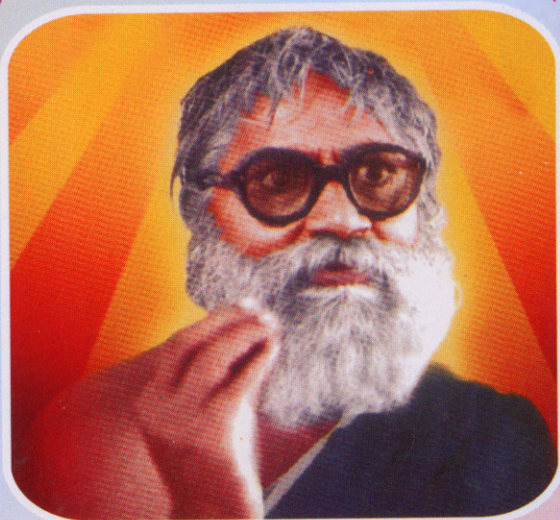


OUR BELOVED RANGDADA

PART-II



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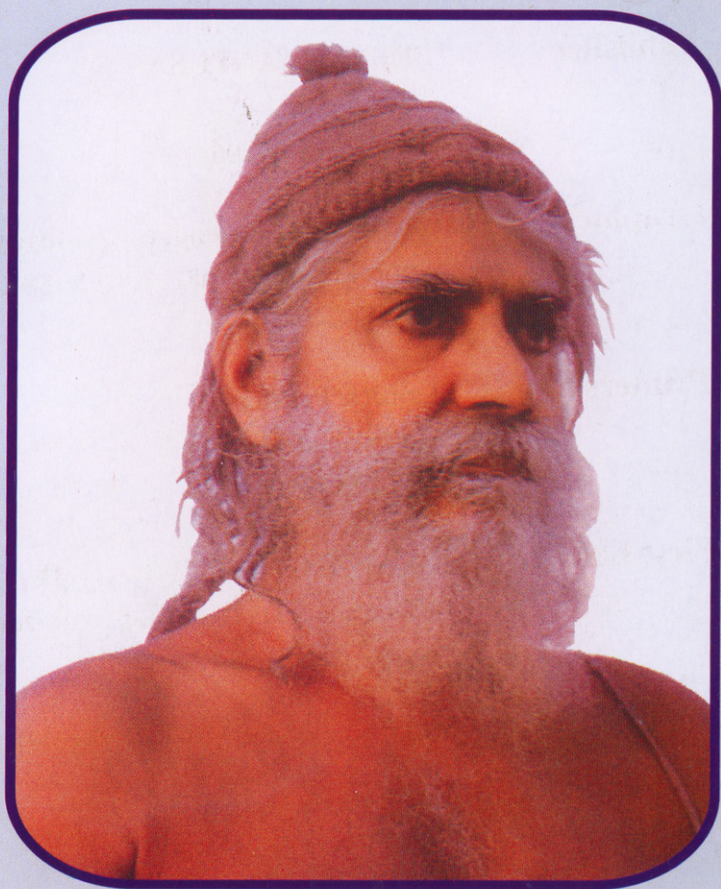
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Param Puja Rang Avadhoot Maharaj

(Nareshvar)

[1898-1968]



Girdharbhai Vitthalbhai Patel

Native Place : Jepur

Date of Birth:
June 1, 1948

Date of Death:
May 15, 1996

Blessings

My dear children,

You have been worshipping Rangadada, singing his bhajans, hearing about him from elders and thus are in touch with him. I am sure many of you might be keen to know more about him as to who he was, how was he as a kid, as a student, with his mother, how did he become ‘Avadhoot’, how come he is being worshipped by so many people around the world, what is so special in him? There could be many such questions in your little minds.

“Our Beloved Rangadada” is a series of small booklets trying to answer many of your questions. I hope you will enjoy reading them, understand Rangadada better and live your life on the path shown by him.

May Rangadada bless you.

With Blessings,

Dt: Sept 23, 2007

Yours

Premoodada

Foreword

A proverb says: ‘If your concerns are limited to a year, grow food grains; if you think of a decade, plant fruit trees and if you worry about the generations to come, sow seeds of humanity’.

The onus of sowing humanity, preparing good human beings lies on the parents and teachers. One of the simplest and most effective way of inculcating values and virtues in the tender minds is story telling.

A child gets impressed and influenced by listening and reading about the lives of great men. He gets to know the idols to look upto. The series of booklets “Our beloved Rangdada” is a commendable step in this direction.

My hearty congratulations to dear Kulinbhai for initiating this series of booklets to mould our kids. It is pleasure to welcome the second book in the series “Our beloved Rangdada: Part II”.

May the immense blessings of P.Pu.Bapji and Pu.Prem Avadhootji bestowed on dear Kulinbhai continue eternally. I feel obliged for being invited to write foreword to this book.

Mumbai

Anil Shroff

Author's Note

A kid's mind is like a blank page on which we can inscribe as we wish. The values and virtues inculcated at a tender age have a long bearing on one's life. With this at the back of the mind, I felt that knowing about Bapji and his life would be immensely helpful to mould our children. This series of booklets for children was thus born.

Initiating the young minds to Bapji's way of life is a challenge for the elders. In an endeavor to groom my grand daughter Nirjari, the need for such a booklet was reaffirmed. It so happened that I came across a booklet "Balakona Mota" of Hari Om Mota Parivaar authored by Shri Mukul Kalarthi. Talking to Shri Subhashbhai Dave about this, he encouraged me and asked me to become 'Mukulbhai of Rang Parivaar'. By Pujya Bapji's blessings, his good wishes have fructified. I am pleased to acknowledge the trust he has put on me.

This book is dedicated to Shri Girdharbhai Patel. Shri Girdharbhai Patel, a native of Jeypur,

near Vijapur in North Gujarat, had settled in the USA. He can be considered one among the foundation stones on which the edifice of Bapji's mission lays today. Unfortunately, he left this world at a very young age. His wife Ramaben and two sons have imbibed the devotion and faith and continue to tread on the path charted out by him. Ramaben's dedication and true devotion towards Bapji are matchless.

A stream of serenity flows through my heart as I dedicate this book to the humble soul Shri Girdharbhai. May his soul rest in peace.

Eventually, it was felt that many children of our parivaar, especially those dwelling overseas, would be deprived of the great wealth of Bapji's values for the lack of knowledge of Gujarati. Thus was born the English version of this book.

One seldom misses to acknowledge the efforts of one's near and dear ones. But it is important nevertheless. I sincerely thank my elder brother Shri Dineshbhai Upadhyay, Dr. Pranav Dave, and my daughter Hetal for translating the booklet into English. Shri Pankaj Dave (USA)

has been an online support of editing the English version. Shri T.R.Joshi, Gandhinagar has been kind enough to give his scholarly inputs, notwithstanding old age.

I do not know how to acknowledge the eternal blessings bestowed upon me by Pujya Prem Avadhootji. He is in fact the driving force behind all these humble efforts. I can only bow down in the feet of Param Pujya Shri Rang Avadhoot Maharaj and Pujya Shri Prem Avadhootji.

Dt: Sept 24, 2007
Ahmedabad.

Kulin Upadhyay

(1)

DO WHAT YOU SAY

There was a saint named ‘Bhagwan’ in Vadodara.

He was poised and serene, a saint in the real sense.

He was not a loner, he had a family, was a ‘sansaari’.

But though being in the worldly life, he lived detached.

Thus, he was virtually a ‘Sanyaasi’- one who has foregone his belongings to lead a divine life.

A saint’s identity does not lie in saffron robe, a true saint is one who is simple, enduring and ready to serve others.

Once our PANDURANG went to meet saint Bhagwan.

He went with Dattopant, a disciple of saint Bhagwan.

They sat near the saint and listened to his talks.

Just then, another devotee named Nandkishore came there.

He started discussing about sadhana (penance) and meditation with saint Bhagwan.

The saint then said to all of them to come to him early morning at 4 o'clock for meditation.

He repeated the time and reiterated to keep the time and not to get late.

The three of them agreed to come at the stipulated time.

Our Pandurang used to get-up at 3 o'clock everyday.

He got up and finished his routine activities.

He reached to the saint at precise time.

The saint took a note of his punctuality.

On the other hand, the other fellow Nandkishore, who seemed to be very keen about meditation, did not turn up even at 4:30.

Saint Bhagwan commented "How is he to do sadhana who cannot even keep time? One must learn to keep his words. Once he agreed to come, he must come".

Two lessons taught- firstly to be punctual and secondly to keep your words.



(2)

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Our Pandurang's devotion to God and the nation were unparalleled.

As you know, he hailed from Godhara.

Not too far from Godhara is Dakor, a small town.

It is a pilgrim place.

The temple of Ranchhodrai (Lord Krishna) is in Dakor.

Pandurang, basically a devotee of Vitthalnathji, had a special attachment to Ranchhodrai of Dakor.

He enjoyed visiting Dakor for 'Darshan'.

Once Pandurang went for darshan to Dakor.

He was very happy and engrossed and with those sweet memories of the Lord in heart and mind, he returned to Vidyapeeth at Ahmedabad.

Gandhiji casually asked Pandurang as to where he had been.

He replied that he had gone for Ranchhodrai's darshan to Dakor.

Gandhiji said “Oh! The temple at Dakor is very nice, but the town is so dirty. Lord’s idol is so divine and pleasing, but the town is in mess”.

What could have been Pandurang’s reply?

Pandurang said politely, “Bapu! I go for darshan of Ranchhodrai with full faith and not to see the filth at Dakor.

When I visit Dakor to inspect the filth, I will report accordingly”.

This episode shows that Pandurang had a clear focus on his activity, positive thinking, pride for his faith and courage enough to present his viewpoint.



(3)

FAITH FOSTERS, DOUBT DESTROYS

Gandhiji was in Vidyapeeth.

The volunteers of non-cooperation movement also used to stay with him at the Vidyapeeth.

To propagate the ideology of truth and non-violence Gandhiji started a periodical named 'Navjivan'.

The duty of circulating the magazine was entrusted to delivery boys, who were also among Gandhiji's followers.

Swami Anand, a prominent disciple of Gandhiji, was managing the Navjivan project. Pandurang assisted him.

Pandurang's job was to give the required number of copies to each delivery boy and collect the amount from them.

The work went on smoothly.

Once, while generally talking on various issues, Swami Anand asked Pandurang how his work was going on, was the account properly maintained?

Pandurang said yes.

Swami Anand advised him to remain alert while transacting with the delivery boys.

He asked Pandurang not to rely on the delivery boys, and not to trust them or else they may cheat.

He doubted that the delivery boys may take more copies or give lesser amount.

Pandurang was shocked.

He could not understand the reason to doubt.

He was not convinced.

He said: ‘I do not count the copies. I ask them to take number of copies they want and put the money. And this system has been working alright till today. There has not been any shortage of money nor of copies till today’.

Pandurang expressed full trust in those people.

Swami Anand was surprised.

He was against putting blind trust on the delivery boys.

On the other hand Pandurang was not ready to doubt them.

Swami repeatedly insisted on keeping a watch.

Pandurang was deeply hurt.

He thought how one can distrust those who are propagating the ideology of truth!

The delivery boys came early morning in severe cold just to propagate Babu's ideology of truth, how can one suspect them? He could not agree with Swami Anand's attitude.

He was of the opinion that if you cannot trust your brothers working for a noble cause with you, what is the meaning of the ideology of truth?

He strongly believed that faith and trust are the edifice of any relationship.



(4)

PANDURANGA : AN ENEMY OF HYPOCRISY

Pandurang had both, devotion for God as well as for the nation.

He insisted for the truth.

He was a believer of truth and trust.

Pandurang had a dislike for liars.

He believed in integrity- say as you think, do as you say.

Disintegration between thought, speech and action means hypocrisy.

He advocated transparency in life.

He, therefore, did not agree with Swami Anand and left the task of managing distribution of periodical 'Navjeevan'.

He said to himself, 'I cannot be a hypocrite like this!'

He started writing a column in a newspaper.

The column was named 'BHANG NO LOTO'.

(‘bhang’ is an intoxicating herbal drink
‘loto’ is a cylindrical container for fluids.)

His language was sharp with sarcasm.

His words would pierce straight into the
hearts of the readers.

Through this column, he was exposing
hypocrisy in a subtle way.

But here too he was disappointed.

The field of journalism was also full of
hypocrites.

Pandurang experienced hypocrisy in the
movement of spreading Gandhian values.

He found it in journalism.

He was getting suffocated.

He was baffled.

He left journalism too.

He decided to take such a profession that
would be devoid of hypocrisy.

He could think of one such profession:
teaching.

He thought that teaching would be safe from
hypocrisy.

Thus he decided to dedicated himself at the feet of Goddess Saraswati- the goddess of learning.



(5)

HIS PASSION BECOMES HIS PROFESSION

Panduranga was a dedicated devotee.

He was a passionate patriot too.

He had a deep love for ‘Sanskrit’ (language) and ‘Sanskriti’ culture.

Sanskrit is the language of Gods.

Sanskrit is a rich and beautiful language.

Sanskrit is the language of affluence.

Sanskrit grammar is very tough, but those who master it get incredible command, not only on Sanskrit but almost on all Indian languages.

Even many words in foreign languages have their roots in Sanskrit.

We know that Gandhiji established Gujarat Vidyapeeth as an alternative to the education system under the British.

A number of national schools based on Gandhian ideology were established.

One such school ‘Adarsh Vinay Mandir’ was established in Ahmedabad.

The teachers who joined such schools were usually patriots and followers of Gandhiji.

Our Panduranga also joined Adarsh Vinay Mandir as a sanskrit teacher.

He was a lover of Sanskrit.

He was a master of the language.

His teaching was, hence, very powerful and effective.

He became a beloved and popular teacher.



(6)

AUTHORED A BOOK

Pandurang had a liking for Sanskrit since a very young age.

He had mastered the language.

Especially grammar, which is considered to be quite tough, was Pandurang's mastery.

In the college he even used to converse in Sanskrit, which is very rare.

When such a person who loves the subject from the depth of his heart becomes a teacher, he injects life in it and the students just enjoy learning it.

Though a scholar himself, Pandurang taught in a simple and straight way.

He had an attitude of respecting the students.

In Hindu tradition, teacher is considered to be God "Aacharya Devo Bhava".

Pandurang coined a complementary slogan "Chhatra Devo Bhava", meaning student is a God for the teacher.

Glory of learning lies in politeness,
glory of a person lies in his learning,
glory of a teacher lies in his students.

Pandurang devised new and simple methods
of teaching Sanskrit grammar, which was
otherwise a mystery for the students.

He aimed at making Sanskrit a lovable
subject, such that students learnt the art of
it, the tricks of grammar.

There was no need to make up.

He kept on evolving novel techniques to
make the teaching simple and interesting.

His aim was to generate interest for Sanskrit
in students.

He kept a note of the new techniques of
teaching that developed in the course of time.

The quotes, verses, short sentences-
everything was well preserved by him.

He compiled all this and presented in form of
a book named 'Girvaan-Bhasha Pravesha'.

Literally meaning an entry in the language of
God, it is a book for basic grammar of
Sanskrit. (an entry level book).

Thus he authored a unique kind of book.



(7)

RECOGNITION OF HIS BOOK AS A TEXT BOOK

Pandurang had compiled the book for his students.

The book was pertaining to Sanskrit grammar.

However, it could be adopted as a text book only after obtaining recognition from the competent authority.

The writer had to get the recognition.

It was to be obtained from Gujarat Vidyapeeth.

The Registrar would go through the book thoroughly, review it critically and accredit it only if he finds it okay.

At that time Kishorebhai Mashruwala was the registrar.

He had a good knowledge of Sanskrit.

Being a learned man, he would study any book in depth before accrediting it.

He went through Pandurang's creation deeply and raised a few queries.

Pandurang's book would get recognition as a text book only after he could solve those queries to the satisfaction of Mr.Mashruwala. Pandurang gave replies to his queries politely. Though his replies were humble and polite, he did not mince words when it was required to express strongly.

True that Mr.Mashruwala was a scholarly man, but Pandurang was equally learned. He would be the last person to forego his self esteem for the sake of obtaining recognition. Mr.Mashruwala had asked many questions, but one particular question bothered Pandurang.



(8)

STRAIGHT AND FIRM REPLY

The registrar had raised some queries before sanction.

He had asked questions to the writer.

The first among them was a doubt about the meaning of the word ‘Girvaan’.

The question was, “Does Girvaan mean Dev?”

Pandurang had used the word ‘Girvaan’, a synonym of Dev in Sanskrit.

The word Devbhasha (language of Lords) is a common usage for Sanskrit but the word “Girvaan” is not commonly used.

Pandurang got agitated with this question.

He felt that the question was to belittle him.

He felt so because the title of the book was being challenged.

He gave a strong and pointed reply.

The words he wrote revealed his self dignity.

His reply was also a clear direction to the other person to be cautious before raising

doubts in future; not only for Pandurang but any author.

Pandurang wrote that whoever and whatsoever an author might be, he is always extra cautious about the title of a book.

He would never make mistake nor remain careless in giving the title.

If the meaning the Girvaan was not known or was doubtful, the registrar should have better referred the dictionary before questioning an author.

How dare one question the author about the title of his book without making sure for himself from the dictionary?

He added that genarally in Sanskrit a word has multiple meanings (**remember ‘Dwij’ in part I?**) but the word ‘Girvaan’ has one and only one meaning and that is ‘Dev’.

He replied to all the questions raised in a scholarly manner.

His replies showed the depth of his knowledge, logical reasoning, the extent of his dedication towards the language, his sincerity and, last but not the least, his

courage to guard his self esteem.
His qualities got him the credit he deserved.
His book was granted recognition as a text book.
Such was the spirit of our Pandurang.
Only those who are sure and confident in their subject can take the liberty to be bold to such an extent.
And such confidence and firmness comes only by hard work and dedication.



(9)

AN UNCOMMON WAY

Pandurang was a Sanskrit teacher in a national school named Adarsh Vinay Mandir.
He was a sincere, punctual and committed teacher.
He would never indulge in activities like gossiping or backbiting.
He kept busy with his work instead.
Once there was Inspection in the school.

On inspection day, authorities from Education department were visiting the school to assess the overall performance of teachers, discipline, etc.

The inspector, along with the principal of the school, moved from class to class to observe. It was around 8 o'clock in the morning.

One by one the team was visiting each class. They would talk to the teacher; ask questions to the students and so on.

In one of the classes, when the team reached, there was no teacher at all.

The inspector was surprised.

He saw that the teacher was missing.

On the other hand, he could also see that the students were doing their work in a disciplined way even in the absence of a teacher.

No noise, no mischief.

The inspector looked at the principal of the school Ramshankerbhai and enquired about the teacher.

The principal replied that the teacher might have gone home for lunch.

The inspector was stunned and asked “It is only nine o’clock. Is this lunch time? Why do you allow him to go?”



(10)

A SPECIAL SCHEDULE

The inspector was surprised as to how can a teacher go for lunch during the school hours, that too at such early in the day of the day!

He confirmed with the Principal whether the teacher had gone with his permission.

The principal explained that the teacher had clearly put this condition before accepting the job. He had sought a special permission to go for lunch at 8 a.m. everyday.

The school had agreed to his condition as it was difficult to get a teacher of his stature. Good teachers with such a level of sincerity, intelligence and knowledge are rare.

While the discussion was going on, Pandurang returned.

He greeted the inspector and the principal. Inspector asked Pandurang how come he took lunch so early in the morning. Pandurang humbly replied, “Sir, how is it early? In fact I am one hour late than everyone.”

Inspector was unable to understand. He asked Pandurang to explain what he meant. Pandurang explained, “Sir, normally people get up at 6 a.m. and take lunch at 11 a.m. (i.e. after 5 hours of waking up.) Going by this I should have been taking lunch at 7 a.m. as I get up at 2 a.m. But I take lunch at 8 a.m. Isn’t that an hour late?”

The inspector laughed with joy, appreciating the argument.

Pandurang then added that the real test of a teacher should be actually done in the absence of the teacher and not otherwise. Students’ behavior in teacher’s absence shows the level of discipline and respect the students have for the teacher.

The inspector was not only convinced but pleased as well.

Those who are extra ordinary in their work have excellent caliber and clarity of intentions can dare to take special concessions in the general rules.



(11)

PATIENCE PAYS

A good teacher is one who helps his students understand the truth, without scolding and in a respectful manner.

Teacher needs to endure and understand.

Pandurang used to give due respect to his students.

He observed fast on every Thursday.

He would only eat about 150 grams of ‘PENDA’(Sweets made from condensed milk) that day.

He had fixed the duty of bringing panda for a particular student.

Every Thursday the same boy used to fetch penda for him from a particular shop.

The student would bring it and return the balance amount.

Pandurang would put the amount in his pocket without even counting it.

He had full faith in the student.

How could he doubt his students when he believed “students are God!”

Knowing well that the teacher had full faith in him, a bad idea gripped the boy’s mind.

Gradually, he started cheating Pandurang.

Sometimes, he would eat away some of the sweets; at times he would return lesser amount and so on.

Pandurang would neither ask nor say anything.

The student was enjoying the feat.

He thought he was cheating the teacher, but in fact he was deceiving himself.



(12)

HEAVINESS OF GUILT

The student was now cheating teacher Pandurang very confidently.

But one day it pinched his conscience.

He suddenly started feeling very guilty about his act.

He thought “What am I doing?

Cheating my teacher?

A teacher is considered God, so am I cheating God? He trusted me and what have I done?”

He kept on thinking.

The more he thought, the firmer was the grip of guilt.

At last he could not tolerate.

He rushed to Pandurang and putting his head on the feet, burst into tears.

Pandurang did not say anything.

At first he let him weep.

Tears take away heaviness of the heart.

One gets relaxed by weeping.

After few minutes, Pandurang asked him why he was weeping so badly.

The boy could not utter a word. He wept even more.

Repentance makes the heart pure.

So he allowed the student to be fresh.

Pandurang asked him the reason to weep, but he went on weeping more and more.

Then he confessed and narrated how he used to cheat.

Pandurang made him feel at ease.

He asked him to sit besides him and relax.

In soothing words he then told that what is done cannot be changed now.

Don't weep on the past but henceforth never repeat it.

Pandurang said "Do you think that I had no idea of what you were doing?

At times you would give five pieces, and sometimes only three.

How was it possible?

Anyway, you provide me service every Thursday and I would have rewarded you for that.

But since you started taking it on your own,
I did not need to give it you.

Now, don't get upset. Forget about it.

Confession is the best way to purify heart.

Since you have confessed, your deeds are
forgiven.

Even, otherwise how could I punish you?

After all you are my student and I respect my
students.

I don't believe that you have committed
serious crime. Relax now".

So soothing were Pandurang's words that
boy who came in tears, returned with a
smiling face.

Positive approach to anything was so natural
to Pandurang.

This is the way one can transform others.

No amount of advice can bring change in
others.

A teacher and a mother are the ones who
accept the child as he/she is.

They see their virtues and mould him.

They endure a lot to set an example.



(13)

PUT YOUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER FIRST

Pandurang was at ‘Swaraj Ashram’.

He lived a simple and self reliant life.

He was a true patriot.

Gandhiji gave a call for a movement to stop people from drinking alcohol as it ruins one’s life.

The volunteers accepted the call.

They would stand near the bar and request the visitors to refrain from drinking.

They would explain, request, try to convince emotionally that drinking not only ruins the drinker but also his family.

At first a person drinks alcohol, gradually alcohol gulps down the person.

The young volunteers would try their best to stop drinkers from going to bars.

Pandurang had also joined the movement.

There was a bar in Ahmedabad.

Men and women all came to drink there.

Pandurang took pains to convince them. He could convince and send back many of them.

Once a lady came from the bar.

She was heavily drunk.

She was in rags and her mouth stinking.

Pandurang approached her and very politely said: ‘Dear Mother, why do you drink? Why do you spoil your health?

It seems you are quite poor. Please, for God sake do not drink”.

Pandurang requested her earnestly but she did not care at all.

It then became a daily routine- daily she would come to the bar, Pandurang would request her to abstain from drinking but she would drink and leave the place.

She could not even walk with steadily.

One day, as usual, the lady came and Pandurang started pleading to her not to drink.

The lady, who was keeping mum till now, countered him, ‘Do you drink tea daily? Do you have the habit of drinking tea?’

Pandurang said yes he did.

She then said, “The way you are habituated to drinking tea, my habit is to drink alcohol. That’s all. You are addicted to tea, I am to wine. When you are also an addict how come you are interfering into my drinking?”

These words of the drunkard lady pierced straight through Pandurang’s heart. Pandurang was moved from within.



(14)

PRACTISE BEFORE YOU PREACH

Pandurang got moved.

The lady’s comment kept on hovering in his mind.

“You are a tea addict, I am a wine addict”

Pandurang could not forget these words.

He thought what the lady had pointed out was not baseless.

She was right in a way.

All said and done, he was equally an addict as her- only the item was different.

This is the way great men look at things.

They try to learn from every comment, every incident.

They are always keen for self improvement, always eager for self enhancement.

They ponder over things and try to strengthen themselves.

Pandurang accepted the lady's remark in its right spirit.

He thought he had no right to advise anybody to leave drinking until he himself leaves the habit of drinking tea.

From that moment he stopped drinking tea.

The next day he went to the lady again.

He requested "Mother, I have stopped drinking tea now".

The lady was moved.

She was touched by Pandurang's firm commitment to the cause and his perseverance.

For the first time, she listened to Pandurang's request and went back without drinking.

Pandurang bowed his head and considered her as a Guru (as he learned something from her) who taught him an important lesson in life “Practise before you preach”.



(15)

THE TRUE VALUE

Those who are truly great are always humble. They never boast about their own qualities. They try to remain as simple and as common as possible.

Gradually people start knowing their greatness and adoring them.

Our Pandurang was a true ‘sadhak’ (one doing penance).

He used to get up early in the morning at 2 a.m.

Although he tried to preserve secrecy about his sadhana and his greatness, how can his glow remain hidden?

Can one ever hide the light of the sun?

Can the smell of a rose remain unrevealed?
There was a Sanyasi (one who spends the time in penance).
He saw Pandurang, and was deeply impressed at the first sight.
He recognized that there was something special about Pandurang, he was not an ordinary man.
He could see the divinity in Pandurang.
The Sanyasi approached Pandurang and said he had a request.
Pandurang humbly said, “You are a Sanyasi; you have a right to order me, please do not request”.
The Sanyasi told him that he had ‘DATTATREYA STOTRA’. (hymn praising Lord Dattatreya) and he wished that Pandurang copied the same in his own hand and gives the handwritten version to the Sanyasi.
Pandurang immediately agreed to it.
The Sanyasi was pleased.
Pandurang then asked him, “But what will you do with this?”

Sanyasi said: “I would do an *anushtaan* (reading it repeatedly in a pious way for a predecided number of times)”.

Pandurang enquired, “what type of anushtaan and what for?”

The Sanyasi told that he had immense faith in Pandurang and his blessings.

He believed that if he did the anushtaan of Dattatreya stotra written in Pandurang’s hand, he would be designated as ‘Jagadguru Shankracharya’ (one of the most coveted among Hindu saints).

Pandurang wrote the stotra in his hand.

Sanyasi’s faith proved true!

The Sanyasi got designated as Jagadguru and was christened as Swami ‘Chandrashekharashram’.

See how a sanyasi resolves for something and achieves it.

And how great was our Pandurang!

If a copy of stotra in his hand writing could fetch such results, with true faith, is anything impossible for his devotees?

But the crux is that only a few can really know the depth of divinity of such souls.

The great men hide their divinity under humility.

One needs to be enlightened self to recognize such divinity.

Only a true jeweler can know the true value of a jewel.



(16)

DRIVES AWAY A TIGER

Our Pandurang was a teacher then.

Outwardly he seemed to mingle with all but the craving for God within got enhanced day by day.

He was clear about his goal and his path.

While everybody was asleep, he would get up and meditate.

He would do his sadhana and mantra jaap (recitation of mantra).

He was in search of a secluded place where he could go for a dedicated sadhana.

So he would arrange trips with his friends at different places.

In this way he was infact exploring different spots for his purpose.

One such trip was to KEDARESHWAR, near UTKANTHESHWAR in Central Gujarat.

There was a nice temple of Lord Shiva.

The place was surrounded in deep forest.

There was a small guest house.

He and friends took a night halt there.

They were warned of a possibility of a tiger coming there at the night. They shut the doors with due caution before going to sleep.

The friends gossiped for a while and then went to sleep.

Our Pandurang, as usual, prayed before going to sleep. It is believed that one who prays before going to the bed gets sound sleep.

One becomes fearless and bold.

All were fast asleep.

Suddenly, a tiger roared!

Everybody got up hearing the loud roar.

It seemed that the tiger was quite near the guest house.

It was for the first time that they were facing a tiger wandering freely like this.

Though the building was protected with grills, the situation was very frightening.

Pandurang's friends shivered with fright facing a tiger like this.

All of them shuddered at the sheer thought of the tiger breaking in!

Pandurang, the lion, was inside the building with his trembling friends and the tiger outside.

It was dark. The tiger had smelt the human beings inside the building.

He kept on roaring repeatedly, louder each time.

Pandurang had conquered fear through sadhana.

All but him were shivering an idea flashed into Pandurang's mind.

He took a big stick in his hands, opened the doors and went outside.

With an unfailing courage and certitude in his mind, and with full faith in his Guru and Lord Dattatreya, he roared back at the tiger with equal strength and shrill in his voice.

He roared “Gurudev Dutt! Gurudev Dutt!”

And lo!

The tiger immediately ran away!

Pandurang’s friends, watching from the building, were really surprised!

Surprised not only at his courage but also at his faith in Almighty.

Wondering not only how he dared to face a tiger, but also as to how true spirit of non violence and equal love for all living beings could conquer over one of the most wild and ferocious animals!



(17)

GURU MAHARAJ MEETS HIM

Pandurang's sadhana was on.

He is firm in his resolve, searching for the right place, a secluded location appropriate for sadhana.

He continued going on trips with friends and thereby exploring different places.

He explored the forests as well as the mountains.

He also explored the areas near river banks.

Once, it was a Christmas vacation in the school.

The month of December is relatively cold in Gujarat.

Pandurang and his friends went on a trip on the banks of river Narmada.

Pandurang's friends were enjoying the excursion while his attention was focused on searching for the place.

By night, they reached a place named Indravarna, where they decided to halt.

Across the river from Indravarna was Garudeshwar.

Garudeshwar is the place of Swami Maharaj Vasudevanand Saraswati's Samadhi (final resting place).

It is the place of Pandurang's guru. (remember how he ran to touch his feet after the sacred thread ceremony!)

The village was Indravarna.

It was a night-halt in the temple of Shiv.

All the friends went to bed.

Pandurang did his prayers.

This was the time when he could calmly unite with God.

Pandurang then went to sleep.

It was early morning and he got a divine dream.

His Guru, Swami Maharaj met him in his dream.

Panduranga was thrilled on seeing his Guru Maharaj.

Swamiji, in the dreams, then asked him to do 'JAP' (recitation) and 'PARAYAN' of 'Datta Puran'. (parayan means reading an epic

or equivalent religious book observing its rule with all piety) He also gave the mantra for the ‘Jap’.

With this command, the dream was over.

Pandurang awoke full of joy and pleasure.

He did not share this with anybody.

But the word ‘Datta Puran’ kept on hovering in his mind (as it happened for Pothe).



(18)

A MOMENTARY ANXIETY

Pandurang and his friends were in Indravarna village.

Pandurang was pondering over the dream. His guru maharaj had given a command in the dream.

The one who previously gave the command of ‘Pothe Vaanch’, now directed to read Datta Puran for 108 times!

So Pandurang started searching for Datta Puran.

Pandurang was well versed with many Sanskrit books.

He also glanced through the well-known eighteen Purans of Ved-Vyas, like Matsya, Kurma, Varah, Garud etc to find Datta Puran. But there was nothing in the name of Datta Puran amongst all these ‘Purans’.

He also contacted the scholars, who were considered an authority on Purans, but in vain.

Pandurang was baffled.

A doubt cropped up in his mind for a while ‘Was it really guru maharaj’s command or just an illusion?’

But as we know him, he had an unfailing faith in the Divine.

He cleared his suspicion himself.

His way of thinking was ‘if it is God’s wish that I should do ‘Parayan’, he will help me in getting the same, who am I to worry?’

And the anxiety ended. Pandurang, though keen to get Datta Puran, was no more anxious about it.

He was again calm and tranquil, as ever.



(19)

GRABS THE OPPORTUNITY

He was a committed and popular Sanskrit teacher.

Sanskrit literature is so rich that its knowledge makes one cultured.

Pandurang used to do his job and simultaneously his inner ‘Sadhna’ continued, becoming intensive day by day.

He was a straight forward employee having his own ideals to adhere to.

It so happened that there was a dispute among the partners managing the school.

The teachers also got divided on account of difference of opinion.

The work atmosphere got vitiated.

It was more politics and less teaching.

Pandurang got perturbed.

For him, school was not just an institute, it was a temple of Goddess Saraswati.

How can there be quarrels in a temple?

What about the sanctity and serenity of a place like a school?

He was very much upset and did not know what to do.

He was already keen to enhance his 'Sadhna' and devote more time and energy to it.

His wish was so sincere that circumstances were so created- and he was not unaware, he grabbed the chance.

He therefore decided to quit the job.

He was guided by divine inspiration and intuition.



(20)

LITERARY WORK

Pandurang had quit the job now.

He was relieved and relaxed, as free bird.

Good teachers and good people are always in demand.

In Ahmedabad, textile mills were thriving those days.

The mill owners were among the most elite class of citizens.

One of them was Ambalal Sarabhai.

He had a daughter, Ansuyaben .

She was very keen to learn Sanskrit poetries.

They were in search of a good scholarly teacher.

They came to know of Pandurang and contacted him.

He accepted teaching Sanskrit to Ansuyaben.

He taught with utmost sincerity and honesty, as usual.

Considering his knowledge of Sanskrit and the hindu scriptures, Ansuyaben assigned him to write a book for spiritual upliftment of human beings.

Pandurang gave full justice to this job too.

He presented the profound philosophy of ‘Upanishad’ in a very simple and interesting way.

The book was named “Upnishad ni vaato” meaning ‘Talks of Upanishad’.

He also translated the books ‘Tolstoy and Education’, ‘ Dhammpad’.

He could do such jobs excellently since he was an avid reader himself. Plus he had great command over Sanskrit language.

Added to his knowledge were his unfailing commitment and dedication.

No wonder then, whatever he did was always one of the best.



(21)

REVEALS THE FUTURE

Pandurang was in his twenties now.

Like any mother, mother Rukmini also wished that her son got married and lead a happy married life.

Once Pandurang was asleep in the house and mother out in the balcony, doing some work.

There came an astrologer in their hamlet.

Mother Rukmini called him.

She made him sit and quietly gave Pandurang's horoscope to him to predict his future.

She asked about Pandurang's marriage, in particular.

The astrologer was studying the horoscope and making some calculations.

His gestures and actions were more a show off than calculations of astrology.

He would calculate and think but keep quiet, thereby creating a suspense.

His style made mother feel that he was very clever and good at his job.

But luck would have it otherwise.

Pandurang woke up.

He listened to conversation going on in the balcony.

Pandurang got up and went to the balcony.

He stood there and kept on watching the drama.

He could see that the astrologer was trying to fool his mother.

He immediately went inside the house, got a big stick and ran towards the astrologer.

He shouted at the astrologer “Sir, can you predict your future? Please guess whether this stick is going to hit your head badly or not”.

The astrologer was taken aback.

He figured out that he had been exposed.

He realized that this is not the right place for a fraud like him.

It would be wise to vanish.

He put his belongings in the bag and rushed off.

Mother Rukmini scolded Pandurang, “Is this a way to behave with a respectful person like him?”

Pandurang said “Dear mother, had he been upright and true, he would not have run away. The fact that he disappeared, proves that he was a cheat.”

Pandurang further told his mother that he did not intend to marry.

He requested her not to pressurise him for marriage.

He said “Mother, if I marry, only one daughter-in-law will bow down at your feet. But if I don’t, there would be hundreds of them”.

So clear and focused he was about his future!
In fact, very subtly he revealed his future to his mother.



(22)

A TURNING POINT IN LIFE

Pandurang lived with his mother at Godhara. The younger brother Narayan was also with them.

Meanwhile our Pandurang fell sick.

It was a serious illness, his entire body being gripped in it.

The illness was prolonged. Pandurang got very weak.

Gradually, he was totally bedridden.

The doctor was trying his best, but in vain. His mother and the brother were much worried.

Round the clock they were busy looking after Pandurang and doing prayers as well.

But it seemed nothing was working; neither *‘dua’ (prayers)* nor *‘dava’ (medicines)*.

A stage came when even Pandurang started feeling that death is fast approaching.

He could foresee the end of his life.

He was in a state of repentance.

He felt he had not been able to do the sadhana that he wished.

He remembered his Sadguru from the depth of his heart.

It was a very sincere call from within.

Cent percent surrender and an ardent cry.

This call worked wonders.

A wave of tranquility grasped his mind.

Though very sick and weak physically, mentally he felt poised and pleased.

He felt as if his Sadguru was in front of him.

He requested his mother and brother to go out of the room.

Pandurang took a call from within.

He got an inspiration.

Alone in the room, he took a piece of paper and jotted down two ‘*stotras*’ (hymns)- ‘*Dattashtak*’ and ‘*Datta sharanashtak*’.

He then called his mother and the brother into the room.

They were very much pleased to see Pandurang fresh and cured.

This was a turning point in his life.



(23)

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

God works in his own way.

Man can only make efforts, the result is always in His hands.

He may not give directly, but he would create such circumstances that would drive man into the right direction.

Like a bird needs two wings to fly, man needs to have both- hard work as well as good luck to achieve something.

Either of them are futile without the another.

Pandurang had a friend named Ratanlal Tripathi, who lived in Sarkhej, near Ahmedabad.

People used to call him ‘Ratanlal Mahatma’.

Ratanlal had a son, Prabodh whose nick name was ‘Ravio’.

One day he ran away from home.

Nobody had any clue of where he could have gone.

Ratanlal had a relative.

His name was Mohanlal.

He lived in Bharuch.

Ratanlal thought of a possibility of his son being there.

In those days there were no telephones or cell phones.

The only way to check was to go personally and look out for him.

They left for Bharuch.

Our Pandurang also went along with them.

On the way Pandurang felt a shivering in his right eye.

Quick shivers passed through his right hand too.

Quick shivers in right organs of a male are considered to be good omen.

(For female the same is true for the left side)

Pandurang told his friend Ratanlal that he could feel good omen.

This indicated that not only they would be successful in their search, some other good fortune was also in store for them.

It happened exactly that way.

Ravio was at Mohanlal's place.

But why God had taken Pandurang to Mohanlal's place was the real mystery.

While talking with Mohanlal, Pandurang casually enquired whether he was aware of 'Datta Puran' (*just think how keen he was ! it was always on the top of his mind*).

And 'yes' came the reply.

Mohanlal said that there is an epic called Datta Puran and it is written by none other than the revered Swami Maharaj himself.

Pandurang's joy knew no boundaries.

He had gone to look for friend's son and what he got was a jackpot !

This is called blessings in disguise.



(24)

DARSHAN OF DATTA PURAN

How thrilled was Pandurang only by knowing that a book named Datta puran did exist.

It showed that his dream was not an illusion but a true indication.

How could Pandurang now resist the temptation to see Datta Puran?

He asked: ‘Can I have Darshan of Datta Puran?’

Mohanlal got up, brought the holy book and put it in the hands of Pandurang.

It was the happy ending of Pandurang’s quest.

He took Datta Puran in his hands and bowed down his head.

He could not take his eyes off the title of the book ‘Datta Puran’.

It was as if a blind had got eyesight or a dumb had got speech.

For Pandurang it was a real treasure hunt.

Pandurang could feel the mission of his life getting accomplished now.

What could be Pandurang's next wish?

Guess what?

Of course, to get the book for Parayan.
(thorough reading, observing the rules of piety)



(25)

DIPPED IN OCEAN OF JOY

Now it was sure that doing 108 parayan of Datta Puran was nothing but God's command. Once Datta Puran was available how could Pandurang refrain himself from doing parayan?

The next question for Mohanlal was "can I get Datta Puran for parayan?

I can pay its price right away".

Mohanlal told that for him it was not merely a holy book, it epitomized Guru Maharaj itself. He further told Pandurang that daily he used to offer Pooja to the book.

He even did not bring it outside.

He offered Pandurang to read the book there in his house, he would not allow to take it outside.

Pandurang was dejected.

But how can God tolerate Pandurang's grief?

Just then an idea flashed in Mohanlal's mind.

Mohanlal recalled that a friend of his, Kalyanjibhai, also had many books written by Swami Maharaj.

He told Pandurang "Let us try, may be he has Datta Puran and he could lend it".

Pandurang was ready immediately.

Kalyanjibhai was the husband of Ganda Maharaj's sister.

Ganda Maharaj was a disciple of Swami Maharaj and through him Kalyanjibhai also became a devotee of Swami Maharaj.

He kept many holy books and scriptures and offered pooja.

Mohanlal took Pandurang to Kalyanjibhai and narrated his need.

Again the same problem appeared.

The same thing “Pooja Granth cannot be given out”.

He said that he kept one copy of each book of Swami Maharaj. He worshipped them everyday.

Pandurang was disappointed here too.

But he said “Okay. You may not lend me, but at least let me have darshan of all literary works of Swami Maharaj, and Datta Puran in particular” Kalyanjibhai went in.

He brought a big trunk. He opened it.

Pandurang was in meditative mood.

As if he had resolved it firmly to get Datta Puran, as if he was requesting God earnestly to get him a copy.

One by one Kalyanjibhai was taking out various books from the box.

As he said, he had one copy each of all books which he worshipped.

Pandurang was paying respect to each book one by one.

And then came the turn of ‘Datta Puran’.

And behold!

In the box there were two copies of Datta Puran!

Kalyanjibhai was surprised.

It was a miracle. Only one copy of every book and two copies only of Datta Puran!

Pandurang was moved.

With tears in his eyes, he thought ‘How closely God takes care of his devotees?

How kind he is!’

Kalyanjibhai was too astonished to believe it true.

He realized that it was certainly God’s wish.

Putting a copy in Pandurang’s hands, he said “While there is a single copy of all books, there are two copies only of Datta Puran. This indicates that God has arranged it for you. Please accept it”.

What could Pandurang say, for him it was more than life itself!



(Conti. from title page no.4)

*What will be the emolument ?
Self Contentment, Immortal Bliss,
Eternal Peace !*

*Where to apply ?
In the heart-within.*

*When to start ?
To firm determination when arrived
at ; Right Now !*

*Where to report ?
On the spot where you are ;
everywhere !*

*Acknowledgement of the application?
The joy within.*

*Whom to apply ?
To the inner-Soul-AVADHOOT!!*

*World Friend,
RANG AVADHOOT*

WANTED! WANTED! WANTED!

Who ?

PRECEPTORS

What sort of ?

Not just talkers, but spiritually alive.

*Not oral pedant, but who awakens one
through own spiritual practice.*

*Not an erudite who only precepts others,
but one who precepts own-self.*

*not a crazy master, but who exerts to
be a disciple of all.*

*Not who hankers after wealth of the
followers,*

But who gives a healing touch.

*Not a fake idealist,
but a hard realist.*

A dreamer not, but an awakened.

(Conti. to title page no.3)