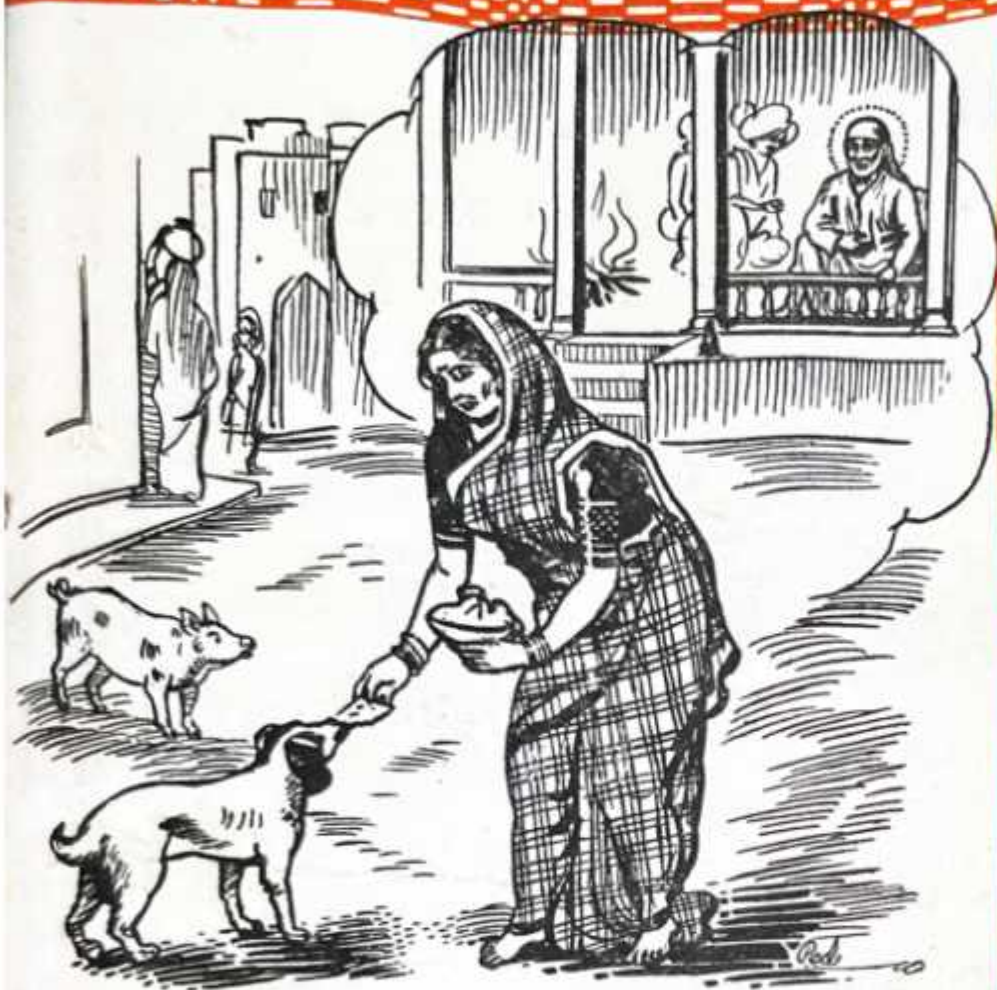




SAI LEELA



"The breads served to the dog and pig are received by me" Shri Sai Baba



SHRI SAI LEELA

SEPTEMBER 1974

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Incident Relating to the Picture on the Cover Page

Once a lady, who had come to pay a visit to Shirdi, started to go to Baba with a bread in her plate. On her way she met a dog. Hence taking pity on it, the lady gave that bread to the dog. The lady went back and took the bread that she had kept aside for her self. This time she met a pig on her way. She gave that bread to the pig. Later on when the lady went to Shri Sai Baba he said, "Oh mother, the breads that you gave to the dog and pig were received by me as I have complete,, communion with all living beings."

SHRI SAI LEELA

(Official Organ of Shirdi Sansthan)



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No.6

Love And Religion

There is no religion higher than love. Truth itself shines with the light of Love. Doctrines of religions derive their strength from the love of the great founders of Faith. When love declines and the followers impose their creeds on others with the weapons of hate, there is decay of faith, and the prophets are wounded preachers of cult and passion.

Aspire through love of individuals to Love itself;

Be true to love and so follow love, from height to height, until you touch the Love Supreme, and know that to love one is to love all, and to wound one is to wound all. All religions, all races, all sages and saints are but the masks of the one Kingdom, the veils of the One Spirit.

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EDITORIAL

Shri Ganesh

On the 19th of this month we shall be celebrating the Ganesh chaturthi. In Maharashtra and wherever the people from Maharashtra are staying, the usual slogan "Ganapati Bappa Moraya" will be heard very often round about this time. This day is celebrated on the fourth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapad every year.

Other gods like Vishnu, Rama, Krishna etc. are very attractive in their form. They have got proportionate bodies and they are dressed with costly silk garments, while Ganesh or Ganapati has a protruding belly and his head is not that of a man but of an elephant. Though this god has a disproportionate body and the mouth of an elephant, still he is the most revered God. Every religious ceremony starts with his worship. In fact the education of a child used to start in old days after paying homage to Ganapati, as the child was first taught to read and write the letters: " श्री गणेशायनमः ".

In the Puranas there are a number of stories narrating the birth of Ganapati, which indicate how this God came to possess this head of an elephant. One of those stories runs as follows :-

Once Parvati, the wife of God Shankara, was taking a bath. As she wanted someone to guard the door of her bathroom, she fabricated a human form from her body and placed him at the door of her bathroom as a watchman. She gave him a strict warning not to allow anybody to come inside. In the meantime Lord Shankar came and wanted to enter into Parvati's apartment; but this watchman vehemently objected to that not knowing who the visitor was. Lord Shankar got angry and with his weapon he cut the head of the watchman. When Parvati came to know about this, she started lamenting for the death of her son. Looking to this plight of Parvati, Shankar

took pity on her and placed the head of an Elephant, which was available nearby, on the body of the watchman, killed by him and brought him to life. Thus Shri Ganesh was born. Later on he was placed at the head of a group and hence he came to be also known as Ganapati (The leader of a group)

In Maharashtra there is a custom of bringing an idol of earth every year and worshipping it for one and a half days, five days, seven days or ten days according to everybody's convenience. Along with this festival, there is a custom of celebrating the Gauri Pujan. Gauri is another name for Parvati, the mother of Ganapati. This Gauri is brought after the third or the fourth day from Ganesh chaturthi and is immersed within three or four days. This festival of Gauri is given a great importance, almost equal to that of the Holi festival, by the people of the non-brahmin community in the Ratnagiri and Coloba districts. Most of the people who are working in the cities make it a point to go to their remote villages for this festival. During this festival the monsoon is almost coming to an end and hence the expectation of a good crop makes the farmers celebrate this festival on a grand scale.

This festival is celebrated as a religious function in most of the houses in Maharashtra. The idol is usually brought home on the day previous to the Ganesh Chaturthi or in the morning of Ganesh Chaturthi. After the Pooja and Arati are over, the whole day is spent in the company of the family members and friends in chitchating and feasting. As most of the Ganapaties in the private houses are of the duration of one and a half days, the Ganesh Chaturthi day is important for all of them and most of the people have to visit a number of houses on that day for taking "darshan" of the Ganapaties.

The second day is the day of immersion for nearly seventy to eighty percent of the Ganapaties. In the afternoon you can see long processions going to the places of immersion of the town or village as the case may be. Similar processions are also to be seen on other days of immersion.

Lokmanya Tilak was a man of wide vision. He had to consolidate the strength of the masses towards national work. He knew that religious and such other functions could be made use of for this purpose. He therefore started holding public performance of the Ganesh utsav and the Shiv Jayanti utsav. This enabled him to carry out lot of propaganda regarding Swarajya in these festivals as the Ganesh utsav used to last for ten days every year. In the days of Lokmanya Tilak this festival had a crowded programme of lectures, keertans and "melas" all aiming at social and political uplift of India, the ultimate goal of which was to obtain independence.

The public performance of this festival once caused a great awakening in Maharashtra. It also helped the consolidation of the Hindus against the Muslim aggression, which was taking place at several places in some form or the other. The day of immersion of these public festival Ganapaties saw mile long processions of these idols accompanied by "Lezim", band and such other musical instruments. The sudden turn that Lokmanya Tilak gave to this religious function and made use of it towards achievement of his goal of swarajya, really goes to show his knowledge of mass psychology and tact.

After the death of Lokmanya Tilak, the importance of this festival had started dwindling and after independence it took the form of a festival for mere entertainment. The artists who prepared the idols of Ganapati wanted to show their ingenuity and the idols of Ganapaties are being prepared according to the changing fashions of the time. Some are apt to depict mythological scenes while a few others used to throw light on certain political situations through their art. The ever increasing costs have also had effect on the cost of the idols and they have gone up considerably during the last two decades.

At present the worship of Ganapati is confined to India and it is done only by the Hindus. Though in all the cities and towns of India there is, as a rule, at least one temple of Ganapati, though not more, still only eight temples of Ganapati in Maharashtra are called to be specially sacred. They are called "Ashtavinayak" (Eight

Ganapaties) and special tours are conducted for paying visit to all these temples in series. This pilgrimage is supposed to accrue lot of merit to the pilgrims visiting all these Ganapaties.

In the middle ages the Hindu empires were spreading far and wide in Asia and at that time the Hindus, who went to far East and the South East Asian countries Like Java, Sumatra, Combodia, Malasia, China and Japan, carried along with them their gods and therefore the idols of Ganapati have been found in all those contries. It is also a wonder how one idol was found in a far off country like Mexico. In all the South East Asain countries the Hindu culture thrived for a number of centuries and a part of it was first wiped out by the Buddhist Religion and later on by the Muhomadan religion. Still the remnants that can be seen, give a rough idea how widely the Hindu culture must have thrived and ruled these countries.

Shri Sai Baba had very liberal views about religion. He always insited on every body to follow his religion, which he was professing before meeting him. He never directed anybody to leave his religion and get converted to another. Therefore we Sai devotees, who have deep reverance for Sai Baba, can also go on worshipping some other gods. Hence those, who are worshipping Shri Ganesh at their houses, should do so without any reservation and with full faith in Shri Ganesh. They may also celebrate this festival as a social function; because if we look at the whole life of Shri Sai Baba, he was never averse to worldly life. He never adviced people to renounce their normal life and lead the life of an ascetic. He on the other hand started functions like the Ramnavami, Gokul Ashtami etc at shirdi. Let us therefore give the slogan.

“Ganapati Bappa Moraya”
and welcome Shri Ganesh.

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

By : Swami Chinmayanand

Why Work At All?

In the second chapter though Krishna insisted that action should be undertaken, he concluded it with an eloquent picture of the Man-of-Perfection, rooted in wisdom. Naturally Arjuna opens the III Chapter with a pertinent question : (III-1) **"O! Janardana! in case according to you, "wisdom" is nobler than "action", why then, O' Kesava, you force me to engage in this horrible action?"** In the earlier part of the last chapter emphasis was on **"Get up ready to fight"** (Tasmaduttishtha Kounteya yudhaya krtanishcayah). While in the latter part the Man-of-Wisdom, rooted in his higher Consciousness was extolled as the Perfect Man. Hence this question.

To make it more vivid the Pandava Prince again asks,, (III-2) **"You are perplexing my understanding with your conflicting theories....tell me the one path by which I can attain the Highest".** (Shreyohamapnuyam) The Sanskrit word **Shreyas** is often translated as "prosperity". Though "prosperity" is the nearest English word for Shreyas, it is a mischievous translation as the term "prosperity", in its connotation cannot stand apart from a suggestion of "one's own prosperity at the expense of others". In India from the Vedic times to this date we wish for **"Shreyas"** which means "prosperity an individual enjoys when all around him prosper; when the nation progresses. Arjuna wants to know which path he should follow for the total happiness of his generation --- as a result of which, he too may come to enjoy his share of the general welfare: Shreyas.

Krishna immediately explains why more than one Path is indicated. As a science of Self-perfection, Vedanta is to bless all man-

kind. Men are mainly of two types --- (1) the active and dynamic type, and (2) the intellectual and thoughtful type. For the latter is the Path-of-Wisdom, Gyana Yoga, and for the former, is the Path-of-Action, Karma Yoga. (III-3) **"These two paths were imparted by Me, from the beginning, to this world --- the Path-of-Knowledge for the meditative type and the Path-of-Action for the active type of men"**.

Any immature student of Vedanta can easily misunderstand it as a Path-of-Actionlessness --- of inertia, of stupor, of idleness. The State-of-Actionlessness (**Naishkarmyam**) glorified in our scriptures is not a state of ineffectual slumber, an escape into the caves, a life of passive incompetence within the high walls of a rich monastery. When a science borrows words from the world, it employs them to express a fresh connotation, a new meaning, an unexpected truth. They are technical terms, and such terms employed in any science, we know, have a special wealth of meaning.

We have already found that when there are **Vasanas**, there are "thoughts" in the mind, and they express at the body-level, in the world around, as "actions". If the **Vasanas** are bad, "thoughts" are ignoble, and our "actions" criminal. If **Vasanas** are less, we can have only less "thoughts", and so less "actions". Therefore, when in an individual **Vasanas** are all totally eliminated, then "thoughts" are no more --- and therefore no more any desire-prompted, anxiety whipped selfish "actions". This State-of-Actionlessness --- because of a State-of-Thoughtlessness --- due to the State-of-**Vasanalessness** --- is defined as the State-of-Pure-Awareness : the Infinite Reality.

This Supreme-State of Peace-and-Perfection is indicated in the Vedas either as the State-of-no-**Vasanas**, or as the State of no actions. Early students of Vedanta may misunderstand that "a dull State of impotent actionlessness is the State of Realization". So Krishna pointedly says : (III-4) **"By non-performance of actions none can reach "Actionlessness". By merely giving up action no one can**

ever attain Perfection”.

Krishna says “Actionlessness” cannot be reached by “not undertaking any activity”; nor by “giving up the work already undertaken”. Arjuna is escaping behind the Upanishadic term **Naishkarmyam** and is trying to give up the battle, and escape from taking any more responsibility. This is the treacherous way of all escapist.

Then why should we act and get involved in the meaningless, painful, sweating problems round us? Why act at all, if “Actionlessness” be the highest State-of-Perfection?

Krishna explains : (III-5) **“Nobody can ever remain, even for an instant, without performing action; all are compelled to act, helplessly indeed, by the Gunas, born of one’s own nature”.** The meaning of the verse seems to be obvious and clear. But it is only on its analysis that we uncover a compelling truth lived all along by everyone of us every hour, all through our lives!

Why should we work? Why serve the society? Why undertake great endeavours for the glory of the nation, for the amelioration of human sufferings? Why struggle at all? Let us sit down protesting against the ugliness of life, against the injustices in life, against the exigencies of nature. “Sit-in” --“Go-slow”, “Strike”, ---“retire”, “resign”, “lie-in”, “run-away”, “desert-duty”, “drop-out” --- these constitute our modern world’s thoughtless means of reaching profitless peace. They think they have “revolted” against the “establishment” they have done their best, the very best.

Alas! They know not the inescapable law of life, that the Creator has not made life to be stagnant. “None can ever remain, even for an instant, without action” (Na hi kashchit kshanamapi jatu tishthatyakarmakrt). “Nature will goad him, helplessly indeed, to act” (Karyate hyavashah karma). “Everyone acts according to his own nature” (Sarvah praktijairgunaih).

The quality of actions stemming forth from an individual is ordered by the type of **Vasanas** in him. The **Vasanas** are of three main types : **Satwic**, **Rajasic** and **Tamasic**. These Pure, Active, and Dull-types are the **Gunas**, born out of the matter-vestures (**Prakrti**) in us. Born of **Prakriti** (**Prakrtijaih**) are the **Gunas**.

Thus in any situation even though we may choose not to act, we will be compelled to act according to our own inherent **Vasanas**. The "strike" or "protest", in whatever form it may express, cannot remain passive; Ultimately it has to express itself in a tragic aggressiveness. The mode of its expression depends upon the quality of **Vasanas** behind us at that time.

Life is ever active and positive. Life is never passive and negative. Dynamic expressions in action is "life". When all actions have ended the organism is "dead"; while living no organism can ever remain, even for an instant, without activity. (*Na hi kashchit kshanamapi jatu tishthatyakarmakrt*). Work without, expresses the life within, in every living organism. All **work** outside, and **activities** of thoughts within are ended when the organism is dead. To escape work is to escape "life" and run into "death" : it is suicidal.

Face life and its upheavals around you. Be active and tirelessly dynamic. Each exertion undertaken is a shooting spark of 'life' from the well of existence in you. Fearlessly work. With a clear vision plan and selflessly execute it. Fear not sweat : hesitate not to face disappointments. Live life, so long as you are alive. Grow through work --- evolve in work --- expand while striving --- make your own life thus rich and sweet. You can! You must!!

(Courtesy : Geeta Office, Powai)

SAINT EKNATH

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

(Continued from August 1974)

Every saint has a halo around him and the miracles performed by him help to create this halo round him. Saint Eknath is also not free from these miracles. A number of miracles are alleged to have been performed by him. They are quite interesting and hence the life of Eknath will not be complete without them.

The sixth day of the dark half of the month of Falgoon was the day when Eknath's Guru Shri Janardan Swami took Samadhi. Hence this day was quite important to Shri Eknath and it used to be observed at Eknath's house very meticulously. Of course some extra expenditure used to be incurred on that day. Once Shri Uddhav, who has already been referred to before, could not procure all the things required for the day with the money he had. Hence he borrowed rupees seven hundred from a money lender in Paithan. Somehow that loan remained to be repaid for a long time and it so happened that the money lender himself came to Shri Eknath and told him that the outstanding loan should be paid immediately. Eknath therefore decided not to eat a morsel of food upto the time the loan would not be repaid. He therefore remained without food and slept on a hungry stomach; but in the night it so happened that the money lender was awakened in the dead of the night by Uddhav and the money was repaid with interest. In the morning when Eknath started reading his usual "Pothi" (Sacred religious book) he found in it the promisory note passed by him duly receipted. Very soon the money lender also came to Eknath and expressed his regret for having pressed for the recovery of his money and also stated that Shri Uddhav came to his house by night to repay the debt. After

listening to this account of the money lender, Shri Eknath followed the whole affair and knew that god had satisfied the pronote posing himself as Uddhav. He however felt very sorry that god had to take that much trouble for him. He was overwhelmed with feelings and he prayed to God and begged his pardon for the troubles given to him. Similar episodes of the god taking some human form and repaying the amount of the pronote are narrated in the lives of saint Damaji and saint Narsi Mehta of Gujrat.

Because of the "Sadavarta" already referred to, at the home of Eknath, he was expected to feed any one who came to his house. All the brahmins in Paithan had already become jealous of Eknath; because his advice was listened to by all and their importance had lessened. So they started sending people to the house of Eknath even at the odd hours of night; but Eknath was not a man who would be upset by such small things. He faced every visitor who came to his house and after welcoming them all he fed them to their hearts' content.

This behaviour of Eknath further upset the brahmins and they were waiting for an opportunity to take a revenge on him and they got it soon. It was the Shraddha day of Eknath's father and he had called the brahmins of Paithan for dinner; but before serving them, he served the food to some non-hindus. The brahmins, who had gone to the Godavari for bath, returned back and saw that before them the "Yavnas" are fed, thus showing disrespect for them. Eknath however told them that no disrespect was meant by him as the soul is the same in all human beings and god is pleased when any soul gets the food. The brahmins however would not agree and ultimately agreed to take the food if the forefathers would partake physically. Shri Eknath agreed to that and requested the forefathers to attend and partake of the food in person. On Eknath's request three forefathers appeared in person and then the brahmins had to take the meals as per their stipulation. It appears that the tradition of the brahmins of Paithan was only

that of persecution. It might be recalled here that saint Dnyaneshwar and his brothers and sister, who had come to Paithan before two centuries, were persecuted similarly by the brahmins of Paithan and had to show them a miracle on the bank of the Godawari river.

One Shri Krishnadas, who was a poet and who was the contemporary of Shri Eknath, was writing a book on "Yuddha Kand". The writing of the book continued for a long time and Krishnadas felt that his end had come near. He therefore felt that he would not be able to complete his work. Hence he ran to Eknath and stating all the circumstances, requested Eknath to complete his work. Eknath however, enquired with him as to what was the time required by him to complete the work. On being told that eleven days would be required for the purpose, Shri Eknath told Krishnadas that only he would be completing his work and death cannot overcome him during that time. According to the guarantee given by Shri Eknath, Krishnadas completed his work within that period and breathed his last after that period in a peaceful manner. It was thought that because of Shri Eknath's blessings, the life of Krishnadas was extended by eleven days.

Mukteshwar the son of Eknath's daughter, was dumb from his birth; but later on his speech was restored to him by the grace of Shri Eknath and he became a prominent Marathi author. Gavba, who was altogether an uneducated person, staying at the house of Eknath, later on became a poet and completed the "Bhavarth Ramayan" which Shri Eknath could not complete during his life time. It is believed that because of the blessings of Eknath Maharaj, this Gavba got the inspiration and he became a poet. It is said that Shri Krishnadayarnava got inspiration to write his book "Harivarada" only from Shri Eknath.

One rich merchant from Karnatak wanted to present two beautiful idols of Pandurang and Rukmini to Shri Eknath. It was however decided that the idol of Pandurang would be first bro-

ught to Paithan and then it would be taken to Karnatak where the idol of Rukmini would be retained. The marriage of the two idols would be performed in Karnatak and the husband and wife would be brought to Paithan. Accordingly all things were arranged with pomp and show and the rich merchant of Karnatak made all the arrangements. After the marriage was performed in Karnatak, the two idols were brought in procession from Karnatak to Paithan and they were to be installed permanently in Paithan, but before that Eknath decided to go to Pandharpur. He accordingly went to Pandharpur, took the "Darshan" of Pandurang and performed Keertan in the temple before the idol. After his return to Paithan, he asked the stone idol of the bull to eat the grass, as per the request of the gathering and later on when butter was placed before the idol of Pandurang as "Naivadya" he requested Pandurang to eat the same and to the surprise of all, the whole butter was consumed by the stone idol brought from Karnatak. In the life of Namdeo also, there is the story of the stone idol having consumed the milk, which was offered to him as a "Naivadya". This incident in Eknath's life also appears to be parallel to that.

One person of the untouchable caste once called Shri Eknath at his house for dinner. In those days of strong orthodoxy, it was a great sin even to touch an untouchable. Then if some brahmin goes to the house of an untouchable, he would get an exemplary punishment of being boycotted. So when the brahmins in Paithan came to know that Shri Eknath has agreed to go to the house of the untouchable for dinner, they were hilarious about catching Eknath red handed so that he could be humiliated in any manner they liked. Hence on the appointed day they kept a strict watch over Eknath's house. They divided them into two groups and one of them kept a watch over the house of the untouchable, while the other group kept a watch over Eknath's house. Very soon the persons in the locality of the untouchables came in Paithan proper and said, "Eknath is in the Maharwada" (the locality where the un-

touchables were staying). They therefore wanted to storm the house of Shri Eknath. Hence they went to his house and lo ! Shri Eknath was in his own house doing his usual jobs. They therefore again ran to the Maharwada and to their utter surprise they found Eknath Maharaj also there. They could not believe in their own eyes and again ran to Shri Eknath's house. Thus they were running helter skelter from Eknath's house to the Maharwada and back; but all their efforts for catching Shri Eknath were completely foiled, for they could not really decide as to where Shri Eknath was present. In this predicament the brahmins felt ashamed and said that Shri Eknath was not an ordinary person and that he was the gods favourite.

Going to Kashi (Benaras) was supposed to be a great religious achievement in those days. Everybody therefore tried to go to Kashi in his old age and complete that pilgrimage. Once a gentleman wanted to go for that pilgrimage. He had a "Paris" (one stone which converts iron into pure gold by touch) with him and in those good old days, when there was no security he was faced with the difficulty of keeping it in safe custody. The travel from Maharashtra to Kashi was quite hazardous. The roads were infested with thieves and often times the Muhomedans used to attack the pilgrims and convert them. Thus unrest and insecurity prevailed in India for about three centuries from 1500 A. D. to 1800 A. D. After the coming of the British, they destroyed all the mischievous elements like the Thugs and Pendharies and established peace in India. It is said that this peace and security, which the British gave to the Indians, was one of the reasons why the opposition to the British rule subsided very soon and the people thought that the British rule has come to India for their good.

This gentleman had heard that Eknath was an upright and honest man who would not play flase with him. He therefore came to Eknath and requested him to keep the Paris with him up-to the time he returns from the pilgrimage. Eknath took that stone

and kept it in the place where the idols of the god were kept and quite forgot about it; because he had not the slightest idea of using the stone and converting iron into gold. After a lapse of nearly eight months the gentleman returned from his pilgrimage and straight went to Shri Eknath. On seeing him Shri Eknath welcomed him and enquired how he completed the pilgrimage. He also enquired whether he had any difficulties on his way. Shri Eknath was talking about everything else except the Paris; because he had forgotten completely about it, On seeing this, the gentleman started doubting the fidelity of Shri Eknath. He thought that Eknath wants to retain the stone and does not want to give it back to him. He thought it is no use keeping quiet at this juncture. He therefore himself opened the topic and requested Shri Eknath to give back his Paris. When the person made the mention of Paris Eknath remembered about it and went in the room where he had placed it. After a diligent search, he could not trace it; because it appeared that along with the stale flowers, used for God's worship, the stone also might have been thrown in the Godavari river. When Eknath could not produce the stone, the gentleman became restless.

The doubt in his mind about Shri Eknath's honesty was confirmed and he thought that the reputation he had heard about Eknath was not correct. He was a rogue and wanted to usurp the stone. He got a little agitated; but Eknath calmed him and said "Do not be afraid. I will find out and return the stone to you before the evening". After this Eknath further requested the gentleman to stay with him for lunch and suggested that in the meanwhile they might go to the Godavari for a bath. Though annoyed the gentleman became quite helpless before the calm and composed talk of Shri Eknath and he went to the river for bath. When they came to the river, Shri Eknath dived into the water and from the riverbed he brought out a handful of stones and requested the gentleman to pick up his stone from amongst them. He was however dismayed and thought that he was being fooled

by Eknath, as he thought that such handful of stones can never all be Paris; but he was careful enough to bring peices of iron with him and on trying them he found to his utter surprise that all of them were Paris. He was picking up one and leaving it, thinking that it was not his stone. So he went on fidgeting, not being able to make up his mind. Seeing this, Shri Eknath said, "Kindly select your stone early. So that we can finish our bath and go home. I have yet to worship the god and therefore we might be late for lunch." On this request, the gentleman had no other go but to select his stone and no sooner he picked up his stone, Shri Eknath threw the rest of them back in the river. Similar incident is also reported in the life of saint Namdeo.

The greedy gentleman was stunned at this queer behaviour of Shri Eknath. He thought of retaining a few more stones out of those brought out by Shri Eknath; but Shri Eknath was a man whose greed, anger love and such other passions had vanished. In terms of the Bhagavadgita he had become a Sthitapradna (स्थितप्रज्ञ) i. e. a person whose intellect had become steady. The state of mind of such a person has been described in Bhagawatgita as समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः । भगवद्गीता ६/८ i. e. to whom the earth, the stone and gold are all alike. He had therefore no interest in the Paris. The saints like Eknath, who are above all worldly things are calm and composed. They are satisfied within themselves and no outside agency can ruffle them or disturb their mental peace.

(To be continued)

CORRECTION

In the article "Kekavali of Moropant" in May 1974 issue, please read "rolling" instead of "rotting" on page 24 in verse No. 10, line 4

Editor.

LORD MAHAVIRA

By : Prof. Vaman H. Pandit

(Continued from August 1974)

EARLIER TIRTHANKARAS

According to the Jain religion, the best way to begin the study of their religion is through the stories of the Tirthankara. Par-svanatha was the twenty-third and Mahavira was the twenty-fourth. But the Jains have legends regarding each one of them and a student of Jainism ought to study all these legends in order to obtain the precise knowledge about the sacred faith.

(1) The first Tirthankara was born when the world had passed out of its happiest stage and was in the era of Susama Dusama. A Rajput king had a little son born to him, whom his mother called Risabhadeva, because in her dream she had seen a bull (Risabha) coming towards her. Risabhadeva (also called Adinatha) taught men seventy-two arts and women sixty-four, for these have only to be skilled in domestic and not in literary and industrial crafts; but his great glory lies in the fact that he first taught men the Jain faith. Risabhadeva had one hundred sons (among whom was the famous king Bharat); The first Tirthankara attained moksha from Astapada (or Kailasa) in the Himalayas.

(2) The second Tirthankara, Ajitanatha, was born in Ayodhya. After his birth all his father's enemies were conquered (jita), hence his name 'the invincible one'. He was born in the period called Dusama Susama, and all the remaining Tirthankara were born in the same period. His sign, which one sees on all his images in the temples, is an elephant. During his life he himself earned the

title of Victorious, for he was so devout an ascetic that he was beaten by none in performing austerities.

(3) The third Tirthankara was born in Sravasti of Rajput parents. His emblem is the horse.

(4) The fourth Tirthankara Abhinanda was born in Vanita, where his parents, Samvara and Siddartha Rani ruled. He attained moksa accompanied by a thousand monks, as indeed, did all the first eleven Tirthankaras except Suparsvanatha. Abhinandana has the ape for his sign.

(5) The fifth Tirthankara, Sumatinatha, was born in Kankanapura, where his father, a Rajput named Megharatha, was king; his mother's name was Sumangala. This Tirthankara's sign is sometimes given as a red goose, but others say it is a red partridge.

(6) Susima, the mother of the sixth Tirthankara, Padmaprabhu longed before his birth to sleep on a bed of red lotuses (Padma), with the result that her son was always of the colour of a red lotus, which flower he took for his emblem. His father, Dhara, was the Rajput king of Kausambi.

(7) The father of the seventh Tirthankara was the Rajput king of Banares; but his queen suffered from leprosy in both her sides. This dreadful-disease was cured (before) the child's birth, so he was given the name of Su (good) Parsva (side). His emblem is the Swastika.

(8) The eighth Tirthankara was son of the Rajput king of Chandrapuri. The moon was his emblem, and he was called Chandraprabhu.

(9) The ninth Tirthankara is called Suvindhinatha. But as his teeth were so beautiful that they resembled the buds of an exquisite flower (Puspa) he was also called Puspadanta. There is a dispute

over his emblem; the Svetambara say it is the crocodile, while certain Digamber say it is the crab.

(10) The tenth Tirthankara was son of Rajput king of Bhaddilapura. His name was Sitalanatha, Lord of Coolness. His sign is the Srivatsa Swastika or according to the Digambara, the *Ficus religiosa*.

(11) King Visnudeva, who ruled in Simhapuri, possessed a most beautiful throne, but unfortunately an evil spirit took up his abode in it, so that no one dare sit there. His wife, however, so longed to sit on it that she determined to do so at any risk; to every one's astonishment she was quite uninjured, so, when her son was born, he was named Sreyamsanatha, the Lord of Good, for already he had enabled his mother to cast out an evil spirit and so do a world of good (Sreyamsa). His sign is the rhinoceros;

(12) The twelvth Tirthankara Vasupujya was son of Vasupuja. His sign is the male buffalo, and he passed to moksa from his birth place, Campapuri,

(13) The sign of the thirteenth Tirthankara is the boar. He got his name Vimalanatha, Lord of Clearness.

(14) There was an endless (Ananta) thread which lay about quite powerless in Ayodhya, but after the king's wife had given birth to the fourteenth Tirthankara, it became endued with power to heal diseases; this event, combined with the fact that his mother had seen an endless necklace of pearls, decided the child's name. His sign is the hawk or according to the Digambara, the bear,

(15) The fifteenth Tirthankara Dharmanath was born to the Rajput king and queen of Ratnapuri. His sign was a thunderbolt.

(16) After the nirvana of the ninth Tirthankara, Suvindhinatha, the Jain faith disappeared until the birth of the tenth Tirthankara,

who revived it; on his nirvana it disappeared again, but was revived on the birth of the eleventh; and this continued to be the case until the birth of Santinatha, the sixteenth Tirthankara, after which it never disappeared again. The parents of this Tirthankara ruled in Hastinapura. The special interest of this saint lies in the fact that he was the first Tirthankara to become a Chakravarti or emperor of the whole of Bharat (i. e. India) His emblem is the deer. He attained moksa from Mt. Parsavanatha in Bengal. With the exception of four, all the Tirthankara passed to nirvana from this hill.

(17) The seventeenth Tirthankara was born in Gajapuri, where his parents, king Sivaraja and queen Sridevi, reigned. Kunthunatha's sign was goat,

(18) Queen Devi, wife of King Sudarsana of Hastinapura, saw a vision of a bank of jewels before the birth of her son, the eighteenth Tirthankara, Aranatha. His emblem is the third kind of svastika (the Nandavartta) and he passed to moksa from Sameta Sikhara (Mt Parsvanatha).

(19) The nineteenth Tirthankara is the most interesting of all, for owing to deceitfulness in a previous life this saint was born as a woman; having, however, done all the twenty things that make an ascetic a Tirthankara, nothing could prevent his becoming one; but his previous deceitfulness resulted in his becoming a female Tirthankara. She was born in Mithila, where her parents, king Kumbera and Queen Prabhavati, ruled. Before her birth her mother longed to wear a garland (malli) woven of the flowers of all seasons. Mallinatha's symbol is a water-jar, and she also passed to moksa from Sameta Sikhara. The Digambaras, who deny that any woman can pass to moksa without rebirth as a man, deny of course that Mallinatha could have been a woman,

(20) Before the birth of Munisuvrata, his mother, the wife of King

Sumitra of Rajgriha, kept all the beautiful vows of Jainism (su vrata, good vows) as devoutly as if she had been an ordinary woman and not a queen; hence the child's name. His parents, while Khatriya or Rajputs, belonged to the Hari dynasty, whereas all the other Tirthankaras, save the twenty-second, belonged to the Iksvaku family. His symbol is the tortoise.

(21) The twenty-first Tirthankara, Nominatha, was born in Mathura to king Vijay and Queen Vipra. His emblem is the blue lotus, and he attained moksa from Sameta Sikhar.

(22) The twenty-second Tirthankara (like the twentieth) is always represented as black; He was son of Samudravijaya, King of Sauripura. Krishna and his brother Baldeva lived at this time, and were cousins of Neminatha. His sign was the conch shell.

Unlike most of the other Tirthankara, he attained moksa from Girnar in Kathiawad.

The twenty-third and twenty-fourth Tirthankara are respectively Parsvanatha and Mahavira.

MAHAVIRA'S CHILDHOOD

The sixth century B. C. was a period of revolt against Brahmanical influences in India, at least in Northern India. Some two thousand five hundred and sixty six years ago in Besarh, near modern Patna in Bihar in the Kashtrya ward of Vaisali an Apostle was born. He who made one of the most emphatic protests the world has ever known against accounting luxury, wealth or comfort. Almost paradoxical, it seems, that the warrior caste should produce the great apostle of ahimsa or non killing. He was afterwards known from his exploits as Mahavira - the great hero-

but his earliest name he derived from his birthplace, being known as Vaisaliya - the man of Vaisal. The chief of one of these Kshatriya clans named Siddharth was a man of some eminence in the State, for he married the daughter of the King of that State, a Kshatriya girl named Trisala. His symbol was a Lion.

There is a legend about Mahavira's birth which is recorded in the Jain sacred books, and which possesses some value as showing the intense hatred existing between the Brahman lady, Devananda, wife of the Brahman Risabhadatta, living in the Brahmanical part of the town, saw the Fourteen Auspicious Dreams which foretold the birth of a great saint or Tirthankara. But Indra, the chief of the gods, saw from his celestial throne what had happened, and knew that the child would be the great Tirthankara Mahavira; so he sent a deer to remove the embryo from Devananda and to give it to Trisala, in order that Mahavira might not be born in a 'beggarly or Brahman' family. However that may be, the stories go on to show how carefully Trisala, 2,566 years ago, gave birth to a perfectly healthy child in 599 Before Christ or towards the end of the Dusma Susma period, as the Jains reckon time, on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the moon in the month of Chaitra.

When the child was three days old, it was shown the Sun and the moon (this is not usual now); on the sixth day was observed the religious vigil (modern Jains still worship 'Mother Sixth') Trisala bathed on the tenth day, and on the twelfth, after the usual family feast, the boy was named with all pomp and show. In India it is the father's sister who usually names a child, but his parents themselves chose Mahavira's name, announcing that 'since the prince was placed in the womb of the Ksatriyani Trisala this family's (treasure) of gold, silver, corn, jewels, pearls, shells, precious stones and corals increased, therefore the prince shall be called Vardhamana' (i. e. the Increasing). Mahavira was some times, as we have seen, called Vaisaliya from his birth place;

his followers, however seldom call him by this or by the name his parents gave him, but prefer to use the title they say the gods gave him, that of Mahavira, the great hero, or else Jina, the conqueror, though this last is really more used in connection with the religion (Jainism) he founded than with himself. He is also known as Jnataputra, Namaputra, Sasanayaka.

We have noticed some of the legends that have gathered round Mahavira, and it is worth while examining more, since legends help us in special way to grasp the latent ideals of a faith. We can learn from them what its followers admire and what they despise, and also what qualities they revere sufficiently to link with their founder's name. If we contrast the stories told of Mahavira with those told, for instances, of Lord Krishna by Hindus, we shall see at once that the thoughts of these early followers of Jainism moved on a higher, cleaner plane, and this purity of thought is one of the glories of Jainism today.

Austere though the creed of the Jain is, there are some amongst them whose habit of mind leads them to interpret even these severe tenets as sternly as possible. This diversity of temperament (which is surely inherent in the human race) manifests itself in the stories told of Mahavira's life. The Digambara always represent their hero as choosing the sterner and less pleasing path; avoiding marriage and going on his way unhindered by any fear of hurting his parents' feelings. The Svetambara sect, on the other hand, believe that, though from his earliest hours Mahavira longed to forsake the world and betake himself to homeless, wandering life, he nevertheless felt he could not do this during his parents' lifetime, lest he should cause them pain.

Legends tell of his boyish prowess and of how easily he excelled all his companions in strength and physical endurance, as he did in beauty of mind and body. One day, they say, the sons of his father's ministers had come as usual to play with him in

the royal gardens, when suddenly a mad elephant charged down on the group of children, who fled hither and thither in their efforts to escape. Mahavira, however, quietly went up to the infuriated animal, caught it by its trunk, and climbing up on it, escaped being trodden by its feet by riding on its back!

According to the Svetambara tradition Mahavira married Yasoda (belonging to the Kaundinya gotra) and a daughter was born to them named Anuja (Anojja) or Priyadarsana. This daughter eventually married Jamali, who, after becoming one of the Mahavira's followers and colleagues, ended by opposing him. Their child (Mahavira's grand daughter) had two names being known both as Sesavati and Yasovati.

Some ancient Indians believe that the result of action (Karma) ties men to the cycle of rebirth, and that if, through the cessation of life, action and its resultant karma could be ended so much the less would be the danger of rebirth. This tenet naturally encouraged belief in suicide as a form of prudential insurance! Amongst the recorded deaths by suicide are those of Mahavira's parents, who according to the Svetambara belief, died of voluntary - starvation; 'on a bed of kusa grass they rejected all food, and their bodies dried up by the last mortification of the flesh which is to end in death' At their death Mahavira, who was by now approaching thirtieth year, felt free to become an ascetic, and asked his elder brother's permission to renounce the world; the brother consented, only stipulating that Mahavira should do nothing in the matter for a year, lest people should think they had quarrelled.

The Digambara accounts differ widely from this. According to them, even when only a child of eight, Mahavira took the twelve vows which a Jain layman may take, and that he always longed to renounce the world; other Digambara say that it was in

his thirtieth year that, whilst meditating on his 'self', he determined to become a monk, realizing that he would only spend seventy-two years in this incarnation as Mahavira. At first his parents were opposed to the idea of their delicately nurtured child undergoing all the hardships that fall to the lot of a houseless mendicant, but at last they consented, and it was during their lifetime that Mahavira entered on the spiritual vocation.

Modern research would seem to favour the Svetambara belief that Mahavira had married, but this the Digambara strenuously deny, for an ascetic who has never married moves on a higher plane of sanctity than one who has known the joys of wedded life.

(To be continued)



WHAT IS MAN ?

Man is God's highest creation, His image and secret. He is His beloved creation and "powerhouse" which lights up the world. The world is the temple which He sanctifies with the flame of His creation, man. Man, God's created masterpiece, master of himself and of the world, is the subtlest miracle, that wonder of wonders, within which lies the understanding and control of the two worlds, the mystery of God and the Universe. In the music of creation, man is His symphony, deriving delicate, divine rhythms from His Heart. Man, seemingly imperfect, in whom the seed of Perfection has been planted and watered by His Love.

Inauguration of THE TEMPLE OF SRI SAI BABA

in the Railway Colony at Kurla, Bombay 24. on Ramnavami

The First temple of Shri Sai Baba was constructed and inaugurated by the Shri Bhagawati Sai Samsthan, Central Railway colony, Kurla at Panvel (near the C. Rly Station Panvel on the Bombay-Poona Road, about 70 Kms. from Bombay) on Thursday the first January 1970.

The second temple of Sri Sai Baba is recently constructed by the Samsthan and inaugurated by His Holiness Sri Sai Padananda, Radhakrishna Swami (President of All India Sai Samaj, Madras) in the midst of thousands of Sai devotees in general and a galaxy of prominent Saints from all over India in particular, on Sri Rama Navami Day i. e. Monday the 1st April 1974.

The celebration started a day earlier (i. e. on 31-3-74) right from 4.00 a. m. with the recitation of suprabhatam followed by Nagar sankirtan around the colony. During the Nagar sankirtan a rare piece of cloth used by Baba alongwith His portrait was carried personally by Sri Sai Sevak Narayan Baba. Through-out the Nagar sankirtan the devotees sang the glories of Baba in the form of bhajans. At different places the devotees performed the CHARAN pooja of Sri Sai Sevak Narayan Baba and received blessings.

After the Nagar sankirtan there was abhishek pooja and aarati in the Samsthan followed by PUNYA VACHANAM, MAHA GANAPATHI POOJA, GANAPATHI HOMAM, NAVAGRHA POOJA, NAVA GRAHA HOMAM, VASTHU SHANTI

AND KALASA POOJA at the New Temple.

It was a touching sight to see the "Poor Feeding and Distribution of Clothes" in which more than thousand people took part. The poor people made a systematic long queue and were allowed inside the Samsthan for darshan before they were given food and clothes.

In the evening, Pooja, Aarati and recitation of Sri Sai Mahima took place in the Samsthan. The Kalyan Bhajan Samaj took over the programme by their thrilling bhajans upto 9.30 p. m. when the Shej Aarati was performed. This was followed by Sri Sai Baba Akhand bhajans from 10.00 p. m. to 6.00 a. m. by Sri Sai Bhajan Mandali of Dadar.

The function was inter alia attended by the following outstanding personalities:-

1. H. H. Radhakrishna Swamy (Sri Sai Padananda)
President, All India Sai Samaj from Bangalore.
2. Sri Dandavate Maharaj of Gangapur.
3. Sri Ratnakar Baba of Wada.
4. Sri N. P. Avasthi from Poona, an associate of Baba.
5. Dr. K. B. Gawanker also an associate of Baba.
6. Sri D. D. Neroy, India's famous Process Artist and block maker who is the first block maker of Sri Sai Baba's protrait.
7. Shri H. B. Talim, the famous Sculptor who together with his Late father made the statue of Baba at Shirdi.

The "Moorti Mandap Pravesham" started at 6.30 a. m. on 1-4-74 with a well decorated chariot in which three moorties were placed i. e. Mula moorti of Baba, two feet six inches, UTSAV moorti of Baba in Italian marble, eighteen inches and the third one being Maha Ganapathi in Indian marble also eighteen inches.

The decorated car was ceremoniously taken in procession with all accompaniments to the mandapam opposite the new temple where appropriate vedic ceremonies were in progress. On arrival at the spacious mandapam Maha Ganapathi pooja, Kumbha sthapanam and veda parayanam took place.

At 9.30 a. m. Maha Ganapathi moorti sthapana was done, followed by the Mula moorti i. e. Sri Sai Baba Sthapana which was done by H. H. Sai Padananda, Radhakrishna Swami. The Maruti moorti sthapana was done by Smt. Pushpa Chimanlal Mehta, an ardent devotee of Baba. Earlier to this, the Kumbha sthapanam was ceremoniously done by Sri Sai Sevak Narayan Baba. This was followed by Shanti pooja homam.

Before taking up the next item of the programme the devotees were given a golden opportunity to hear the amritvani of so many Saints from different parts of India, collected together at one and the same place, which is quite rare. Shri Dandavate Maharaj of Gangapur, Dr. K. B. Gawankar, Shri D. D. Neroy, Shri N. P. Awasthi and Shri Talim addressed the gathering. They explained from their point of view, the importance of the occasion.

Sri Ratnakar Baba of Wada spoke with great eloquence and power expounding the inner meaning and significance of certain rites of the Upasana Khanda of the Vedas. He is a Gayatrimantra Sidha and words of light and power flowed out of him without any hindrance like the Niagara-falls. Concluding his speech he remarked that the assembly of so many saints and mahatmas here was not so remarkable as the power of this zealous Sri Sai Sevak Narayan Baba attracting all of them irresistibly like a magnet attracting iron. This was more significant.

While describing how SRI Sai Sevak Narayan Baba came under the influence of SRI SAI BABA, Ratnakar Baba said,

“In 1958–59 Narayan Baba got a vigraham of Sri Sai Baba from Bal Yogini Saraswati Amma, who had the miraculous power that whenever she dropped a pinch of kum-kum in an open palm of a devotee, it would turn into a metallic moorti or figurine of e. g. Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Hanuman, Devi, Jesus or Mary etc; but in Sai Sevak Narayan Baba’s hand it was a figure of Sri Sai Baba that materialised. Again the following week yet another bigger moorti of the same Sri Sai Baba appeared. At that time Narayan Baba did not know much of Sri Sai Baba much less His devotee, he was puzzled and inquired, what these figurines were and their significance. Balyogini Saraswati Amma had gone into trance at this inquiry and when she came out of it, she explained that though he did not know Sri Sai Baba much less that he was a devotee of Baba, yet Baba had chosen him for manifesting His powers. There was something unprecedented and unique about Baba that the like of which he had not come across in any scriptures or religious literature.”

The Chief Guest H. H. Sai Padananda, Radha Krishna Swami, who had the privilege of association with Seshadri Swamigal and Ramana Maharishi and Narsimha Swami, opened his illuminative address with a verse from Vivek Chudamani of Adi Shankara, starting with “Sath Sangatve.....and ended with the value of Sath Sangh.” He was much struck by the self-control of the audience who without any volunteers to regulate the crowd, were regulating themselves quietly and promptly. This was surely a sign and symbol of their Shradha and Bhakti.

Before the sthapanam of the Mula moorti by H. H. Radhakrishna Swami, Sai Sevak Narayan Baba accompanied by some Samsthan members sang in chorus the ‘Sai Mahima’ extolling the limitless and incomprehensible glory of Baba. Earlier Narayan Baba had sung a soul-thrilling song how one may travel to liberation by meditating on the holy name of Sai, Sri Sai; the song was so thrilling that many including H. H. Radhakrishna Swamy,

Sri Awasthi and others asked for a copy of the song.

This was followed by the Prana Prathistha of the Mula moorti of Baba by H. H. Radhakrishna Swami.

The evening programme started at 6.00 p. m. with pooja aarati and bhajan. During this programme, some of the Rly. officials e. g. Sri Ramchandran, Divisional Personnel Officer, Sri Balbir Singh with other officers participated. This was followed by the famous Rathotsav in which Baba's original portrait with a rare piece of cloth worn by Him during His life time was carried in an illuminated chariot tastefully decorated with flowers, around the colony. The Rathotsav was musically well led by the famous Nadaswaram players (Nadaswaram Vidvan Sri Thirumalai and party) from Matunga in addition to Bhajan goshti and fire works.

The Rathotsav ended at 11.30 p. m. with hearty shouts of Jai Jai Kar and charan pooja of Sri Sai Sevak Narayan Baba. Thus ended the celestial celebration of Kumbhabhishekam of the New Temple held on the Shri Rama Navami Day.

SAI-SEVAK, B. NARAYAN

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महान तीर्थ स्थान शिर्डी

“ संसारमें सब से महान हमारा भारत है ”
भारत में सबसे महान हमारी शिर्डी है
शिर्डी में सबसे महान हमारे साईं है

महाराष्ट्र राज्य के अहमदनगर जिले में स्थित शिर्डी एक छोटासा गांव । यहीं एक छोटासा गांव शिर्डी श्री साईनाथ की पवित्र चरण धुलि से एक महान तीर्थस्थल बन गया है । आज उस पवित्र नगरी शिर्डी का एक एक कण व पत्ता पवित्र हो गया है । आज इस पवित्र स्थान पर प्रति वर्ष लाखों लोग आकर मानसिक तथा सांसारिक सुखों की प्राप्ति कर रहे हैं ।

आज से बहुत समय पूर्व जब कि श्री साईनाथ महाराज का यहां आगमन नहीं हुआ था “ शिर्डी ” को एक छोटेसे गांव के रूप में जाना जाता था । आज यही एक छोटासा गांव प्रभु साईं की कृपा से एक महान तीर्थस्थल बन गया है । श्री साईनाथ महाराज का यहां आना और उनका साईं रूप से यहीं बस जाना शिर्डीवासियों के परम सौभाग्य की सूचना देता है । वैसे तो श्री साईनाथ प्रभु कण-कण में समाये हुए हैं । जहां उनको प्रेमसे पुकारा करो वहीसे प्रकट हो जाते हैं । परन्तु उनका मुख्य केंद्र तो शिर्डी ही है । समाधि के पूर्व व समाधि के पश्चात आज भी भक्तगण आ आकर ठीक वैसे ही आनन्द अनुभव करते हैं जैसा कि वे पहले करते थे । शिर्डी आज एक साधारण सा गांव न होकर भारत के महान तीर्थों में से एक हो गया है । आज यहां पर आने वाले साईं भक्तों को हर प्रकार की सुविधा प्राप्त है जिससे कि वे किसी भी प्रकार की असुविधा महसूस नहीं कर पाते हैं ।

आप यदि सौभाग्य से यहां एक बार भी अकेले अथवा परिवार के साथ आये तो आप कभी भी एकान्त अनुभव नहीं करेंगे । श्री साईं की कृपा से

यहां का कुछ ऐसा मनमोहक धार्मिक वातावरण बन गया है की वहां से आने की इच्छा आपके मन में कदापि नहीं हो सकती है । वहां पर प्रत्येक दिन सुबह, दुपहर संध्या तथा रात्री को होने वाली आरतीयों को अपना अपना एक अलग आनन्द है । तथा प्रत्येक गुरुवार का कार्यक्रम तो अत्यंत मनमोहक है । अर्थात् कहनेका तात्पर्य यही है कि वहां के प्रत्येक कार्य कलाप में आपको मानसिक शान्ती की प्राप्ती होगी ।

आज वावा की इस पवित्र नगरी में देश-विदेश से हजारों भक्त गण प्रतिवर्ष यहां आते है और मानसिक और सांसारिक सुखों की प्राप्ती करते है ।

आइये । ऐसी पवित्र साईनाथ महाराज की धरती को हम शत-शत प्रणाम करें और ईश्वर से यह प्रार्थना करें कि हमारा मन सम्पूर्ण इच्छाओं को त्याग कर अपने प्रभु साई के चरणों में ही लग जाय ।

पवित्र तीर्थ नगरी शिर्डी को शत-शत प्रणाम ।

श्री किशोर कुमार सपकाल
C/o श्री दिनकर डी. सपकाल
नया बाजार, तेलिकी बजरिया
लडकर, ग्वालियर (म. प्र.)



YOGIRAJ VASUDEVANANDA SARASWATI

(A Biography)

By:- Shri S. N. Huddar

(Continued from August 1974)
Chaturmas-17 Shak 1828 (1906 A. D.)

Narsoba Wadi

People were eagerly waiting for Swami Maharaj and they wished to bring him in procession with music from the outskirts. But Swamiji arrived suddenly and stood before Shri Datta Paduka for Darshan at midday. Though it was dinner time as the news of his arrival was known, people came to the ghat for his darshan. All bowed to him humbly. Swami Maharaj stayed at the Brahmanand Math. He did midday rituals and went for alms. Narsinha Saraswati (Dikshit Swami) was much delighted to have darshan of Swamiji.

From next day, Swami Maharaj resumed his daily routine. He got up at 4 A. M. gave instructions about sanyasa to Narsinha Saraswati. After morning bath and rituals he took darshan of Shri Datta Paduka, worshipped Shri Narayan Swami and explained Geeta Bhashya, Upnishat Bhashya etc. Then he read Brahmasutravritti and Jeevan Mukti Vivek. Interested local people came to listen to him. Vakratund Kavishwar Puranik also regularly came there. Visitors worshipped Swami Maharaj at 10 A. M.

This time Swami Maharaj stayed here for 2 months. Thousands of Rupees were received which were taken by the priests. Cocoanuts, fruits and such eatables were distributed as prasad. At 12 noon he would go for alms at 5 houses, Narsinha Saraswati accompanied him. Alms were taken to Narayan Swami

Math. He would take only 8 morsels (अष्टौ प्रासोर्मुनेर्भक्ष्याः) as per Sanyasa Rule. Many females would wait to take of his pattal and clean the place. One non-brahmin woman could not get this opportunity of service for several days. Knowing this Swamiji came out, dropped some rice particles on the ground and asked her to pick up and clean the place. She did so and had consolation.

He explained 'Krishnalahari' and 'Shatshloki' of Shankaracharya in the afternoon. In the evening he would go to sangam for rituals and at the time of the third round of the Palakhi, he would come for darshan and return to Math. After Shejarati (arati at the time of sleeping) he would sit on a stony varandah in front of Narayan Swami Math to listen to the Bhajan as he liked it much. Vishnu Deo, Patwardhan and others sang padas and Abhangas of Swami Maharaj and other saints with devotion. After Arati, Mantra pushpa and Prasad, people dispersed at 12 in the midnight. Swami Maharaj taught Bhrama Karma to those interested at this time and then slept at 2 a. m. for only 2 hours.

Swamiji's Departure For Rameshwar Withheld

Guru Dwadashi festival (Ashwin Vadya 12) was ceremonised by the priests. This year Kolhapur state had taken objections for it and so the priests were anxious. Swamiji said, "Do Kothipujan as usual and everything will be all right." On Ashwin Vadya 10, Swamiji bathed in Krishna and came for darshan of Datta Paduka. He got samadhi and Shri Datta told him to go to Rameshwar, knowing this the people felt very much. All requested Swami Maharaj to stay for the festival. Swamiji said that he could not disobey Shri Datta Adesh. The priests continued to pour water on the Paduka incessantly to stop Swamiji's departure. Shri Datta told Swamiji to stay in Vadi till further Adesh, Swamiji said, "Be selling this body as you wish" Kolhapur State

also lifted the ban on the festival.

Kalkundrikar of Belgaum had come there and he had invited Swamiji for alms. His wife had completed cooking and was eagerly waiting for him. Swamiji came to her and received alms. When people knew this, they were astonished as they had seen Swamiji in Samadhi at Brahmanand Math the whole day. Some persons, who came from other towns also saw Swami Maharaj at the border line of Vadi and received prasad from him. Gandabua was puzzled to know these incidences. He asked Swamiji at the time of evening Sandhya about this. He smiled and said, "I do not know anything. I was with you at the Math in Samadhi State."

Ekadashi Smart or Bhagwat ?

This month Ekadashi was on two days. Swamiji observed 2nd i. e. Bhagwat. Guru Dwadashi was to be celebrated on that day. If Swamiji observed fast, how could he take prasad of guru Dwadashi? Shri Datta asked Swamiji, "who am I, Smart or Bhagwat?" Swamiji replied "Both" Shri Datta said, "Then any one Ekadashi can be observed," so Swamiji observed first Smart Ekadashi and received alms of Prasad the next day.

Mangal Snan In Deepawali

On Narak Chaturdashi, all the devotees gave mangal snan (auspicious bath) to Swami Maharaj. Shri Narsinh Saraswati worshipped him with 16 upchars and the Arti was sung as follows:-

“ बय जय श्री मग्दुखवर स्वाभिन् परमात्मन् हंसा ”

Very Hot Water Bath

After mantra pushpa all offered Sashtang Dandwat- i. e. fell straight before and bowed to him.

Once in Deepawali very hot water was poured on Shri Datta paduka. The result being Swamiji began to pass blood in urine. When asked Shri Datta said "You are troubled by one day's hot water bath, then what should be my case if boiled water is poured on me for 5 days." Swami Maharaj inquired whether the boiled water was tested before pouring on the paduka and said, "For your offence I am punished so pray Shri Datta and beg his pardon."

Son Affected By The Spirit of His Father.

A person affected by a spirit had come from Konkan. After darshan of Swamiji, the spirit said, "I am the father of this person. He does not follow the routine of recitation of Vishnu Sahasranam and feeding of 'Atithi' (guest) daily. If he follows these rules, I will not trouble him." Swamiji asked him to do this. He returned acted as advised and he was relieved of the spirit trouble.

Advice For Having Issues

A person of Mangaon had 2 wives, but he had no issue. Swami Maharaj asked him to offer a gold cradle to a Brahmin. After doing this he had issues. Issues of one other person of Mangaon did not survive. Swamiji asked him to observe fast on Tuesday.

Vasudeorao Thakur of Indore came to see Swami Maharaj. His wife was affected by a spirit. He was told that the samadhi of one of his forefathers was not cared for and that he should arrange for its upkeep. Thakur searched out the place of Samadhi in his Vast estate and arranged for its worship. His wife had good health thereafter.

Laper Brahmin Cured

A Brahmin suffering from Leprosy had come from Vengurla and stayed at Vadi for over 5 years for relief. He requested Swami Maharaj for relief and Swamiji after consulting Shri Datta, told him to feed an ass with Puran (delicious food made of gram dal and gur or sugar) and asked him, if he needs, he should take money from that offered by the devotees. He took one rupee and arranged to prepare puran and offered it to an ass in a jungle. He came for bath at midday when Swamiji was also bathing. He took bath on the lower side. After taking 3 dips he came up and observed that he was cured.

Significance of Gayatri and Family God

Balu Sadhala of Barsi was learning Vedas at Sangli. He came for the darshan of Swami Maharaj and requested to favour him with mantropadesh. Swamiji said, "For a Brahmin Gayatri is a principal mantra. He should observe Gayatri Purashcharan and get his desires fulfilled. Next he should recite mantra of his family God, who has been protecting the family, As you have come here, observe a gurucharitra saptah and recite 'Digambara Digambara shripad Vallabh Digambara.'"

A Rich Woman Relieved of Spirit Trouble.

A rich person came to Vadi with his wife, who was troubled by a spirit. She was serving there for 3 months; but there was no relief. The person narrated this to Swami Maharaj, who told him the next day, "one Brahmin had deposited Rs 200/- with your forefathers. That amount was not returned. The Brahmin had become a spirit and he is troubling your wife. If you spend Rs 1100 in feeding the Brahmins here, she will be cured."

The person demanded the amount by telegram from home and placed it before Swamiji. He asked a priest to take the amount and to use it for feeding Brahmins and further told him that until the whole amount was spent, no brahmin should dine at home. When all the amount was thus utilized, the woman was relieved of the spirit trouble.

Ganesh Satwalekar of Kolgaon copied 'Dwisahashri Gurucharitra' in hand and presented it to Swami Maharaj, who in leisure time explained the Gurucharitra to him and also gave him mantras for a scorpion, a serpent, evil eye, easy delivery etc. in writing on a paper. While departing he came for darshan. Swamiji said "why not go tomorrow". He said, "A tanga has been hired and the luggage had already been taken away by him." "All right" exclaimed Swamiji. The tangawalla did not come that day and he had to go the next day.

Forbidden to Write on Public Matters

Swami Maharaj once told that when he was at Bhusawal, many persons came to see him. They would say that they were inclined to do good things and had started doing daily rituals due to Swamiji's advice, but they cannot satisfy others in arguments and so they requested Swamiji to write an article by which others could be convinced. Swamiji began to write but again he had fever. When asked, Shri Datta said, "you cannot do this nonsense writing, if you are kept in such condition." He tore off the papers which he had written.

Crop Saved From Rains.

Dikshit Swamiji's elder brother's daughter was given in marriage at Bhilavadi. She was not liked by her husband as she was not fair. She was given a field and kept separate. She lived

by tilling the land. She had put the dust touched by Swamiji in a case. Once the crop was ready for reaping. The sky was full of clouds and there were signs of rains. She prayed Swami Maharaj that until the crop was removed there should be no rains. She put out holy dust around the heaps of crop. She also said that she would feed Brahmins at Vadi after this. It rained in the surrounding area; but not a drop fell on her crops. She then went to Vadi and did Samaradhana (feeding of Brahmins). Swami Maharaj came to her for alms on her request.

Swami Maharaj - Shri Datta Incarnate

Once Swami Maharaj was taken for alms in "Mola" forest, two miles from Vadi, with many devotees. Vakratundbua Kavishwar was with them. He read Purana in which he stated an authority of Bhavishya and other puranas that Shri Datta had three incarnations in Kaliyug, Shripad Shrivallabha, Narsinha Saraswati and 'Yogiraj' and this Yogiraj is none else but Shri Vasudevananda Saraswati, Tembe swami Maharaj only.

Swamiji expressed, "Yogiraj has yet to appear" They all returned by evening. Swami Maharaj sat on the varandah before Narayan Swami Math. Kirtan started and Swamiji got Samadhi.

Spirit Harrasing a Woman

A woman was affected by a Brahmin spirit. He would carry her in the sky and throw her anywhere in senseless state. After awakening she would return home. She came with her mother to Vadi. Here too one day she was taken high in the sky and left somewhere far away. The mother narrated this to Swami Maharaj, who said that she was safe in the west and that she would return by the evening. Being requested by her father, Swamiji gave a yantra to keep round the neck of the woman and after doing this, she was relieved of the trouble.

Vaijinatha's Puja and Feeding of Thousands in Rs 7- Only

During the first visit to Vadi of Swami Maharaj after Sanyasa, there lived a Brahmin, Vaijinatha, who wore one pancha and took another on his body. He called himself a disciple of Swami Samarth of Akkalkot. For 15 years he lived in Vadi and had saved Rs 8/- by collection of dakshina of one or two paise received at a time. He did not observe Sandhya or Puja. He did not worship Datta Paduka also.

Once he was asked to do Mahapuja spending Rs 8/- which he had. He said that he was affected by a spirit and that he had to go to his elder brother. People could not know the meaning of his saying. Swamiji said that he was a Brahmanishta, he is affected by a spirit, means God and that he wanted to go to his elder brother, meant he wanted to assimilate with Brahma and for the last ritual he had kept the money.

However Gandabua insisted him to do Mahapuja. Swami Maharaj told him to spend Rs 7/- for puja and keep Rs 1/- in balance. He also agreed to come for alms and told all the citizens to come for prasad. Preparations were made, cooking started, all food was covered by Swamiji's chati. Thousands of men, women, children, Brahmins and others dined and still there was food in balance. This is an instance like that of Bhasker Brahmins feeding at Gangapur at the instance of Shri Narsinha Saraswati about two hundred years ago (This is described in the 38th chapter of Shri Guru charitra).

(To be continued)

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