ethics, no morality is possible; all hopes and all aspirations are dead. For what are we to hope for? We have neither a past nor a future; we might as well live as we please and sink from one degradation to another. And what is more, even intellectual enquiry will have to be satisfied.

This enquiry only religion can answer. And because of this, the present age is ripe for religion. This is an age wherein the head dominates. The modern man is thirsting to know. The scientists have gone as far as they dared, and they are standing aghast at their own discoveries. The more they probe into the thing called matter, the more they realise that there is no such thing as matter. So our very eyes have turned traitors; instead of enlightening, they are deceiving us. What are we to believe? This chair which I can see, and feel as something solid, is proved to be only at best a mad crowded dance of electrons, protons and neutrons around their central nucleus! Hence science, on which we had been basing our hopes, is crumbling before our very eyes. The weapon which we had been aiming at somebody else has missed its aim and, as a boomerang, threatens to cut off the very hand that sent it forth. Unenviable indeed is the present-day-confusion in the contemplative minds of all true scientists.

Is religion the answer? Can it surely supply the bridge to cross the yawning chasm before us? The materialist scorns at this and declares religion to be a mere product of a bygone age — the delusion of an infantile brain. But he forgets that his science now is also a product of a bygone age. The exact science of chemistry was evolved from the medieval science of alchemy. The ancient art of astrology is the mother of the modern science of astronomy.

All living things change. Man's thought is never static, and religion too has evolved. It does not lose its value because it is ancient. The religion of superstition has **given way to a religion with a full philosophy**. Just as **morality without religion** is empty so also **religion without philosophy** is meaningless. To worship a black stone, merely as a black stone, takes us nowhere. But when once we understand the symbolism behind it, then we can feel uplifted to an awareness of the divinity behind the stone-idol. And from there it is but a step to realise that the very same divinity is within us as well. Thus, it is not a blind faith that religion demands, but a faith which has the firm foundation in an intellect which is convinced that what it is seeking is the Truth and nothing but the Truth.

And where is that Truth to be found ? Not in the welter of change and confusion around us but in something permanent. For, what is ever-changing can never be the Absolute Truth. And change can be perceived only with reference to something — a substratum — which is changeless. We perceive the river flowing only because the bed-rock beneath it is absolutely firm; the observer in the boat is also floating on the river ! If the river bed was also moving, and if the observer is also floating down the river, then the movement of the river would not have been experienced; the moving film can only be perceived when it is projected upon a changeless screen. Hence all change has to have an underlying bedrock of Reality; and the experiencer of the change must be in essence himself Changeless.

You, as an infant that crawled on the floor, are completely different from the youth that you are now, dashing about in a car, and from the old man that you would perhaps become. No part of you is the same. Physically, mentally, and intellectually you have changed. No cell in you is the same as it was when you were young. No emotion in you is the same. Even your

intellectual conceptions have changed. So who is the real 'YOU' ? How dare you call yourself by the same name you had in infancy when not a thing about you now is the same as then ?

Thus, the physical body is not you; the mind is not you; and even the intellect is not you; for, all these change from day to day — why, from moment to moment. Hence the real 'YOU' is away from all this, and it is the bed-rock on which all these changes take place. And this Entity, the philosophers call the Atman, or the very Self in you. Thus far, the intellect can take us. We understand that we are not the body, not the mind, not the intellect. Yet every day, every moment, we are confusing the issue, imagining ourselves to be either the body or the mind or the intellect.

How to realise that we are That Atman ? Philosophy can only point out the road. It is only the theory. Religion alone can verify the theory and bring us to full realisation of our true nature. 'Know Thyself' is the final call of philosophy, but like the doctor who merely diagnoses the case and prescribes the cure, it leaves you exactly where you were — a little wise perhaps, but certainly not a trifle better. And so religion has to step in and dispense the prescription. If the doctor is good, the prescription will be good, the cure will be sure : so also, if the philosophy is good, the religion also will be good and effective.

Thus, only a religion wedded to philosophy can hope to succeed in the modern world, and only such a combination is capable of solving problems of this age. Today man's personality is shattered. He stands between two worlds — one dying and the other struggling to be born. Will the baby be a monster or an angel ? You alone can choose. Man is the maker of his own world, and if today the world is an ugly place, it is because he himself is ugly. Cleanse your face with the soft towel of religion, and you will find that the brilliance in the world is but a reflection of the brilliance within you.

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This self-cleansing becomes difficult for the average man because it is a subjective process, wherein each has to cleanse himself by himself. Hence moral living, ethical standards, religious virtues and cultural values are often discussed and more people talk about them, but very few come to live them. And unless we decide to bring about these known virtues into our own life, the perfection promised by the scientists of life cannot be ours. The Divine Truth remaining the same in all bosoms, the personalities expressed through us differ because of the difference in the arrangement of our equipment. Retuning the inner personality is the only thing we have to do, in order to bring out from each one of us a greater dynamism, a brighter cheer, and a fuller love in all our contacts in society.

Without this unfoldment of our inner beauty, life cannot be chastened and brightened. Secular and material organisations are necessary. The politicians, the economists and the scientists have great burdens to bear. Social welfare work, organisations of production and distribution, administration of justice — all these are to be organised and worked out efficiently in order to improve the conditions of life in a society. But happiness of the community can ultimately be assured only when we have a healthy humanity. If man has the positive virtues of the heart and the self-creative values of the head, his responses to the environment will be healthy and he will come to gain a balance and a joy in existence.

The values that make him a happier man himself and a healthier social creature in life, spreading love, service, benevolence and cheer around are the religious values found in all the scriptures of the world. The actions of a man are but expressions of the intellectual urges in him. If his intellect is rife with unhealthy values like lust, passion, selfishness, anger, vanity, and the like, his actions —

which are nothing but the expressions of the values entertained in his intellect—bring about confusion and conflicts not only with himself but also with others in the society.

It is individuals that make up the society. Often do we hear that our society now-a-days is much deteriorated the behaviour in the society is vulgar the habits of the society are bad. In fact, it is the individuals, who constitute the society which is now labelled as deteriorated, vulgar, and bad. If the individuals are healthy, noble and divine, then the entire society that is peopled with such individuals is healthy, noble and divine. For, individuals in their mutual relationship constitute the society.

Individual perfection is the means for the total perfection. Religion is the means for the individual perfection. It supplies the higher values of life to its followers, and nourishes them with its various techniques till each individual absorbs them into himself.

Socialistic pattern of society, or a Welfare State, will remain but an ideal in the world if the individuals in the society do not pursue healthy values of life. And it is religion and religion alone that sows and cultivates the higher values of life in the hearts of men. For individual happiness we need religion. For community welfare we need religion. For international peace, we must have religion. In short, to complete the work of the politician and the economist, to fulfil the promises of Science, and to establish a cultured happy community, we must have the true Religion — based upon an exhaustive, intelligent, and rational philosophy.

Courtesy : CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST.



SELF - AWARENESS

By :- Dr. K. M .P. Mohamed Cassim.

Man is in search of happiness. He thinks that by earning a lot of money as well as by enjoying sensual pleasures he can attain happiness. But the fact is he is dissatisfied after every form of enjoyment. Where can we get real happiness? The real state of happiness or complete satisfaction is an inward state which means we are happy or experience the bliss of contentment only when our minds are peaceful. When our minds are agitated by contradictory desires we feel mental disturbances and worries. Therefore a person who understands the various functions of his mind correctly will certainly have the ability to control the mind and thereby enjoy the beauty of life without distractions.

We should not depend on others or on environments for our happiness, because, by depending on others we create unnecessary attachments which in turn produce untold miseries and psychological complications. The beauty of living peacefully and freely is paralysed by abnormal attachments. The balance of mind is shattered by clinging to a person, thing or place, because our minds are very sensitive to outward reactions and these reactions increase mental disturbances immensely. On the contrary, if we can maintain mental equilibrium all the time with our relationships, then there is the possibility of achieving the REAL HAPPINESS in which we are not depending on others.

We always want to be a strong man or woman. What is the significance of real strength? Can a person who is strong physically face all problems? No, because the actual problems in life directly affect and attack our minds and not our physical bodies. Hence, a person who is mentally strong can alone overcome all difficulties. How to develop our minds so as to increase the mental force? We know from our daily experience that when our thoughts are scattered we are immediately disturbed. In other words mental weakness follows as soon as our minds get

agitated. Real mental strength can be obtained by keeping our minds concentrated. Concentration consists in doing our work with full attention without being disturbed by outward circumstances. Then only can we do our job efficiently. Without having learnt to concentrate we cannot live in this world happily. The greatest achievement and advantage of having a strong and concentrated mind is that we are not mentally affected by contact with persons, things or places. This mental force gives tremendous power to solve all problems, which means we have the ability to participate in daily activities and at the same time we are not disturbed by reactions. A man of concentration acts freely by paying complete attention and he is not bothered about consequences of failures or success. The highest happiness is to keep the mind pure and peaceful under all circumstances.

For this we have to attain a state of Divinity in which the mind cannot drag us down to the lower level of physical-sensual pleasures. Through meditation alone we can reach to the Divine plane in which we are free from emotional excitements. Even our ordinary experience amply proves that we are happy only at the time of meditation, which means, when the mind is stopped. Meditation is a method by which we proceed to the Divine plane and if we can live in that pure state of meditation, then we can easily drop our physical bodies at the time of death and further we can also free ourselves from the agonies of mental complications. The purpose of coming into this world is to realise our Divinity in which alone we can have real happiness and liberation.

We cannot have real happiness by just improving the standard of living or by acquiring wealth. In other words mere material prosperity will not provide the right condition for happiness and peace. The modern way of living is not suitable for elevating us to the spiritual plane which is very essential to harmonise our lives.

By satisfying our sensual pleasures we are depriving ourselves of the spiritual power which is necessary to lead a healthy and peaceful life. Our life consists not only in enjoying the pleasures of emotional nature, but also in developing the faculties pertaining to divine aspects.

The problem is whether we are satisfied with the lower excitements. The human constitution is such that by wasting our energy in the avenues of sensualism one cannot have mental equilibrium, because the purpose of taking the physical body is to attain perfection in the art of mastering various diverse forces and then to utilise the purified energy in the realization of reality. It is an interesting question to ask ourselves why we are disturbed mentally and emotionally very often, and this disturbance causes a complication in our nervous system and thus introduces obstacles in maintaining the stability of mind which is indispensable if we wish to lead a sane life. The reasons for such disturbances may be due to energy running in a wrong channel. The urge for the energy or the desire is to flow in the lower direction which brings mental strain. Whenever we think we are manipulating certain mental forces, if our thinking is based on the higher aspects of life, then the energy is well concentrated and conserved for the utility of higher aims, and if our thinking is stimulated by the impacts of lower sensations then the mental energy is dissipated and deteriorated by going in the wrong channel. When the energy is rightly focussed by the correct process of concentration then only is there the possibility of increasing and developing the spiritual power which is required to realize Reality.

Craving for desires cannot be satisfied by indulging in them. The human mind so operates that by satisfying one desire, the cravings for further desires arise. The urge for repeated experiences is intensified. It is an observable fact that to gain real freedom we must mentally dissociate ourselves completely from desire which induces us to undergo the same old routine of sensations.

The mind is only a bundle of desires and these desires are accumulated as a result of incomplete experiences.

We must develop the faculty of discrimination to perceive everything dispassionately. This quality of discrimination will give us the right vision to verify the movement of mind without involving in its reactions. Full awareness and complete control of the mind is the only process through which we can attain a peaceful state of meditation which paves the way for spiritual liberation. The mind must be pure without the contamination of emotional disturbances so that the dynamic quality of meditative awareness can be developed.

To lead a happy and peaceful life, it is very important that we study the mind, because it is through our mind that we are affected. If we observe the mind we will find that it reacts constantly and it is the reaction which gives us either painful or pleasant experiences. We can say that the mind itself is a bundle of reactions and impressions. Why is there reaction to our action? When we act why do we feel a psychological disturbance? Since our action is incomplete the reaction comes in the shape of mental disturbance.

If we study our minds very deeply and dispassionately we will find that our minds are only a bundle of desires and sensations with incomplete experiences, because our minds are conditioned and influenced by the impacts of outward circumstances. Generally our minds are thinking about a problem, a person or an idea. The reason is, the structure of the mind is such that it is based on sensual experience and, hence, the task before us is to keep the mind in a state of stillness and silence. If we can have the capacity to look at people, ideas and things in one-pointed concentration, then only can we live in this physical world freely and happily without psychological disturbances.

The most important problem that we face is to free ourselves from the confusions that exist in our minds. Since we are all con-

fused owing to wrong thinking, it is very essential to understand clearly the activities and tricks of our minds because if we study our minds closely, we will see that the very nature of the mind is to create complexes in our relationship with people. It is our own minds which fabricate innumerable attachments and anxieties. Therefore our relationship becomes impure and sometimes complicated.

The question is why we are unable to pay full attention to the job to which we are engaged ? The reason for such inability for concentration is due to distraction of the mind which indicates lack of interest in the work to which we are attending to. What are the factors which introduce distractions ? The reactions of past experiences which are suppressed in the unconscious mind are the main cause for such mental agitations and these distractions are pulling us in different directions which produce emotional upsets and conflicts.

The next question we have to consider is whether we can control the mind and we must also find out whether the controller who controls the mind is really a spiritual entity or another aspect of the mind. The observer who examines desires is also conditioned by the desires and, therefore, his decision is actually not acceptable in view of the emotional colouring. The dual process of analyser as well as of the function of analysing our desires proves the difficulties as the analyser is also the part of the mind and hence the observation of its psychological reactions cannot be relied on. We think or rather react to various excitements by means of words and these words stimulate sensations and accordingly the process of thinking is manipulated. Can we think without words ? Sensations and the connected words are inter-related so closely that we do not know how to separate the words from the pure feelings. At first the words start and then thinking commences and after that the chain of thinking follows. When the mind is calm and quiet, you will find there is no disturbance which indi-

cates the absence of words. When we say we want to concentrate, we indirectly refer to the stoppage of sensational activities of the mind.

Disturbance is due to the distractions of mind and contradictory desires. The mind is always evading the fact of understanding its own function by various images which it creates in attending to self-contemplation. Instead of concentrating our minds on a particular object, we must turn our minds inward and observe each and every thought constantly under all circumstances and then we will have tremendous spiritual power to dissolve the centre of distraction. We can drive away evil thoughts by watching them silently in a witness-like state without giving importance to them—this detached observation is very necessary just to be aware of our thoughts without introducing our psychological likes and dislikes. To lead a peaceful life we must understand the agitation of the mind correctly. This is the ladder up which we have to climb in the path of concentration.

RAMAYANA — A GREAT INFLUENCE

on Indian Cultural Thought

—D. A. Ghaisas.

The epic poem Ramayana, containing the adventures of King Ramachandra of Ayodhya, is famous and it is not necessary in this article to give details and incidents of the story. The lessons that we have to draw from the life of the hero and the other characters and their application to the challenges of our times is very important.

The pivot around which the whole story moves is the relation of the individual to the society; and the frictions, the choice of action, the emphasis that swings like a pendulum between the family and the social aspect of life, form the essence of almost all the incidents that are depicted with lucidity by the great sage Valmiki. The role of this epic in the cultural structure of Indian thought is therefore a base and a code of behaviour in the life of a man who is surrounded by various challenges.

Duty first

The main character of Ramchandra is always upholding the principle of duty towards father and mother, duty towards elders, elder brothers, and above all to the occupation which befalls a man in his life—to cite his own example, that of the Royal responsibilities. He always chooses what is better for the ideal king, ideal brother, ideal husband, ideal son and ideal leader of the common men. The friction between the emotion and the reason, the private benefit and the public welfare, is always off-set with the extraordinary insight of Rama to go to the root of the problems. Whenever his brother insists on rights and privileges, Rama teaches him that it is the duty of an intelligent person to circumvent his personal feelings and sense of claims to comfort by social necessity.

circumstantial complusions and vision of all-time effect on the ethics of common man. There is a series of such instances when the negotiations take the form of generalised ethical standards, and one cannot fail to guess the undercurrent of a tendency on the part of the hero to derive lessons from every-day observation of life, and learn by the errors of by-gone generations. We can easily see the social urgency of controlling the unbound zeal of Kshatriyas who were using their powers and prowess without any compunction toward the down-trodden and unprotected. The example of his own father Dasharatha, who shot Shrawana in the darkness, following the direction of the sound, shows how technically advanced the warriors were in their use of weapons, but how careless they were to recognize the need of circumspection, and the ill-effects of indiscretion. Rama stands aloft in contrast with this careless handling of weapons. He emphasizes that once a warrior puts his arrow to his bow, he must use it properly and must not let it go waste. This primary control of a sound mind over physical superiority is his ideal. Another example of his father who married three wives, but could not lead a happy married life, shows the background which must have influenced the child Rama, and must have made him vow to have only one wife throughout his life-time. The social results of this monogamy are still today, in 1973, prevailing almost universally among all advanced people. There is another example of the uprightness of character which he emphasizes as a necessity for those who are in power—political or religious. When the question of accepting Seeta again as his wife and bringing her back to Ayodhya from Lanka arose, he decided in the negative, because, to him the unblemished career of a royal personage was of supreme importance. A lady who is taken away by another and kept in bonds for a long time, cannot come back and resume her role of a housewife without penance, purity and a positive proof. If a king of his stature would not be severe about failures and faults, the common man will connive at any sin and carry on unscrupulously the evils that may be in

him or her. The fundamental necessity to suffer the pangs of sacrifice which poses a problem to those in power is realized by him as the primary need of the times, and whenever we find a ruler corrupt, the subjects follow his example. The history of mankind and political rulers shows this to be true, times without number. Thus, if we could generalise the ethical standard for a king, it has its highest example in Ramachandra.

Love and Co-operation

Ramachandra is never tired of wandering to the nooks and corners of India. He takes pleasure in the company of sages and savages alike, provided the latter have even an iota of devotion. The aborigines of Dandakaranya who were simple people like Guhaka, Shabari and thousands of Vanaras, with their own limitations, found in Rama a valuable friend, an idol of devotion, a guide and a counsel. Co-operation with the sages is easily understood in the case of Kshatriyas who fulfil the role of protectors of their religious occupations and aspirations. But co-operation, respect and unprecedented love for vanaras is a new aspect of Ramayana. The need for a king to really mix up with the subjects to extend his full cultural enhancement to be shared with underdeveloped but intelligent folk is obvious in this context. The compassion of Rama for old people knows no bounds; at the same time his respect for elemental powers and sensitivity towards Nature is depicted with dextrous indulgence by Valmiki. We have therefore an example of softness and hardness devetailed in Rama, who knows how to give full attention to the problems of life, does not lose sight of the total long-range good of the country and the race, nor allows his likes and dislikes to come in the way of justice, uprightness and evolution.

Virtue—Essential in all circumstances

Ramayana teaches us that virtue is essential in all circumstances. When virtue is upheld and maintained, there is commu-

nion between the relations, a dynamic balance in the behaviour of the individual with the society, with the masses, and an understanding in the hearts of all. When humility, kindness, bravery and power are assembled into one personality, like that of the hero Rama, we have a ready-made schedule to refer to in the case of our own problems. When he meekly and willingly submits to the dictates of his mother Kaikeyee to get himself usurped for 14 years and resort to a life in forest, away from the pomp and comfort of the mother city, we find a great relinquishing force who gathers around himself the sympathy of masses and therefore rules their heart.

Righteous War

Ramayana shows that for a great war, small-seemingly small-causes are sown as seeds. The chastity of woman forms the main principle for which a war is fought, though pride, prejudice, the corrupt nature of Ravana in handing the affairs of the kingdom, are also concomitant causes. But, for all practical purposes, Rama does not desire to rule Lanka nor has he any territorial ambitions behind his attack on Lanka. The freedom from greed, which is conspicuous by its absence in rich and powerful persons, at once dazzles our eyes in this peculiar attitude of Rama to do the job with dispassion, not for personal ends, but only for justice and righteousness.

A Master

Rama is a master builder of civilization, culture, family relationship, respectfulness, ability, psychological understanding of every situation, religious reform, and last but not the least, the harbinger of a new age of thought, deed and emotions. There is no parallel in the world's history to this character, placed as he is in the hands of destiny, always surmounting difficulties with daring and diligence, and raising himself up as the most towering

personality—a Master of many things—in Indian history. Ramayan has perhaps the greatest influence on Indian philosophical, religious, social, ethical and moral thought. The influence is of the highest order because it lays down the ideal king, the ideal husband, the ideal son, the ideal brother and the ideal leader who shows by his own example what should be done by others.

The Principle of golden mean

In Ramayana, there is a tint of supernatural, but the behaviour of human being is always according to the limits of basic human instincts curbed by social considerations. The golden mean is the rule of the whole development of the story. Whenever there is any extreme situation, Rama is seen always moderate and meaningful, most practical but most theoretical also. When Bibheeshana dislikes to perform the religious rites over the dead body of his evil brother Ravana, Rama does not spare him the strongest advice to end hatred with death—‘**Maranantani Vairani**’. This is perhaps a slap in the face of modern political campaign of defamation after death indulged in in some countries of the world. When Lakshmana sees Bharata with a huge army approaching them in the forest and presumes jealousy and treachery, Rama at once admonishes him not to presume anything, but to wait and watch, thinking of the brighter side. Rama even tells him that he can sit on the throne of Ayodhya if he wishes, to which Bharata would have no objection : The faith in goodness of our brother, the insistence on love—first and always—is the strong equalizing force in his character. Wherever there is idiosyncrasy in anybody’s behaviour, he is always ready with the other point of view and makes a supreme effort to kindle kindness and compassion, regard for justice and duty in all who are so affected.

A classical poetry—More living than life

The poetic form of Ramayana is praised by one and all. Scholars delve deep into it for beautiful passages of translucent natural

descriptions, word-pictures of primordial virginity of forests, the ever-changing panorama of the southern parts of India; historians scan its pages for indications of the customs, structures, political systems, social patterns and family relations; poets are enchanted by the felicity and ease with which Valmiki describes the outward situation and the inner conflict in any given incident; but, above all, the common man takes his inspiration for a better life, a valuable life, and a purposeful life from this classical poetry. It gives him a solace in suffering, a sheet-anchor in the tempest of difficult circumstances and a hope for happiness by controlling his character, when he is confronted with his own little problems. For us, the ideal of an individual as a useful part of the society, and the ideal of society as affording a scope for aspiring individuals to develop to their highest goals, are prominent in this story of Ramachandra, not only the king of Ayodhya, but a monarch of Indian cultural thought. It is a private code of the best conduct and a public presentation of purest and wholesome behaviour.

The name "Rama" has become identical with the inherent goodness of anything—the essential quality of human interest that motivates all good actions.

R A M D A S

HERO—SAINT OF INDIA

By—Vaman H. Pandit.

Preeminently high stands the name of Ramdas in the rosary of Bharatiya saints, for his gospel in life was to achieve unity and to promote strength and security—a national solidarity—and to get rid of the invaders who were committing unheard—of atrocities and to defend the religion and freedom of man on this fair earth.

The seventeenth century was a period of unrest. People's belief in material and religious values was waning like the moon after the full moon day. To restore this faith God fulfills the pledge cited in Shri Bhagwad Gita by incarnating Himself time and again in the world of men whenever religion comes to an end and irreligion prevails.

And true to His eternal pledge and to dispel the doubts of men on this rotating globe, Ramdas was born in 1608 A. D. (Chaitra Suddha Navami Saka 1530).

So stepped forth the vision incarnate in the form of an active and mystic saint—Shri Samarth Ramdas. Early in life he initiated his own *sampradaya* or cult of cymbal and sword. Although this great philosopher-saint was outwardly calm and placid, still below the stormy water of his age he paddled like a devil—duck and so like Heracletus he stands somewhat in spiritual isolation.

“ Other saints of Bharat laid the moral foundations on which Ramdas reared his politico-religious edifice ”, said Justice Ranade. Undoubtly, he was the first saint of Bharat to realise the paramount need of elevating the national consciousness. Hegel, the great German philosopher, said:—“ We want both knowledge and works as we want both religion and national greatness. ”

More than any other saint of Bharat, Ramdas gave a new national ethos to the inhabitants of this land. It was a dynamic concept employed to safeguard the homes and hearths of the suffering humanity. He gave us a complete idea of what was, what it is and what it ought to be. It is hardly possible for me to evaluate the profound significance of his teachings which runs like a golden thread through the entire tapestry of Bharatiya cultural life.

The greatness of a man does not consist in acquiring outer possessions but sacrificing himself to a cause dearer than oneself in the service of the nation—and ultimately in the service of man or the world at large. This was the gospel of the greatest evangelist, I mean of Shri Samarth Ramdas—the sage and seer which our motherland had the honour to produce.

Never before have we felt the need of this gospel of saint Ramdas so much as in the space-age today. We are lacking in national consciousness and if we thoroughly imbibe his teachings, I am confident that they will go to serve as an efficacious antidote to this major evil. He did contribute in no small degree to our spiritual and literary heritage in verse and prose which has become a cynosure of all intelligent eyes—nay, it has been commended by rationalist thinkers of the world. It is one of the wonders of this earth how the saints of Bharat could keep to their rationalism while applauding the doctrine of Bhakti.

And the literature of Ramdas, in this respect, is a rich legacy worth coveting and studying in these days when mankind is standing on the verge of collapse—losing faith between man and man, between east and west and between democratic and communist world.

Amongst his various writings, *Dasbodh* is most important. It is a sovereign volume. It is prose both in style and sentiment.

It deals with worldly affairs. It shows the rigorous logic of his intellect. In short, it is a spiritual autobiography of Ramdas. He presents us in this book a true cosmological argument for the existence of God. "He, indeed, may be called God", says Ramdas, "who is the supreme agent. The true God is indeed he who lived before creation, just as a potter lived before the pot. He who creates the world must necessarily exist before the world. He is changeless. He is immaculate. God produced birth and death and is different from either of them."

Ramdas expounds the practical and social philosophy in *Dasbodh*. Amongst other topics in this volume, he has vividly touched upon what knowledge is; what knowledge is not; the power of untruth; the relation of Body and Soul and God; Power and knowledge; mystic reality as a solace of life and the duties of saints and gurus etc.

Obviously this book has proved a source of effective inspiration to millions of people who can read and understand Marathi. Herein the great saint has displayed his genius like that of Shuka-charya and Vasistha and Valmiki. *Dasbodh* is a perspicacious stream of knowledge. The saint's voice rings out powerfully for those who are groping in darkness.

The most characteristic feature of his teaching is activism. First, he tells us to believe in God; secondly, he tells the man to do his duty to himself; and thirdly he tells the man to do his duty towards the nation. Above all he tells the man that when his efforts are backed by devotion they are sure to succeed. All these virtues were practised by him. He preached only after he had practised.

Besides *Dasbodh*, Ramdas has written beautiful Verses invoking God's merey (*Karunaashtake*) which show that his heart was full

of highest devotion and emotion. His verses addressed to the mind (*Manache Sloka*) are also very trenchant bons-mots—full of observations of the world and full also of the highest spiritual advice of do's and don't's. By far his marvellous vision is to be found in his body of verses called "*Anandavan Bhuvan*" or the Region of Bliss in which he gives free vent to his political sentiments. This poem is the Apocalypse of Ramdas. In this grand vision he has spelled out something of the hopes and beliefs and the purposes of mankind and his longing for a strong and stable rule in which justice and human dignity could flourish along with endurable peace.

To Ramdas goes the credit of turning the corner of our history towards emancipation and that too under unsurmountable obstacles; under instability of unrest; in days of anxiety and change. It was this great saint who rightly initiated the men and women of our beloved motherland in nationalism. His was a most realistic approach then to the national problems. To rejuvenate the whole country was his life mission.

What more should I say ? Let us turn the attention of our land today to achieve a wonderful reconciliation of worldly and spiritual life which Ramdas tried his best to inculcate. The message of Ramdas unfolds truly unlimited prospects of spiritual and material progress for men and women who are living in this wonderful age of moon-flights and satellite communications.

Let us enjoy the Beautiful Vision by reading and studying the books of Shri Samarth Ramdas – the Patriot-saint of India. Let us seek like him the silent enjoyment of divine in self – the ineffable. It is a Vision Romantic. It is a romance of light that never was on sea or land or in outer space. It is a realisation of the divine in man



YOGIRAJ SHRI VASUDEVANAND SARASWATI

Tembe Swami Maharaj

(Biography)

By S. N. Huddar.

Introductory

Lives of Great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime.

— Longfellow.

It is fortunate to be born as a human being in Bharat. It is still more fortunate to have birth as a Brahmin and have inclination to study Veda, Shastra, Upanishat, Smriti, Purana etc., the divine literature which is mostly in Sanskrit, the language of Gods.

Bharat has the most ancient and developed culture because of the Vedic Philosophy, which propogates the ways and means to attav the ultimate aim of human life i.e. peace of mind here-and salvation (Moksh) after death.

In spite of tremendous researches and developments in modern sciences and various means of enjoyment and of pleasures of different sorts, it is observed that the people of modern developed countries are far away from real mental peace and solace. Hence learned thinking persons of Europe, America, Japan etc. are eagerly inclined to study the sublime literature of Ancient India to attain real and lasting peace of mind.

Good moral and ethical thinking is the key of achieving this object. The lives of the incarnations of Gods, Sages and saints are therefore guide-lights for the common people engrossed in worldly worries to proceed on the Path of self-emancipation.

There have been ten incarnations of God Vishnu in different species and at different times in Bharat. After serving the purpose

for which these incarnations were meant, they left this mortal world as other human beings do. These incarnations are adored with devotion all over the country as per one's inclination and the worshipper gets the fruit as per his sincerity and devotion.

Shri Dattatraya is the triple incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, to whom are respectively attributed the functions of creation, protection and destruction of this universe. Shri Dattatreya has been there before any of the incarnations of Shri Vishnu and, it is believed, that He has been surviving all the time past and will be surviving in the future also.

Shri Dattatreya first appeared as a son of Atri Muni and his most devoted wife Anasuya in the Krit Yuga, the first of the four Yugas (divisions of periods). Some of his prominent devotees of this time have been Kartavirya Sahasrarjuna, Ayu, Alark, Pralhad, etc.

Shripad Shri Vallabha and Shri Narsinha Saraswati are Shri Dattatreya's incarnations who lived in 13th and 14th centuries A.D. Shri Guru Charitra is a holy Marathi Volume written by one Saraswati Gengadhar. It narrates the lives of these two incarnations and the volume is respected as much as or even more than the Vedas. Shri Manik Prabhu of Maniknager near Hyderabad, Shri Swami Samarth of AKKALKOT, Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi belong to this 20th century, and they were regarded as Narsinha Saraswati personified. Alike these, Shri Vasudevananda also had been a great devotee of Shri Datta and of his incarnations Shripad Shri Vallabha and Shri Narsinha Saraswati. All his actions and deeds have been as per **A D E S H** (orders) of Shri Datta. An humble attempt is being made here to narrate his life-sketch in short.

Shri Ranga Awadhut Swami, a prominent disciple of Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati, desired that the life of his Gurudeo be

written and published in English. Shri Vasudeo Shastri Prakashkar expressed this intention in Shri Vasudeo Niwas, Poona. And my Gurubandhu Kahalekar informed this to me at Jalna. This inspired me to write this short life-sketch. This could not have been achieved but for the blessings of Shri Gurudeo revered Yogachudamani Shri Vamanravji Gulavani Maharaj—another prominent devoted disciple of Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati Swami Maharaj.

I acknowledge my incere gratitude to revered Vidya Vachaspati Pandit Shri Dutta Shastri Kaveeshwar, who has written in Marathi the life of Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati and the same is published by Shri Vasudevanand Grantha Prakashan Mandal, sponsored by most revered Gurudeo Shri Vamanravji Gulavani Maharaj. This volume has been the main source to write this life-sketch.

Shri Kinjawadekar Shastri wrote a short life-stetch of Shri Vasudevanand for the special issue of 'Prasad,' a Marathi monthly of Poona. Shri Yogananda Swami alias Ganda Maharaj, another prominent disciple of Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati (who passed his last days at Gunj, District Parbhani) had also written in detail 'Shri Guru Murti Rahasya' in ovi form, containing 139 chapters, about 40 years ago. These volumes have also been in my view while writing this sketch.

Shri Vasudevananda Saraswati was born at Mangaon, about 8 miles away from Sawantwadi State in South Maharashtra. It has a population of about 4000. Hari Bhat, well versed in Veda Shastras, was his grand-father. In 1830, Hari Bhat had written in hand a copy of the holy volume 'Shri Guru Charitra' which is yet well preserved.

Hari Bhat came to Mangaon as a priest and stayed at Sitaram Bhat Konkar's. Hari Bhat had a son Ganesh and a daughter Kashi. Later he had 3 more sons — Ramkrishna, Balkrishna and Vishnu, and two daughters, Yamuna and Bhima.

When Sitram Bhat's wife died, Kashi was given to him in marriage and was named Annapurnabai. Sitaram Bhat's daughter Yesubai was married to Ganesh and she was named Ramabai. Ganesh Bhat and Ramabai are the parents of Shri Vasudevananda.

Ganesh Bhat and Ramabai both were pious and great devotees of Shri Datta. Ganesh Bhat often went to Ganagapur and once he lived there for 12 years. Shri Datta expressed to him in a dream that He was pleased with his devotion and told him to return home (Mangaon) and that he need not come to Gangapur again.

BIRTH

With the blessings of Shri Datta, Ramabai gave birth to Vasudeo on Shravan Krishna panchmi, Shaka 1776 (13th August 1854). Ganesh Bhat was always engrossed in rituals. He did not look to the family affairs. Hence Hari Bhat had to look after all the household matters. As the family could not be maintained only on priesthood, he managed to till some land with the help of a servant.

At the age of three, Vasudeo began to learn the alphabets in the village school. Hari Bhat loved his grand son very much as he was very smart and intelligent. Hari Bhat taught him (as is customary in Hindu Brahmin families) Sanskrit Roopawali Samaschakra, Amarkosh, Ashtadhyayee, Shiksha, Stotras etc and he learnt them readily within a short period.

THREAD CEREMONY

At the age of 8, Vasudeo's thread ceremony was celebrated and he began to do Sandhya every morning and evening, and also read 'Shri Guru Charitra' regularly. It is a practice in Bharat to learn Vedas after thread ceremony. Vasudev also started his study of Vedas at Vishnubhat Ukidve of Mangaon.

One or two years later Hari Bhat died. One of Vasudeo's uncles, Balkrishna, took away all the articles, clothes, utensils, ornaments etc. and left Vasudeo's aunt and mother alone with a debt of Rs. 500/-. As there was no male adult member to look after this family, Vasudeo's aunt asked Nana Konkar, one of her relatives, to manage the affairs.

Study of Vedas, Shastras & Sanskrit

Vasudeo studied Vedas and came home only for dinner. He himself cooked rice, wearing silk or pure cotton cloth, and after Vaishwadeo (offering rice to Fire-God) he took his meals. Chaste behaviour is the first rule of Dharma i.e. religion. Vasudeo developed Brahma-Tej by his purity and observance of rituals punctually and regularly. While studying, Vasudeo wore pure cloth and avoided the touch of a woman or a shudra.

Learning of Vedas is a penance for a Brahmin. Later Vasudeo learnt Sanskrit at Shambhu Shastri Sadhale of Mangaon. He also studied Raghuvansh and some part of Astrology.

Once Sadhale Shastri suggested an auspicious day for starting the construction of a house. Vasudeo pointed out a defect in the *muhurta*. Similarly Sadhale Shastri told that a particular month would be a grace (adhik) month the next year. As per Vasudeo's calculations, some other month was to be adhik, and his calculations proved to be correct. Hence Sadhale Shastri felt jealous and thereafter prohibited Vasudeo to come to him for learning.

After the death of his grand father Hari Bhat, Vasudeo had to go to do the work of a priest. After his work he would return home for dinner as he did not dine at others and without doing Vaiswadeo. While dining, if he heard the sound of a woman in menses or of a Shudra, he would leave the food and preferred to remain half starved or even wholly starved.

Vasudeo lived a very simple life. He wore a cloth around his loin and one over his body. He did not use sandals or shoes and always walked bare-footed. He slept on a straw mat. He had great regard for his mother. Due to such purity, learning and pious behaviour, people respected him and paid liberally for his religious services.

MARRIAGE

Due to poverty it was rather difficult to get a good bride for Vasudeo Bhat easily. But Nana Konkar initiated and fixed Bayo, daughter of Balajipant Gode, Havaldar of Rangnagarh, for Vasudeo. She was a simple girl with a defect in one of her legs. Vasudeo Bhat was twenty one years old at this time. Bayo was called Anna-poorna after the marriage. After marriage Vasudeo Bhat took the vow of Smartagni and observed Gayatri Purashcharan. Due to scanty resources at Managaon, Vasudeo went to Pedhe in Goa. A rich person tested Vasudeo Bhat. He held a coin in his closed hand and asked Vasudeo Bhat what it was. Vasudeo made a calculation and said that it was an eight-anna piece. Being pleased with the knowledge of young Vasudeo Bhat he directed him to Nilam Bhat Padhye, a renowned astrologer, for further study of astrology. Nilam Bhat was also much pleased with the good behaviour and brilliance of Vasudeo Bhat. Vasudeo hardly studied for six months when he received a message that his father was seriously ill at Mangaon. Vasudeo Bhat returned home.

Ganesh Bhat passes away

Ganesh Bhat knew beforehand the time and hour of his end and he asked all his relatives not to weep on his death. At the fixed hour he passed away peacefully.

Some Instances of the Power of Mantras

Observing purity and chaste behaviour, Vasudeo Bhat had learnt all the Vedas. Hence he acquired Siddhis (miraculous powers) of *Veda Mantras* very early. There have been numerous instances to prove this fact.

Once Vasudeo Bhat was going for Mantra-Pushpa with a person. They saw a serpent in the way. The person accompanying asked Vasudeo Bhat to use Mantra. Vasudeo Bhat took some earth in his hand, chanted a mantra and put the earth around the serpent, and they proceeded further. Vasudeo returned home in the night. Next day after dinner he remembered the incident of the serpent. They both went to see the serpent. They found that the reptile moved and moved within the boundaries of the earth and was lying in a tired state. Vasudeo Bhat chanted another mantra and removed the bondage. Instantly the serpent went away. Seeing this Vasudeo Bhat decided not to use the mantra for a serpent.

Vasudeo Bhat once went to his sister. Her cow was turbulent and stormy. She ask her brother to make the cow tame by using a mantra. Vasudeo did so and the cow became humble.

Day after day Vasudeo's name and fame spread all over the region for his learning and power of mantias. Even Police Officers came to him to find out murderres, thieves and other culprits.

A woman at Mangaon was much harassed by some powerful spirit. Some times she was taken up high in the sky and was thrown down on earth. She requested Vasudeo Bhat for relief. He wrote a *mantra* on *Bhurjapatra* (a sacred leaf) and asked her to wear it in her necklace. By doing this she was relieved of the trouble. But the same night this spirit caught the neck of Vasudeo Bhat. After reciting Shi Datta Mantra, he got a little relief. Seeing his acute pain, his mother got up and came to him. Vasudeo Bhat asked her to bring a little rice, on which he chanted a mantra and threw them on all sides. Later God Datta said that while relieving the woman, he did not take care of self-protection and hence this trouble.

HOME ATMOSPHERE

Vasudeo Bhat's mother Ramabai and wife Annapurnabai were not on good terms and so they often quarrelled. Vasudeo Bhat

had great regard for his mother and so he did not interfere. But poor Annapurnabai was passing her days in distress.

Once Vasudeo Bhat had to go to some village. He asked his mother to prepare food early. Annapurnabai was in bed due to high fever. Ramabai thought that she was pretending. Vasudeo Bhat touched the body and found that she had high fever. On hearing the son say this, Ramabai was furious and she blamed Vasudeo Bhat for taking his wife's side and disregarding his mother. Vasudeo Bhat had to go to the village without food that day.

Out of regard for his mother, Vasudeo Bhat did not speak with his wife. His mother was of hot temper; and so he and his wife had to listen to her bitter words every now and then. Annapurnabai was very simple by nature, but, due to mother-in-law's repeated coaxing and quarrelling, she became irritated at times and blamed her fate for this state of things.

Due to such home atmosphere, Vasudeo Bhat had no peace of mind. So he wished to go to Narasoba-wadi and at times expressed his intention of being a Sanyasi.



MY FIRST PILGRIMAGE TO SHIRDI

By :- A Devotee, Bombay

(Continued from March issue)

To see the place and find out the best way to reach it, I first came to Shirdi with two friends in 1958/59, and got a lot of happiness and pleasure out of Baba's Samadhi "Darshan". I was pleasantly surprised to see the arrangements for comfortable stay of devotees at such a small place. I had expected to see a cluster of huts and Samadhi or "Mazaar" with or without any shelter on top. I had heard that many rich people and Film Producers etc. who had faith in Baba visited Shirdi before launching any new venture and stayed there at least one night. If lucky they were guided by Baba that night by way of directives in a dream or otherwise. We were all very happy to see the grandeur of Baba's Samadhi and the veneration by people of all shades and religions, rich and poor alike. We stayed there overnight but did not have any dreamy direction as we did not have any problems. I did have such a dream later which will be narrated subsequently.

Later, I visited Shirdi with my family (wife and three daughters.) Wife and myself beseeched Baba for the gift of a son. During next pregnancy of my wife, we both went for Baba's Darshan and were blessed with a son at the end of 1959. Will you not call this Baba's Kripa ? At least I did.

In 1962/63, I got into trouble with the revenue collecting department of the Government which put on me a demand of over Rs. 55000/- after taking three long years to check up and arrive at the figures. I was too much stunned and could not gather courage enough to go through details. This long checking of three years put me under great strain and worry and made me an easy victim to over-drinking. More so, because, if ultimately I was made to pay this heavy amount, my business career would come to an end. In other words it meant starvation for all of us. I did have the right of appeal. But, I think, in matters of revenue,

very few appeals are successful. Besides, before going into appeal I was required to pay in about Rs. 18000/- under the law. I felt very hopeless as I feared I would not be able to pay in that much in time for the appeal.

I had been given four show cause notices, each of about 30 typed pages, pertaining to four years of accounts. But looking at the final figures, I could not rally enough courage to go through the same. I feared I may collapse while doing so and hence put it off for 2/3 weeks till my Advocate pressed me to do so to avoid missing the last date for appeal. Somehow, things so happened that I was able to pay the pre-appeal amount.

Hoping to have Baba's blessings and courage, I went to Shirdi intending to stay for 3/4 days to study all the show cause notices and prepare grounds for the appeal. Arriving by car at about 2 P.M. the Sansthan Management on my request kindly gave me a room with a table and chair for doing my work. Being tired I went to sleep and intended to start my work in the evening; but I was not required to do so. I had a strange dream. There was a very severe earthquake and the whole building was shaking like a leaf. I told Baba, "So you have brought me here to die, away from my family." Still in dream, I felt the earthquake was over. I raised my head and saw my wife and son standing before me and smiling at me. Just after this the dream was over and I woke up. Out of sheer joy and great relief, there were tears in my eyes. Just then some Sansthan employee came to see me and was surprised to see me in tears. In answer to his query I told him that Baba was kind and that He had solved the problem for which I had come to get an answer and help.

The dream was a clear indication that I would be very badly shaken but will get through the whole affair,—and get through I did. The Sansthan management were surprised when I told them that I would be leaving the next morning, although a few hours earlier I had asked to keep the room for 3/4 days. I left Shirdi

the next day without reading the Show Cause Notices, as I did not like to spoil the Bliss kindly showered on me by Baba the day before.

I went into appeal and my Advocate was of the view that I would be lucky if I got about 1/3rd relief. However my Advocate and myself did the best to present the case. During the hearing when a very crucial point was being discussed, in my mind I called Baba to come and get into that Lady Officer to make her understand the point in my favour. On this point hinged the whole case and I had never expected anyone to accept my statement, correct though it was. Hence it came as a pleasant surprise even for my Advocate when, after two days of collecting and co-relating figures and facts, my point of view was fully accepted. When the result was known to other Advocates, some suspected bribing and some would not believe it. Absolutely no bribing was done as the Lady Officer was and is totally above board. My Advocate got a good name for this and subsequently got many cases of appeal pending before that officer. Acceptance of my case was really unique and people still wonder how I was able to prove it. But was I ? No. It was Baba's work.

The result was that the Government's demand was reduced to almost what I had paid before the appeal. Topping this miracle was the fact that I earned more than this amount from a deal of chemicals supplied to the Defence Department without an investment of a single paisa. My only investment was labour and contacts, backed, of course, by an ardent faith in Baba. Chemicals are not at all my line of business. I am a dealer in hardware and tools. But by Baba's grace, I got help from outside my line due to a chance meeting and friendship with a Defence Officer.

Can anybody with my experiences of Baba's benevolence doubt Him ?

Almost all my friends and relatives started having faith in Baba after knowing about my dream, the result of my appeal in the Revenue Case and that case of Permits and quotas which (concluded.) brought me to Baba's feet. (concluded)

MOTHER SITA

Behold ! The sweet and serene Sita,
The consort of Sri Rama.
Following her husband into the exile
Of her own volition and will,
Giving up the pelf and pleasure,
Embracing adversity; what a wonder !

She prefers the forest life,
Full of peril and strife,
To the comforts of the palace,
For she likes the fragrance,
And the sweet company,
Of her Lord. Behold and see !

Thorns prick her lotus feet,
But she wouldn't retreat,
Braving the discomforts and danger,
Of the forest life; what a wonder !

She's taken away by cruel Ravana,
To far away Lanka,
But she wouldn't forsake Rama
And fall a prey to the pranks of Ravana !

She lives a chaste life,
Facing the sorrow and strife,
In the palaces of Ravana,
Till she's rescued by Rama.

We salute Mother Sita,
The Queen of Ayodhya.

— Bakht N. Moolchandani.

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