

SHRI

SAI LEELA



“Welcome! Oh, Sai”



July

60 Paise

1975

SHRI SAI LEELA

JULY 1975

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Picture on the Cover Page

The lad who pointed out his horse to Chand Patil, came to Shirdi along with Chand Patil's marriage party, which camped in the field near the Khandoba Temple. Shri Mhalsapat; the pujari of Khandoba, at once recognised the lad and welcomed him spontaneously with the words, "WELCOME! OH, SAI!"

SHRI SAI LEELA

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All Roads Lead to God

“On whatever Road men approach Me, on that Road I move to meet them : for all Roads are Mine,” - saith the Lord. All Religions are Roads : all disciplines are Roads : all lead to the One Lord. This is more than tolerance : it is reverence. The Lord has reverence for man. He goes forth to meet men on whatever Way they walk. All Roads lead to Him, -science, philosophy, literature, daily life!

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EDITORIAL

Food

All living beings need food. In ancient India the value of food has been described as follows :-

पृथिव्यां त्रीणि रत्नानि जलमन्नं सुभाषितम् ।

The poet says that water, food and good words, these are the three jewels in this world. In recent years man has started constructing dams and canals; but prior to that he was entirely depending on rain water for production of food. As over population was not a problem in those ancient days, food was ample for the population existing then in the world, still food was valued as much as a jewel in ancient India as voiced by the poet in the above verse.

The times have now changed. Human beings have become conscious of their fundamental rights. The essential necessities of modern human beings are now being described as "food, clothing and shelter". The United Nations Organization has been preaching that every nation should try to provide these necessities to their citizens. A number of sub-committees of this organization are busy in helping different needy countries in providing these primary necessities to their people. It will thus be seen that food still continues to be a very important constituent of the human society.

The conditions regarding supply of food in our country are quite precarious. The population explosion is a constant menace to our food position. In addition to the abnormally growing population, nature is hitting hard some portion or the other of our country. There is usually a drought in either one or two

states of our country. Food is therefore required to be rushed to the drought areas. During rainy season, there are floods in some parts of the country and then also it becomes difficult to reach food to these parts.

Under these circumstances our rulers are constantly required to go abroad and beg for food. Some countries which are supplying food grains to our country are under the impression that they are obliging us and are therefore, trying to have political domination over our country. The primary necessity of human beings in this country is thus being taken advantage of by other affluent countries.

The western countries have only two ways of classifying food viz. vegetarian and non-vegetarian; but we are classifying the food in three different ways. In the Bhagawadgeeta; the human beings have been classified in three ways as Satwa, (सत्त्व), Raj (रज), and Tam (तम), and it has also been described that these three types of people have three different tastes. While describing the habits, thoughts and deeds of these three types of people Lord Krishna says in the seventeenth canto :-

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ॥१७॥

After this shloka the food liked by the three types of people has been described by Lord Krishna in the next three shlokas viz. 8, 9, 10. In our daily life we come across different people whose likes and dislikes of food are varied. Even the most common article of food like milk is not liked by all. Some like milk in all its forms like plain milk, curds, butter milk etc; but we often come across people who do not like plain milk, though they like it only in tea or coffee and here too they will not like even a small bit of the cream of that same milk to float at the top of their cup of tea! Thus we get from the above shlokas a clear solution of the queer likes and dislikes of people.

Food is a double - edged weapon. It is no doubt necessary for the growth and maintenance of all living beings; but its excess is always harmful. In all books on medicine, it has always been advised that you should be "युक्ताहारविहार" that means moderate in your food and entertainment. It has also been advised that your food should be plain and simple. It should not be spicy. Medical books say that overeating has direct bad effects on the body. Similarly eating of spicy and hot things also changes the temperament of a person accordingly.

Eating of tasty and delicious food and being addicted to it is a sort of a vice. A man who has special liking for such food will not relish any other sort of simple food. He will always be finding fault with that food. If we observe the food taken by all saints of old and modern days, we will be able to know that the secret of their serenity, purity and calmness of mind lies in the simple food that they take. Much has been said and written about the food that was being taken by Mahatma Gandhi and the food that is being taken by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. Their food is restricted only to certain things and the quantity of food that they take is also limited so as not to cause under nourishment nor have excessive load on the stomach.

Some modern saints like Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave have their views about food as stated above. Sai Baba, who is also a modern saint, had altogether different view about food. In Sai Satcharitra we find the following account about the food that he ate :-

"Baba Begging food

Blessed are the people of Shirdi in front of whose houses Baba stood as a beggar and called out, "Oh Lassie, give me a piece of bread" and spread out His hand to receive the same. In one hand He carried a tumrel (tinpot) and in the other a zoli or choupadari, i. e. a rectangular piece of cloth. He daily visited

certain houses and went from door to door. Liquid or semi-liquid things such as soup, vegetables, milk or buttermilk were received in the tinpot, while cooked rice, bread and such solid things were taken in the Zoli. Baba's tongue knew no taste as he had acquired control over it. So how could He care for the taste of the different things collected together? Whatever things he got in His zoli and in the tinpot were mixed together and taken by Baba to his heart's content. Whether particular things were tasty or otherwise was never noticed by Baba as if his tongue was devoid of the sense of taste altogether. Baba begged till noon, but His begging was very irregular. Some days he went a few rounds, on other days upto twelve noon. The food thus collected was thrown in a kundi, i e. earthen pot. Dogs, cats and crows freely ate from it and Baba never drove them away. The woman who swept the floor of the masjid took some 10 or 12 pieces of bread to her house and nobody prevented her from doing so. How could, He, who even in dreams never warded off cats and dogs by harsh words and signs, refuse food to poor helpless people? Blessed indeed is the life of such a noble person! People in Shirdi took Him in the beginning for a mad Fakir. He was known in the village by this name. How could one who lived on alms by begging a few crumbs of bread, be revered and respected? But this Fakir was very liberal of heart and hand, disinterested and charitable. Though He looked fickle and restless from outside. He was firm and steady inside. His way was inscrutable. Still even in that small village there were a few kind and blessed people who recognized and regarded Him as a great Soul." (P. 47 to 48 Sai Satcharita. VII Edition. 1974).

It is said of a few people, who are gluttons, that "they live to eat" while there are many selfless and noble souls in this world who "simply eat to live". They are aware that if they have to live they must eat something, because like water food too is a necessity of life. Such saints, who are never interested in what they eat, are not the slaves of hunger. It must be beca-

use of his Yogic power that Shri Sai Baba got control over his hunger and tongue and could therefore, keep them under subjugation.

Fast is the other side of the coin of eating. Absence of eating or abstaining from food is fast. All saints have condemned too much addiction to rich food and they have at the same time recommended observance of fasts. Even books on medicine have advised the observance of fast as a remedy for cure of a number of diseases. In the second canto of Shrimadbhagawad-geeta, Arjuna asks Lord Krishna to state the way of recognising a स्थितप्रज्ञ (one whose intellect has become stable). That time Lord Krishna told him that when a person discards all sensuous desires and remains pleased within himself, then he can be called a स्थितप्रज्ञ. While explaining further the relation between food and desires, Lord Krishna says विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ॥२१५९॥ Here the Lord has given a general rule. The temperament of a person varies according to the food that he takes. Naturally his sensuous desires will be keen so long as he is taking a diet which will elate his system. If on the other hand, he abstains from food, then his desires also will come to a stand-still and he will be free from sensuous desires. It is not easy for everybody to follow the advice of Lord Krishna to the last letter of the word; but we can occasionally observe fasts or at least follow Shri Sai Baba and be disinterested in what we are eating.

According to modern conceptions, every man is running after wealth by which he expects to have rich and sumptuous food everyday. As rich food, when taken regularly, gives rise to sensuous desires, we must avoid that and eat whatever simple food we will get. At the same time we must be indifferent about what we are getting to eat. Thus if we bear in mind this basic principle of the relation of sensuous desires and food and remain indifferent about the food that we eat like Shri Sai Baba we are also likely to progress towards achievement of stable intellect, which will help us to attain lasting peace of mind, which is the greatest need of the present age.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By : Swami Chinmayananda

The Law of Invocation

The eloquent declaration that the Omnipotent Lord is functioning through our equipments in all our activities opens up enchanting possibilities. If this be true there can be no limit to the abilities and capacities in man since the Infinite is functioning through us, Infinite are our potentialities.

This is also demonstrated sometimes in some people. An inspired artist or poet is capable of excelling his own past normal performances. At times we all have experienced an excellence which we cannot reproduce at will. At such moments we ourselves become excited onlookers of our own perfect performances. Such spontaneity is not always with us --- it comes of its own accord; we seem to have no authority over it.

According to the Geeta there is a definite discipline by which we can come to live almost continuously in the spontaneity of inspiration in our thoughts and actions. The great saints have demonstrated this possibility in the daring dynamism of their actions and in the magnitude of their life's achievements. To many of us it is an accidental mood; but those rare moments are fulfilling in-as-much as in that rare mood we excel in our actions and are rewarded by a sense of joyous satisfaction, at once refreshing and nourishing.

Scientists, artists, men of action --- all have climbed to the peak of their individual achievement in life, during such accidental moods of inspiration and unearthly spontaneity.

Geeta echoes here the Upanishad declarations that we can learn to invoke this divine mood at will and train ourselves to remain continuously in it, and thus come to constantly function with heightened joy and subtle thrill. This was already discussed in the last chapter when we were advised upon the technique of **Karma-Yoga** --- the art of fulfilling all our obligatory duties in a divine **Yagna** - spirit of total dedication.

Here are the conditions necessary for the influx of this enthralling mood. (IV-10) **"Freed from attachments, fear and anger, absorbed in me, taking refuge in me, purified by meditations, many have attained to my Being."**

Where attachment is, there fear for the loss of the thing becomes natural, and anger is automatic when fear entertained is found baseless. These three are unavoidable concomitants, when our attention gets turned out towards the objects - of - pleasure, seeking therein our satisfaction and happiness. **"Freed from attachment, fear, and anger"** (veetaragabhayakrodhah) is an essential condition for the invocation of the mood of true inspiration. These three stumbling sentiments are natural with us, who are living our ego-centric little life of sense-gratifications. Hence Lord guides us how we can rise above the attachment - fear - anger complex in us. Those who are **"absorbed in Me"** (manmayaah) are persons who are not absorbed in the ego. This all-absorbing identification with the Lord can come to man only when they **"take refuge in Me"** (maamupaasritaah).

We, as common folk, without much thoughts assure our life's joys with objects of pleasures, house, wealth, relations etc. We take refuge in these worldly things for our security. The more we do so the more our faith in them increases.

Krishna advises us to take refuge in him, so that our faith in him deepens, until we come to be as fully absorbed in him as we are today absorbed in our ego and ego-interpreted world of experiences.

When these three things are accomplished --- 1) Freed from attachment, fear and anger, 2) absorbed in Him, 3) taking refuge in Him --- then all our personality layers, physical-mental-and-intellecutal, come to rest single-pointedly in the contemplation of Him. This is the State of Meditation. In awareness of His Presence when we serve, our **Vasanas** get exhausted --- and so our inner equipments of mind and intellect become more and more pure. Into such a pure-bosom inspiration-divine floods in, and inspires the pure-hearted to act with an irresistable charm. Such a pure-heart automatically invokes the highest spiritual bliss, and experiences the full beatitude of the Self.

But all men do not use their mind for the invocation of the Supreme. There are scientists, artists, politicians, economists, authors, and others --- each producing spectacular results, often products of some subtle inspiration. How do the generality of people get their inspiration?

Krishna answers this logical doubt, and says, (IV-11) **"In whatever way men worship Me, the same way I fulfil their desires; it is my way that men tread everywhere."** Herein we have the very basis of one of the Hindu characteristics --- its incorruptible tolerance. Any one invoking the Lord in any form, be it in a church or mosque, or a Vihar, or a Gurudwara, they all are direct "lanes" on the same road --- to His Infinite Beauty-Palace.

Subjectively, from the stand-point of man's personality reconstruction, whatever be the mode of invocation, he gains the fulfilment of his desire, if the conditions are all fulfilled. With single-pointed intense consistency one may invoke war, and another peace: both shall have their desires gratified. There is nothing impossible for man --- only he must be able to steady his mind, intelligently apply it with the required intensity and constancy : he shall gain what he wishes --- be it spiritual unfoldment or material gains in this world.

As they invoke so will I give them : (ye yatthaa maam prapadyanthe taamstatthaiva bhaamyaham). Everyone comes to his gain, in his own field of endeavour, according to his intense invocation --- but all are from me alone. As the Infinite Self is Omnipotent, all abilities, successes, gains and joys are from him alone --- although different men may invoke him differently.

The secular and spiritual, the honest and the dishonest, the saint and the sinner --- all men, of all persuasions and professions, all of them walk, everywhere, my path alone : (mama vartmaanuvartante manushyaah paarttha sarvasah). Every success, any splendid performance, anywhere, at any time, are all sparks from the pure inspiration --- which is the State of Selfhood.

Eliminating all attachment, fear and anger, with a steady mind, through meditation upto him, some come to experience the Infinite Beatitude. Others prompted by noble desires, invoke him, and in his grace of inspiration achieve success. Even those who have nothing but low selfish desires and ambitions of wealth, power, sense-gratification etc. even they achieve these fulfilments by invoking in themselves the same Infinite Power only. Declares Krishna (IV-12) **"Craving for success in their undertakings in this world, some worship Gods; for, success in actions is quickly gained in the world of men"**. Worldly success is easy and enchanting to the many, and therefore, they run to invoke "Gods" --- the Powerful ones; even there they are but invoking aspects of the Infinite Supreme Power Divine.

Majority of people run for worldly gains and material successes because they are easy to get at, and they do not demand subtler self-efforts. In spiritual successes each has to strive alone for his inner beauty and cultural development; physical exercises and efforts are much more easier than mental disciplines and contemplations. And everywhere the law of invocation is the same.

(Courtesy :- Geeta Office, Powai)

SHRI GURU CHARITRA

By :- Shri S. N. Huddar

(Continued from June 1975 issue)

CHAPTER 6

Ravan and Gokarna Mahabaleshwar

Namdharak- "Swami, though Trimurti was Siddha, (Having Yogic power to do and undo things) why did he visit different holy places and why did he prefer Gokarna to other places? What is its significance?"

Shri Siddha- "I am much delighted with your question and I am encouraged to narrate incidents from Shri Guru's life. Shripad Shrivallabha reached Gokarna and on his way he made disciples and gave them divine advice.

Gokarna is a sacred place of Shri Shiva and one of the twelve famous Jyotirlingas. Shri Ganesh founded here the original Linga-image of Shiva. It is known as Mahabaleshwar, the tale of which I shall narrate to you now.

"Ravan's mother Kaikaya (wife of Pulasti Manasputra of Brahma) was a great devotee of Shiva. She worshipped a new Shiva Linga every day. One day she could not get a new Shiva Linga. Fearing that her 'Vrat' would be futile, she prepared an earthen linga and began to worship it with devotion. Seeing this, Ravan asked her what she was doing. She said that she was worshipping a Shiva-Linga. Ravan said, 'You being my mother, it is a great misfortune that you should worship an earthen Shiva Ling. Well what do you intend to achieve by this worship?'"

Mother replied that thereby she will get a place in Kailas, abode of Shiva after death. Thereupon Ravan said, 'why do you take so much troubles? I shall bring Kailas itself to you.'

Saying this, he went to Kailas and began to shake it violently with his 20 hands. He tried to lift it up. Due to this action of his, 7 Patals were shaken, Shesh moved his hood, the tortoise began to tremble with fear. Amarpur (capital of Indra the King of Gods) and Heaven were shocked. Parwati went to Shri Shiva with fear and said, 'What has happened to Kailas today? When everyone is in distress how are you lying at ease? Please do something to check this calamity.'

Shri Shiva said to her, 'You need not be anxious Ravan, one of my devotees, is playing a game'.

Parwati entreated, 'Kindly protect the Gods, who are terrified'

Shri Shiva pressed Ravan's 10 heads and 20 hands underneath the Kailas. Finding himself in distress, Ravan uttered 'Shiva-Shiva' and further prayed 'Shri Shiva,' I have made a mistake. Forgive me. I seek your shelter. Kindly do not kill me, your devotee.'

Shri Shiva, who is very simple and kind, was pleased by his prayer, so he took him up from beneath. Ravan then cut his head, turned his hands into violin, he attached his intestines to serve as musical wires. He then began to chant Samveda and sing other Ragas on the tune of this musical instrument. He praised Shri Shiva in Nine Rasas and Thirtysix Ragas.

Being much pleased by Ravan's performance at great personal sacrifice, Shri Shiva appeared before him and said, 'I am much pleased. Ask for whatever you desire.'

Ravan said 'Oh God of Gods, Laxmi is my maid-servant. I possess all the 8 treasures. Brahma is my priest, and all 33 crore Gods are serving me day and night. The Sun, the Moon, the Varuna and the Wind also obey me. Agni (Fire God) washes my clothes, Yama does not take away anybody without my permission. Indrajit is my son and Kumbhakarna is my brother. Kamdhenu is at my doors. Now I have come to take away Kailas with me as my mother has accepted a 'Vrat' to worship you daily. Kindly fulfil my mother's desire.'

Kailaspati Shri Shiva said, 'If your mother wishes to worship me, what is the necessity of taking Kailas to her. I shall give you Atma-Linga which will fulfil all her desires instantly. It is just like my soul.'

Saying this, he gave his Atma-Linga to Ravan and said, 'After bath, place this at a holy place reciting Rudra sukta and worship it with 108 jap (recitation of a particular mantra). One, who worships this Linga continuously for 3 years, will attain my prowess. One, who possesses this Linga, will live for eternity, one is relieved of any great sin, simply with the sight of this Linga. Do not place this on the ground till you reach Lanka.'

Taking the Atma-Linga, Ravan at once started for Lanka. Naradmuni immediately approached Indra and said to him, 'How are you sitting idle? Ravan has become immortal. You will lose all your prominence. Shri Shiva has given him Atma-Linga and has assured him that if he would worship it for 3 years with devotion, he will be Ishwar himself. How will you then rescue 33 crores of gods who are in his custody. Better you all be his slaves. Also send divine damsels like Urwashi, Rambha, Menka etc. to him.'

Being shocked, Indra requested Narad to advise what he should do. Narad asked him to go to Brahma. Indra and Narad

went to Brahma and narrated what had taken place. Then accompanied by Indra and Narad, Brahma went to Shri Vishnu and requested him to devise some means to overcome this calamity.

Shri Vishnu was enraged to hear this tale. He, with all others immediately went to Shri Shiva. Shri Vishnu said to Shri Shiva, 'What made you give Atma-Linga to Ravan, the most wicked, who has made all the gods his captives? How do you bless such cruel persons? Now he will conquer even heaven.'

Shri Shiva said, 'I was extremely pleased with his devotion. He cut his head and hands and made a violin using his intestines as strings and sang Samveda and other songs in different ragas. This time if he had asked for Parwati, I would have given her even to him.'

Shri Vishnu said, 'You give such blessings and the demons become impudent and then we are troubled much as they harass the gods and Brahmins and I have to descend on the earth. Well tell me when did you give the Ling to Ravan?'

Shri Shiva said, 'I gave it to him only 2 hours before.' Hearing this Shri Vishnu immediately sent his Sudarshan Chakra to hide the Sun and asked Narad to go to Ravan and induce him to linger on the way, as he would like to observe evening Sandhya. Then he called Ganesh and said to him, 'Ravan always disregards you. All bow to you first and you fulfil their desires. While those who speak ill of you, you bring obstacles in their undertakings. Ravan deceived Shri Shiva and has taken away from him the most valuable Atma-Linga. So you should go to him in the form of a Brahmachari boy and winning his confidence, take the Atma-Linga from him at Sun-set, when he would engage himself in the evening Sandhya and place the Linga on the earth. If you do so, the Linga will remain there. Saying this Shri Vishnu gave Ganesh various sweets, tilballs, gur, cocoanut kernel, milk, ghee, sugar etc.

Narad had already proceeded. Ganesh followed him hurriedly. Narad approached Ravan and said, 'I had just been to Kailas and knew that you pleased Shri Shiva by your hard penance and have brought his Atma-Linga from him. You have obtained extraordinary power and strength due to this. This Linga has great significance. Please let me see the Linga, I shall explain to you all its qualities.'

As Ravan did not believe Narad, he showed him the Linga from a distance. Narad asked, 'Do you know when and how this Linga came into existence? This is a very interesting account. A black skinned bright deer having all fragrant things, was lying in Brahmand-Khand. Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh once went there for hunting. They killed this deer and satisfied their hunger with its flesh. The deer had 3 horns on its head and 3 Lingas below. Each one of them took one Linga and preserved it as his Atma-Linga. One, who worships this for 3 years, becomes Ishwar himself. The place where this Linga is placed, is like Kailas. Therefore Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh have great prominence over all other gods.'

Ravan intercepted, 'I have no time to listen to you, as I have to reach Lanka soon. Let me proceed further on my way.'

Narad said, 'This is evening time. You know the Vedas, you should act as prescribed by the Vedas. This is the time for evening Sandhya. Let us perform the same.' Saying this Narad went away for Sandhya.

In the meantime Ravan saw Ganesh in the form of a Brahmachari boy who was plucking 'durvas' (a particular grass). Ravan thought that that boy would not deceive him. Better observe Sandhya entrusting the Linga to that boy.

So thinking he approached Ganesh, who was afraid to see Ravan with ten heads coming to him. But he began to run away.

Ravan asked him, 'who are you? who are your parents?'

Ganesh said, 'Why are you inquiring? What does my father owe you? Ravan smiled and said 'Don't be afraid of me. I am asking this only out of curiosity.'

Ganesh replied, 'I am the son of Shri Shiva. He has ash marks all over the body, has a necklace of Rudra-beads around his neck and bears hair-locks on his head. My mother is Parwati. My father rides a bull Nandi with my mother and begs for alms daily.'

Ravan said, 'your father is a pauper. He begs for alms from door to door. So it seems that you are unhappy at home. I reside in a beautiful city Lanka, rich with magnificent buildings, gardens and other wealth. You live with me. I shall give you whatever you desire.'

Ganesh said, 'there are many Rakshasas in Lanka. They will devour me, a boy living in forest. Hence I would not come to Lanka. I am hungry and so I am eating these sweets.'

Ravan again entreated him to hold the Linga in his hand till he observed Sandhya.

Thereafter Ganesh said with hesitation, 'I am an ignorant boy. I won't hold this Linga in my hand as it may be heavy. Let me go to my place.' Still Ravan persuaded him and induced Ganesh to hold the Linga and he proceeded to observe Sandhya on the sea shore.

Ganesh warned him, 'Mind, as soon as I feel the Linga heavy, I shall place it on the earth.' Saying this Ganesh took the Linga and waited there. All the gods had gathered in the sky and were witnessing this event.

When Ravan was offering arghyas (water ablutions to fire god), Ganesh called Ravan and said that he is fatigued and he should take his Linga from him soon' Ravan made signs by hand and asked him to wait for a little more time.

After a while Ganesh again called Ravan and asked him to come immediately as it was becoming unbearable for him to hold the Linga.

Ravan was meditating this time. Seeing that Ravan was not coming, Ganesh recollected Shri Vishnu's words and placed the Linga on the ground in the presence of the gods in the sky. All the gods were greatly pleased to see this and showered flowers on the head of Ganesh in admiration.

Soon after Ravan returned and seeing that the Linga was placed on the ground, he was much annoyed. He began to thrash Ganesh in wrath. Ganesh began to cry and wallow on the ground saying, 'I shall report this matter to my father.'

Ravan tried his best with all his might to lift up the Linga. The earth trembled but the Linga could not be shaken a bit. As Ravan tried to lift it up by screwing, it took the shape of an ear of the cow and so it is known as "Gokarna" and as Ravan exercised all his might to lift it up it is called "Mahabaleshwar".

In despair Ravan then went to the forest for hard penance. There are many other incidents signifying the greatness of this holy place. This is narrated in the Skand Purana.

(to be continued)



STORIES FROM MAHABHARAT

SAVITRI

(Part II)

[The first part of this story was published in the issue of this Magazine for the month of May 1974. Due to rush of other articles, the second part was held up, which is being published in this issue - Editor]

When there appeared a strange figure before her, Savitri saw that he was dark-skinned and wearing red garb, and a coronet on his head. He was handsome in his own way and though Savitri was first afraid, she mustered strength enough to address him. Her heart was pounding with apprehension. She put down the head of her sleeping husband from her lap, stood up and bowed before the Godly figure. She addressed him and said : "I presume you are some God or Angel, because your body is unlike a human being. If it pleases you, kindly tell me, O God! Who you are and what is your desire?"

The Being said - "Savitri! You are a real devotee of your husband, and an ascetic of great austerity. I will therefore speak to you. Know that I am Yama, and have appeared here to take away the higher principles, the Jiwa of your husband Satyawar from the shackles of his physical body because his life span is over. I desire to tie his Jiwa by this rope, the Pasha, and go away."

Savitri said - "O Lord, I have heard that your messengers come for such work and not yourself. Then, why have you come here personally?"

Yama explained - "Satyawar is an advanced Jiwa, a religious person. He deserves not to be escorted by ordinary messengers and, therefore, I have come myself."

After saying this, Yama put the rope, the divine strings to the Jiwatma of Satyawan, and that subtle body of the size of a thumb emerged out of the physical body together with its sheaths. Yama proceeded to the southern direction immediately.

Savitri could not remain on the spot. She was overwhelmed with sorrow. She followed Yama promptly and when Yama saw her following, he said - "Savitri, please go back and perform the last rites of his dead body. You have discharged the duty of service to your husband. There is no further path for you where you can accompany him." Savitri said - "Wherever my husband will be taken, or wherever he will go of his own will, there I will go. This is my duty. My way will not be blocked anywhere, by virtue of my penance, devotion to Guru, love to my husband, observance of fasts and religious ceremonies and above all, by your kindly grace."

Yama said - "Savitri! I am happy to listen to such sweetly uttered language, which is logical, rhythmic and flawless. You can ask of me any boon, excepting the rejuvenation of Satyawan. I will grant your request."

Savitri asked - "My father-in-law has been deprived of his kingdom and he is living in a forest. He is blind. By your grace, he may get his vision again, and should be as brilliant as the fire and as shining as the Sun, and he should regain his strength."

Yama agreed - "Savitri! I grant you this boon. As you desire, so shall it be. You seem to be tired by walking. Please go back, so that you will not be fatigued."

Savitri replied - "How can I be tired when my husband is with me? My place will always be by the side of my husband. O God of Gods! I must go where you are taking him. Moreover, please listen to something more. It is said that the company of saints, even for one moment is blissful. So, I must not lose the chance of being in the company of your Great Self."

Yama was pleased. He exclaimed :- Savitri! I like your statements which are good. Even learned people can benefit by this advice. You may ask for one more boon, except the restoration of life of Satyawana."

Savitri said - "First of all, the kingdom of my father-in-law, of which he has been deprived, may kindly be re-established of its own accord in his power and he may never give up good religion and duty. This is the second boon I request."

Yama consented - "The King Dyumatsen will get his kingdom again without his efforts and he will abide by his duties. May it be so. Now, please return from here, O Savitri!"

Savitri, however, did not return. She said, "O Yamaraj! You are the controller of all the creatures and dispenser of the Law which is the reason why you are called Yama. Please therefore, listen to some more statements and see whether they are true. The age-old religion of saints is to be obliging to everybody, and not to hate anybody in thought, action or speech. This world contains mostly such people, who are soft to others as much as possible, but saints are so great that they are kind even to enemies who approach them."

Yama replied - "Your statement is true and pleasant. It is as good as water to a thirsty man. I like it very much. So ask for anything else than the life of Satyawana to be restored."

Savitri asked the third boon. She said - "My father Ashwapati is not having a son. In order that our family should grow let him have a hundred sons. I ask this boon of you, please."

Yama bestowed the third request and said - "All right. Now that your desire is fulfilled, you will please go back. You have come too far."

Savitri was not discouraged. She said, "I do not feel tired because my husband is near me. My mind is grasping some more useful principles. I would request you to please hear me further. As you are the son of Vivaswan, people call you Vaivaswat, and as you do justice to all with equanimity, both to the enemies and friends, people call you "Dharmaraj" and they abide by your Law. Man does not have faith in himself as much as he has in saints. Therefore, he desires to love the saints best of all. Friendship is the cause of faith and people feel most friendly with the saints."

Yama was happy. He said - "O Beautiful lady! I am hearing this from you for the first time. I am much pleased for this. You may demand anything else except your husband, and return now."

Savitri was now very bold. She said, "I may get from Satyawan one hundred sons who will be very brave. This is the fourth boon which your Holiness may kindly grant".

Yama said, "O! meek lady! You will have a hundred sons, strong and brave, from Satyawan, who will give you great happiness in due course. Now at least, please go back from here."

Savitri however proceeded further, she was walking by the side of Yama, and speaking about religion. She said- "Saints are always dutiful. They never worry or suffer inwardly. When saints meet saints, such meeting is always fruitful. Also, a good person has no fear of another good person. A saintly person can, by the power of truth, call the Sun himself to his feet. This earth, this world, is resting upon the goodness, the strength of the saints. Saints are protectors of the past and future, and nobody loses anything in their company. Saints do good things, not for the sake of repayment, but because it is right to do good. O Yamaraj! Is this all right, what I say?"

Yama said , "As you are going deeper and deeper into the religious truths, which are full of meaning, I am having greater and greater regard for you. You can now ask for any good boon."

Savitri retorted - "O Respectful God! The boon of getting a hundred sons which you have already endowed upon me will not be realized unless I lead a family life for which my husband must be alive. Now, therefore, in order to make your statements true, I request for this boon, that my husband may come to life again. Otherwise, how can your promise come true? Without him I am virtually in the jaws of death. I do not desire any pleasure or happiness without my husband. Neither heavens, nor Lakshmi with all her riches, nor this life do I want without him. You have granted me a boon to get a hundred sons and now you are taking my husband away! So, to return my husband to me is the only way to make your statement true!"

Yama was non-plussed. He was pleased to listen to this clever and truthful argument. "Tathastu" (May it be so!) He said. He immediately released the bondages of the soul of Satyawan. He said to Savitri - "Here! Here I release him. He will be quite healthy. Please take him back to your home. He will live with you for four hundred years and be always law abiding and all your ambitions will be fulfilled. His fame will cover all the world. You will bear him a hundred sons." Then speaking, Yamaraj disappeared.

When Savitri was left alone, she came back with the Jivatma the real Satyawan, to the place where his physical body was lying dead. She sat down and again took his head in her lap. After a little time, Satyawan's body began to show signs of life. He woke up slowly, opened his eyes and spoke to her, as if he had returned from a long journey. "Who was the man who dragged me with a rope? He was dark-skinned and of imposing figure" He asked her. Savitri reassured him that everything was all right. She said , "Dear! You were asleep in my lap for

quite a long time. The man who was dragging you was the God Yamaraj, the controller of the people, the Dharma. He has gone now to his place. See, the day is no more and it is now night. I will tell you the whole story afterwards. Now let us go home and see the elderly ones."

Satyawan said , "All right, my dear! Let us go early. Now the headache is gone, nor is there pain anywhere in the body. I am feeling quite well. If you so please, I will come back home and see my parents. I was never so late. My mother was always prohibiting me from going out at odd hours. If I was late any time, all in the Ashram were anxious and would go out in my search. They must be very much disturbed tonight. We must go home quickly."

Savitri stood up and helped him stand also. Putting one of his hands on her shoulder and putting one of her hands round his own waist, he walked with her gradually. Satyawan said , "Dear, I know this path very well. We have now the advantage of the moonlight of Poornima, as the moon is up in the sky. Let us go early." So saying, both went home.

Dyumatsen was already having his vision back. The inmates of the Ashram were all astonished, but everybody was now worried about the young couple Satyawan and Savitri who had been out in the forest and were not yet home.

When the couple reached the Ashram, all were pleased to see them safe. Happily everybody received Savitri. All asked her about the wonderful restoration of the eyesight of Dyumatsen. She told the whole story of Yama, her arguments, his boons and when all knew what great feat Savitri had performed , everybody praised her. All the boons given by Yama were fruitful by the lapse of due time.

(Continued on page 26)

रामभक्तशिरोमणि तुलसीदास

(गतांकसे आगे)

जब यह बात काशी के पंडितोंने सुनी तो उनके हृदय में ईर्ष्या उत्पन्न हुई। ईर्ष्यावश वे दल बनाकर तुलसीदासजी की निन्दा करने लगे। उन्होंने उस पुस्तक को भी नष्ट करनेके लिये प्रयास आरंभ कर दिये। उन्होंने पुस्तक चुराने के लिये रात्रि में दो चोर भेजे। तुलसीदासजी अपने इष्टदेव श्रीरामजी के भजन ध्यान में मस्त रहते थे। उन्हें इस बात की कोई खबर नहीं कि काशी के पंडितगण उनके और उनके महाकाव्य के बारे में क्या करना चाहते थे। चोरों ने बाहर देखा कि तुलसीदासजी की कुटी के आसपास दो वीर धनुष बाण लिये पहारा दे रहे थे। वे बड़े ही सुन्दर श्याम और गौर वर्णके थे। उनके दर्शन मात्र से ही चोरों की बुद्धि शुद्ध हो गई। उन्होंने तत्काल चोरी करना छोड़ दिया और श्रीरामभजन में लग गये। यह घटना यह सिद्ध करती है कि भगवान ने गीता में जो प्रतिज्ञा की है उसे वे अवश्य पूर्ण करते हैं —

अनन्यादिचन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९/२२

तुलसीदासजीने जब यह समाचार सुना तो उन्हें बहुत दुख हुआ कि उनके लिये भगवान को कष्ट हुआ। उन्होंने तत्काल अपनी कुटी का सारा सामान छुटा दिया और अपने महाकाव्य की पुस्तक अपने मित्र टोडरमल के यहाँ रख दी। इसके बाद उन्होंने एक दूसरी प्रति लिखी जिसके आधार पर दूसरी प्रति लिपिबद्ध तैयार की जाने लगी और मानस का प्रचार दिनोदिन बढ़ने लगा।

अपने प्रयत्नों में विफल होनेपर पंडितोंने विद्वान श्री मधुसूदन सरस्वती को उस पुस्तक को देखने की प्रेरणा की। उन्होंने उस ग्रंथ को देखकर बड़ी प्रसन्नता प्रकट की और उस पर यह सम्मति लिख दी —

“आनन्दकानने कश्चिज्जंगमस्तुलसीतरुः ।

कवितामंजरी यस्य रामभ्रमरभूषिता ॥”

“इस काशीरूपी आनन्दवन में तुलसीदास चलता फिरता तुलसी का पौधा है। उसकी कविता रूपी मंजरी बड़ी ही सुन्दर है जिसपर श्रीराम रूपी भँवरा सदा भँडराता रहता है।”

इसपर भी पंडितों को संतोष नहीं हुआ। उन्होंने रामचरित मानस की परीक्षा का दूसरा उपाय किया। भगवान विश्वनाथके सामने सबसे ऊपर वेद, उनके नीचे शास्त्र, शास्त्र के नीचे पुराण और सबके नीचे रामचरित मानस रख दिया गया। इसके पश्चात् मंदिर बंद कर दिया गया। प्रातःकाल जब मंदिर खोला गया तो लोगों के अश्चर्यका ठिकाना नहीं रहा जब उन्होंने देखा कि श्रीरामचरित मानस वेदों के ऊपर रखा हुआ है। अपने कुकृत्य के कारण पंडित गण बहुत लज्जित हुये। उन्होंने तुलसीदासजी से क्षमा मांगी और भक्ति से उनका चरणोदक लिया।

अब तुलसीदासजी की कीर्ति सारे देश में फैल चुकी थी। काशी में अनेक शास्त्रज्ञ विद्वान उनसे आकर मिला करते थे। उनके मित्रों व स्नेहियों में नवाब अब्दुल रहीम खानखाना, महाराज मानसिंह, नामाजी, टोडरमल, मधुसूदन सरस्वती आदि थे। उनकी एक बड़े भक्त व महात्मा के रूपमें प्रसिद्धि हो गई थी।

लोकोक्ति है कि उनके यश को सुनकर अकबर बादशाहने उनको एक बार दिल्ली बुला भेजा। दिल्ली पहुँचने पर बादशाहने उनको कोई चमत्कार दिखाने के लिये आज्ञा दी। उन्होंने बादशाहको स्पष्ट कहा कि वे रामनाम का जप करते हैं और कोई चमत्कार नहीं दिखाया करते। इसपर बादशाहने उन्हें रामदर्शन कराने के लिये कहा। तुलसीदासजीने उत्तर दिया कि वे राम के केवल दास हैं और दर्शन देना उनके स्वामी की इच्छापर निर्भर है। अपनी आज्ञा का तिग्स्कार होते देख बादशाह क्रोध के वशीभूत हो गये और उनकी आज्ञासे तुलसीदासजी को कैदखाने में डाल दिया गया। कैदखाने में रहने पर भी उनकी मनस्थिति में कोई अंतर नहीं आया, वे निर्विकार रहे तथा नित्य की भांति श्रीराम के भजन ध्यान में लीन रहे। प्रतिकूल परिस्थितियों में ही किसी व्यक्ति की असलियत की परख होती है। उपरोक्त परिस्थिति में तुलसीदासजी उच्च कोटी के भक्त का परीक्षा में सरे उतरे और उनके निम्न लिखित गुण उजागर हुये —

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
 निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखःक्षमी ॥१२॥१३
 समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
 शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः संग विवर्जितः ॥१२॥१८
 तुल्य निन्दा स्तुतिमौनी संतुष्टो येन केन चित् ।
 अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिः ॥१२॥१९

[अपूर्ण]

दीनानाथ टी. गुप्ता
 रेल्वे क्वॉर्टर्स नं. आर. बी. २/२५७/५
 रेल्वे स्टेशनके सामने जवळपूर (म. प्र.)

(Continued from page 23)

(The story of Savitri gives us the example of bravery, logical arguments and great devotion of the wife to her husband. The story of Savitri is known to all devout Hindus. The religious-minded Hindu wife observes the Vata-Poornima (the full moon day of Jyeshtha Month, in the traditional way of observing fast, reading the story of Savitri and offering Pooja to Vata tree which is the symbol of continuity of race. The description of the saints contained in the arguments of Savitri in this story is specially pertinent to saints of all times, and even today's saints. Readers will find the life of Sai Baba comparably equal to that description. The moral of Savitri is imbibed in Hindu cultural background and fear of death is surmounted by this exemplary conversation between Savitri - the Intellect enlightened, and Yama, the God who presides over destiny of Jiwa after bodily death.)

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SAINT TUKARAM

(Continued from June 1975 issue)

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

Though complete details of the early life of Tukaram are not available, still from the financial status of his family, described above, we will not be wrong if we presume that Tukaram led a happy life in his childhood. He was a healthy child. He had two brothers. One was senior to him and the other was junior to him. It appears that he was taking keen interest in the games that were current in Dehu village at that time. Tukaram's father Bolhoba was a well-to-do person. His grocery shop was giving him enough money to keep the family going properly. Hence the children, Tukaram and his brothers, were enjoying their happy childhood peacefully. Saint Tukaram has written a number of Abhangas about the games played by god Shreekrishna and his friends. In these Abhangas Tukaram describes the games with so much affinity that unless he was himself playing these games, it would not be possible for him to describe them in such minute details. These Abhangas, therefore, clearly indicate that in his childhood Tukaram must not have been a lonely child, keeping aloof from the company of other children; but he must have been a healthy child taking part in all the games enthusiastically.

During the days of Tukaram, early marriage was very common. Over and above that if after marriage a lady would remain childless for a long time or if she was found to be suffering from some disease, the parents were never hesitating to have a second wife for their son. Tukaram's elder brother got married in due course of time and when Tukaram was hardly thirteen years old, he was married. The name of his wife was Rakhumai. Very soon after the marriage, it was noticed that

Rakhumai, was suffering from Asthama and, therefore Tukaram's father hurried up and performed Tukaram's second marriage. Shri Appaji Gulwe, a rich merchant from Pune, gave his daughter in marriage to Tukaram. Her name was Jijabai alias Awali.

By this time Bolhoba, the father of Tukaram, attained his sixtieth year. He, therefore, thought that it was the proper time for him to retire from the family affairs and concentrate his mind on god. As per the custom of the time he asked his eldest son Sawaji to take charge of the shop and run it for the maintenance of the family; but Sawaji was a person of philosophical bent of mind. He had no interest in the worldly affairs. He, therefore, declined to take up the responsibility of the family and the shop on his head. When Sawaji thus declined to take up the management of the house, the choice of Bolhoba naturally fell on his second son Tukaram. Somehow Tukaram accepted the challenge and he started looking after the shop. Tukaram was looking after the upkeep of the shop so well and he was maintaining the accounts of the shop so nicely that he had nothing but praise from his parents. The disappointment that the parents had to face because of the refusal given by Sawaji to look after the affairs of the house, disappeared altogether as the darkness disappears immediately on the appearance of the Sun. Tukaram continued to manage the grocery shop in this fashion for four years and won the applause of his parents and family members.

Pleasure and sorrow follow in the human life like the tide and ebb that follow the sea. The pleasure in Tukaram's life and the prosperity that he was enjoying just proved to be short lived. When Tukaram attained the age of seventeen, he got a severe blow of the death of his father. This death was followed by the death of his elder brother's wife. This proved to be a very big blow for the whole family. Sawaji, Tukaram's brother, took this tragic event to his heart and he lost all his interest in the family life. As a result of this disgust, he left the house and went on a pilgrimage of the holy places.

The years that followed the death of Tukaram's father proved to be utterly disastrous for Tukaram's family. Because of the death of his father and the sister-in-law, his elder brother left the house. This incident resulted in Tukaram's total mental depression. He got dejected. He could not apply himself to the job of looking after the shop. He had a big family of two wives, one son, one younger brother etc, which he found it difficult to maintain. His yield from the shop was not enough for the maintenance of the family. He started suffering in his business and to add to this misery there was a big famine in Shaka 1551-52. This famine has been recorded in the history of Maharashtra as one of the worst famines. Due to the failure of the monsoon, the crops also failed miserably. Even the grass did not grow in abundance. This resulted in the death of the people and the cattle. Many villages were devastated. The residents of so many villages migrated to other places in search of food. Those who could not go to other places died in their own villages due to starvation. This famine hit Tukaram also very hard. He lost his senior wife and one son for want of food. These calamities created in Tukaram's mind a total disgust for worldly life. He decided to leave the family life and meditate on god in seclusion. One fine morning he got up very early, before anybody in the house was awake and went straight to Bhamnath mountain. For fifteen days he remained all alone there and meditated continuously on god. Tukaram's prayers were heard by the god and he gave him "Darshan" and thus satisfied his desire.

When Tukaram disappeared from the house in this manner, all his family members became restless. They sent out people in different directions to find out the whereabouts of Tukaram. His younger brother Kanhoba took the lead as per the directions of Tukaram's younger wife Jijabai. As she came from a rich family, she had ideas of a high standard of living. She had all worldly attachments and wanted to live a life of pomp and show;

but she was a devoted and a faithful wife. Hence even though Tukaram was not able to satisfy her desires and she was therefore at cross roads with him, still when he disappeared all of a sudden she was totally upset and could not rest awhile. Tukaram's younger brother Kanhoba, who was prompted by her for the search, ultimately found Tukaram on the Bhamnath mountain. He was very glad that he found his brother and immediately bowed down to him. He entreated Tukaram to return home as per the request of his wife. Tukaram however declined to return as he wanted to renounce the worldly life and take interest only in the worship and bhajan of god; but Kanhoba explained that Tukaram's wife Jijabai had specially sent him to bring him back to his house and further described her mental condition. When Tukaram heard all his brother's requests, he consented to go back with him. When Jijabai saw Tukaram returning home, she was so overjoyed that she could hardly control herself. She ran to the front door of the house to welcome her husband and bowed down to him. Tears of joy were flowing from her eyes. She entreated Tukaram to stay at home and promised to give him all the pleasures in the house and to make him comfortable.

Tukaram came home but he could not apply himself to his domestic and home affairs. His mind had broken all the bonds of worldly life and he wanted to be away from these fetters. In order to be free from them he intended to destroy all the promisory notes and other documents in which all the money transactions and dues of the family from the time of his father were recorded. He searched out all such documents in the house and started for the Indrayani river; but his younger brother Kanhoba intercepted and requested Tukaram to review his decision and hold over the destruction of the documents as their destruction was likely to hit hard the family finances. Tukaram, therefore gave due consideration to his brother's request and asked him to choose half of the documents, as that would be his share. When Kanhoba chose his documents, Tukaram took the remaining ones and sunk them in the waters of the Indrayani river.

Tukaram thus became free from all worldly problems. He left his entire monetary life in the hands of Lord Pandurang. He thus freed himself from the love for money and did not touch it for the rest of his life. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, who is a modern saint, is also reported to be never even touching money. He might have taken this vow because of the inspiration that he got from Tukaram's example.

After thus breaking the family bondage, Tukaram concentrated on the meditation of god. By his previous experience for fifteen days, he had realised that it was absolutely necessary to have complete solitude in order to be able to concentrate on god. He therefore, planned his daily programme accordingly. After finishing his normal morning programme he would take bath and then go to the family Vithoba temple for worship of Lord Vithoba. He would then go beyond Indrayani river and take recourse to some secluded place either at Bhamnath, Bhandara or Gorada mountain. There he would spend the whole day in the study of either Dnyane-hwari or Nathbhagwat or some such philosophical book and also on the meditation of god. When it was night he would come back to Dehu and attend either Keertan or Bhajan in the temple. After a few months he himself started performing the Keertan. He would go to bed late in the night and after taking rest for a short time he would be ready for the next day's work. With these austerities and with this strict discipline, Tukaram was able to get control over natural human needs like hunger and thirst.

Pilgrimage to holy places has always been looked upon by all religions as an act which bestows a merit of very high order on the pilgrim. In India the importance of pilgrimage has been recognised from times immemorial. Pilgrimage has always been an important part in the lives of all Indian Saints. Though Tukaram has often times hit hard on the hypocrisy in human behaviour, he was never spoken against pilgrimage, though even

today we find so many hypocrites going on pilgrimage not for attaining god but with some other ulterior motive. As Vitthal was the family god of Tukaram's family, he was following the practice of visiting Pandharpur every year on the Ekadashi days in the month of Ashadh and Kartik. This tradition he continued upto the end of his life. Dnyaneshwari is considered holy by all the followers of the Warkari sect and is read by them as often as possible. Hence Alandi where saint Dnyaneshwar took his Samadhi is also considered to be holy by the Warkari sect and a pilgrimage to that place is considered to be next in importance to that of the pilgrimage to Pandharpur. Alandi was only about eight miles from Dehu and Tukaram, who was studying Dnyaneshwari in seclusion in the mountains in the vicinity of Dehu, had therefore, great love for that saint and undertook the pilgrimage to Alandi very often. The Abhangas composed by Tukaram give a clue regarding his pilgrimages to other holy places in India. In one such Abhanga he has described the beauty and cleanliness of the banks of the Godawari river. Paithan, where saint Eknath lived, was also considered as a place of pilgrimage by the Warkari sect and hence Tukaram must have visited that place, which is situated on the bank of the Godawari river, when he had occasion to appreciate the beauty and cleanliness of that river. At other places he has described about his visit to Kashi, Gaya and Dwarka. As Tukaram had spent most of his life at Dehu, he naturally had no occasion to see a ship with sails. The ship with fluttering sails was therefore a novel object for Tukaram. When he had gone to Dwarka for a pilgrimage he saw the ship and it naturally attracted his attention. In his Abhanga, about his visit to Dwarka, he has therefore described how the sail of the ship was fluttering due to strong wind and how the ship was anchored.

After having run the household smoothly for a period of four years, calamities befell Tukaram one after the other. This gave rise to utter disgust in his mind and he decided to leave the family life and spend the rest of his days in search of god.

but it is a question why he should have selected the Warkari sect and joined the same and followed it with so much faith and sincerity that he is described as the pinnacle of the house of devotion! The family traditions of Tukaram and the environments of Dehu are responsible for attracting Tukaram to the Warkari sect. Vitthal was the family god of Tukaram's family. Vithoba's temple was constructed by his fore-fathers near his house. This temple was renovated by him and the daily worship of this deity was being done by him. The traditional training of the Warkari sect was therefore, in Tukaram's blood. From his father he knew about the pilgrimage to Pandharpur on Ekadashi days and before he decided to concentrate on god, he must have gone to Pandharpur, as a matter of course, for that pilgrimage along with other pilgrims from his village. Dnyaneshwari and Bhagwat are usually being read by all followers of the Warkari sect. Tukaram must have often been listening to the comments on these books. Bhajan is a very sacred ritual of the Warkari sect. The Abhangas of Namdeo and Eknath must have been heard, as well as sung, by Tukaram while he must have remained present at the Bhajan. Saint Eknath had come to Alandi for searching the Samadhi of Dnyaneshwar. He had stayed there for sometime and preached devotion to Vitthal. Since the visit of saint Eknath to Alandi, that village became a place of pilgrimage and this resulted in the spread of the Warkari sect in the country round about Pune. The main rituals of the Warkari sect viz. observance of fast on the Ekadashi day, Bhajan, Keertan etc were current at Alandi, Pune, Dehu and other places nearby. All these influences made Tukaram follow the Warkari sect and he became one with it.

(to be continued)



HEMADPANT



(Shri Govindrao Raghunath alias Aannasaheb Dabholkar was called Hemadpant by Shri Sai Baba and in the Sai Satcharita written by Shri Dabholkar, he has mentioned himself by the same name. Hemadpant was a minister at the court of the Yadav kings of Devgiri. He was well versed in various Shastras and has written a number of books on various subjects. Hence one who will read Sai Satcharita minutely will at once think that this was the most appropriate name given by Shri Sai Baba to late Shri Dabholkar.

Shri Dabholkar wrote Shri Saicharita with the permission and blessings of Shri Sai Baba and this was the pioneer effort in this direction. All subsequent biographies of Shri Sai Baba have been based on this book.

Shri Dabholkar has written Sai Satcharita in the "Ovee" metre. This a very popular meter with all Marathi authors. The first famous work to have been written in this metre is Dnyaneshwari. Since the time of Dnyaneshwar so many subsequent authors have written voluminous works in this metre. Shri Eknath, Mukteshwar, D. Sopant and so many other authors could be mentioned, who have successfully used this metre for their books. Shrimadbhagawat, composed by Shri Eknath in this metre, is very popular among the religious minded people in Maharashtra and it is being read daily by so many devout persons. Shri Dabholkar was reading Bhagwat every day and he had a close study of that book. It is therefore, no wonder that he chose this metre for his book. The influence of this work on Shri Sai Satcharita can also be easily found by a careful reader.

There are no other books to the credit of Shri Dabholkar. He therefore does not seem to be a writer; but his language is so lucid and appropriate in Sai Satcharita that as pointed out by him, it really appears to be correct that he could write this life only because of the inspiration given to him by Shri Sai Baba. The author, therefore, says with humbleness that "he did not write the biography. It was Shri Baba who took the pen from his hand and wrote the book for the benefit of his devotees."

Soon after Shri Sai Baba's Samadhi in 1918, the Sai Satcharita was published serially in the Sai Leela magazine (in Marathi). It was commenced in 1923 and completed in 1930. Thereafter it was published in book form. Shri Annasaheb Dabholkar expired on the fifteenth of July 1929. Hence this month it will be 46 years since his departure. Therefore in remembrance of Shri Annasaheb and for paying homage to him

for having accomplished this unique work, which is a great boon to the Sai devotees, the accompanying article by Prof. V. H. Pandit is being published in this month - Editor)

When Govindrao came to Shirdi for the first time, he had a hot discussion with Balasahib Bhate on the subject, "Is there the necessity of a Guru? Whether the Fate is greater or the deeds!" and so on.

Govindrao was of the view that we should not depend on Fate alone. The opponents said, "Whatever is destined must happen. None can go against Fate!" Govindrao cited many quotations from the scriptures to enforce his point of view. He quoted a verse from Gita, "Let him raise the Self by the Self and let not the Self become depressed; for verily is the Self the Friend of the Self, and also the Self is the Self's enemy." (Chapter VI - 24)

After having discussed this subject they all went to see Shri Sai Baba in the Mosque - "Dwarka Mai."

"What were you discussing in the Wada?" Sai Baba asked Kakasahib. "What did this Hemadpant say? (turning and looking at Govindrao). It was a most appropriate title used by Shri Sai Baba. This fact shows that Shri Sai Baba knew well the ancient History of India.

And thus the author used this epithet at the end of every chapter of Shri Sai Satcharita that "It is written by Hemad dedicating at the feet of Shri Sai Baba" and "Let there be joy."

Govindrao prayed to Shri Sai Baba that he would like to write a biography of His Great Self. When this wish was conveyed to Baba indirectly he said, "I am a fakir. I go on begging alms from door to door and pass my days. Why do you want to write my life-story. It will be the cause of censure and laughter!"

“Do not say so,” Govindrao retorted humbly. “Thou art a gem. This gem needs a beautiful frame.” Shri Sai Baba understood his ardent desire to write. He gave his warm blessings to Govindrao, permitted him to write his life and said, “Do maintain a record of the same. I will surely help you.”

The author while writing the biography did not take the credit of writing the same to himself. He gives credit entirely to Shri Sai Baba. He (Baba) took the pen from his hand and wrote the story through and through. Govindrao was 60 years old. He felt diffident; but Shri Sai Baba completed the biography by his hand.

In this way a great book Shri Sai Satcharita - a Volume Royal - was born. It is a wonderful and marvellous work, out-matching all the religious books on saints' biographies.

Biographies of Saints

To write the biographies of saints is one way of serving them. But it is something quite different to write about them by the order of the Guru with deep insight, perfect faith, unbounded love and undivided attention. It is not possible for my Tom, Dick and Harry to write such saintly books.

The country of Maharashtra and India is very rich in dealing with the lives of Saints and Sadhus. It is this most outstanding cultural way which distinguishes our Motherland from western and foreign countries. No one can uproot this religious culture and India will be no India without this way of life.

Why are such sacred books written? The people should read them not only once but thousands of times. It is the inborn faith with the people of this country. They think that it is one of the best ways of attaining salvation or rendering service to their master or Guru. One can recite and read often and often what is stated in them. One can read them nonstop i. e. have *khand Path*. There are various ways of reading such sacred books as it suits one.

Most of the biographies written in Marathi are in the "Ovee form" - a particular metre suitable for reciting aloud or remembering the lengthy narratives. It has been adopted from Sanskrit.

There are two types of biographies or sacred books; first the saints write them for their followers or devotees; the second way is that saints and sadhus ask others to write about them by collecting their discourses. For example Shri Dnyaneshwari Shri Nath Bhagwat and Dasbodh are written by the saint themselves.

"Shri Gure Charitra" is a grand biography used for daily reading by the devotees and the second "Volume Royal" is a modern biography known as Shri Sai Satcharita written by Govindrao alias Annasahib Raghunath Dabholkar. This biography deals in full with all the incidents and events and miracle of Shri Samarth Sadguru Sai Baba - the crown gem of the saint of saints in India. This was first published serially in Shri Sai Leela Magazine and later it was published in book form.

Besides the above books I have not come across any other book in Marathi literature which deals with the lives of saints. It is our traditional spiritual heritage that the stones, the rock and rivers of India reverberate with the songs and stories of our saints and sadhus. Nowhere in the world do we find people who intensely long for deliverance or Moksha or Mukti. Our motherland is saturated sumptuously with such holy recitations of songs day in and day out. Above all the life story of Shri Sai Baba has been written with such devotional emotion that his multi-coloured thread runs through the entire story.

Govindrao - Hemadpant

Shri Govindrao, the author of Shri Sai Satcharita was born in 1859 in Thana district in a poor Brahmin family. After having passed his V English Standard, he had to bid goodbye to his

studies on account of the family circumstances. He became a school teacher drawing a salary of Rs. 8/- per month. The Deputy Collector of the Thana district was very much pleased with his services and offered him the post of a Talathi. Later on he passed the departmental examinations successively and got an executive post in the Revenue department.

After some years he was promoted to Forest Settlement Officership and was appointed to look after the relief work in the drought-stricken region of Baroach district in Gujarat. In 1901 he was appointed as Mamlatdar and thereafter from 1903 to 1907 he had the distinction of serving as a Resident Magistrate at Bandra. In the end he retired in 1910 as a Magistrate.

This is undoubtedly an ennobling record of the services rendered by him. While at Bandra he came in contact with (1903-1907) his most intimate friend late Shri Hari Sitaram Dikshit - a solicitor. It was agreed between them that if any one of them came across a Mahatma, one should inform the other. And this desire was fulfilled by the Darshan of Shri Sai Baba.

Govindrao was an uncorrupt, straightforward and honest man. The service rendered by him to the Government is a proud record. Whenever and in whatever post he was appointed he served sincerely and faithfully. He was always very cheerful. He helped the poor and needy. The poor students never went without receiving something from him. From 1916 he led the life of a pensioner, praying God and doing philanthropic work. He left this world on July 15, 1929. He met a Yogi's death.

Shri Sai Satcharita

It is impossible for an ordinary writer like me to evaluate the dimensions of the author of Shri Sai Satcharita - Shri Govindrao - a man of genius, a great scholar, a man with wide and divine vision. So humble and so polite was he that he does not wish to take the credit of writing Shri Sai Satcharita. It was his master he says, that took the pen from his hand and wrote

for him. As propounded in Gita this was a philosophy of action. He has utilized, his energy, ability and all his learning in writing the biography of Shri Sai Baba.

By writing this Satcharita, he has blazed a trail for the devotees of Shri Sai Baba to cross this worldly ocean without any fear. For generations to come this book will go on influencing the right conduct in men, women and children. He has written like a zealot. This Volume Royal is a grand symbolism of Shri Sai Baba's stories. The book is like nectar. It is of great use for a person walking unsteadily on the earth. There is some hidden impulse which will revitalise the Faith of Man. One can have the realization of God and religion by reading this book.

There is diction, rhythm, image and form in the book -- written in "Ovee metre". The author has chosen the best words in the best order. It is an art supreme. It is a perfect devotion of mind. The less I say about the qualities of the book, the better will it be, for one has to experience in one's mind this concealed faith.

There is no craving for ideas like other writers. Ideas after ideas are pouring like a pleasant shower. The ideas are inspired yet concrete. They show the clear path and change the man for the better. There are metaphorical ideas in story-form which strike one like a lightning or a roll of thunder. The flashes of thought will surely instil among men a sense of humanity and a sense of understanding. It is the writer's profundity of experience and beauty of expression which has made Shri Sai Satcharita most dear and near to one's heart.

If one reads this Sai Satcharita, one is sure to notice, "Every day, in every way, things are getting better and better." Shri Sai Baba says, "I am everywhere." May Sai Baba bless the readers of this "Volume Royal"

Prof. Vaman H. Pandit

13 Khatipura Road, INDORE CITY (Madhya Pradesh)

BABA'S HELPING HAND !

During the 'Ashadh' month of 1949, a batch of Devotees from Hyderabad left for the 'darshan' of Shri Sai Baba's shrine at Shirdi. Being monsoon season, the journey was an ordeal. After a 20-hour dusty train journey, the party reached the railway station of the jaggery town of Kopargaon. The tired members of the party had their luncheon before they set out on a journey by bullock cart to the town. There were no buses in those days from Kopargaon railway station. One had to cross the river Gadavari, that runs majestically through the town, to catch a bus to Shirdi. The present road - over - bridge was under construction at that time. The three mile journey to the shore was arduous, since the road was neither metalled nor asphalted. Due to rain, the black cotton pathway became slushy. This gave more strain to the bullocks. On reaching the shore, the party found that the low level bridge across the river Godavari was almost about to submerge into water. A ferry boat was plying from one shore to another over which the people with their belongings were crossing the beautiful river. The party wanted to do the same thing. But the cart-man suggested that he would take the party by his cart to the other shore through the low-ebb bridge across the river. The party agreed in order to avoid transhipment by the boat. The cart restarted the journey over the low-ebb bridge. When the cart was half way through, there was down pour. The river became furious. The water level was rising very fast. The cartman lost his control over the bullocks. The bullocks missed their stride and were virtually floating on the water. The water current was very heavy. One of the cart wheels got stuck to a boulder. There was no parapet wall to the low-ebb bridge and the water force was pushing the cart, endangering it to fall into the river. The members of the party were chanting the name of Shri Sai Baba in chorus. They almost lost the hope of survival and were prepared to meet the watery

grave with the Lord's name on the lips. Chanting of Sai's name in high pitched tones by the party rent the air. Suddenly from nowhere, a middle aged man appeared before the bullocks and voluntarily assumed control over the bullock cart. The cartman removed the boulder and the stranger piloted the cart slowly towards the other shore. The chanting of Sai's name was continuous. The water subdued as the stranger drew the cart cautiously to the other shore. The clouds cleared and there was sun-shine. The crowds, that were watching from the shore the party's plight, rejoiced with joy and shouts of "Sai Baba ki Jai" rent the air.

Mr. Baliah, the head of the party was so immensely happy that he took out a ten rupee note to be presented to the stranger, who helped the party to safety. But lo! the stranger disappeared. The searching eyes of Baliah and other members of the party could not locate him. The baffled Mr. Baliah put a question to himself as to who was that stranger. **WAS HE BABA HIMSELF?**

After the evening 'darshan' of the shrine, the party retired to the cottage. Mr. Baliah fell asleep and a gentleman appeared in his dream, who told him that he erred in the accounts of the 'hundi' for the Shrine of Shri Sai Baba. Mr. Baliah got up in excitement and calculated the accounts on paper. And to his shocking surprise, he discovered the error to the correct pie as pointed out by the gentleman in his dream.

It was divine!

Ananthula Neeraj
5485 Himmatnagar
Secunderabad (A. P.)



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2. Shri Sai Satcharita (English)	Rs. 6.25
3. Shri Sai Satcharita (Gujrati)	Rs. 4.50
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