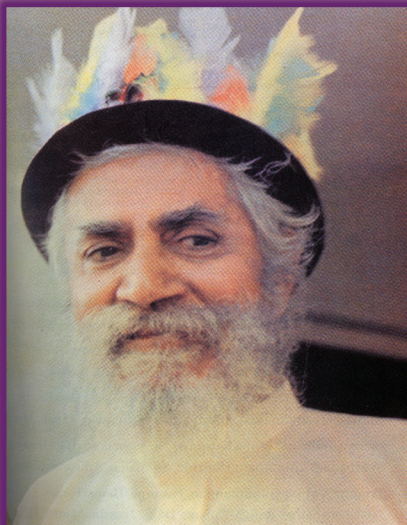


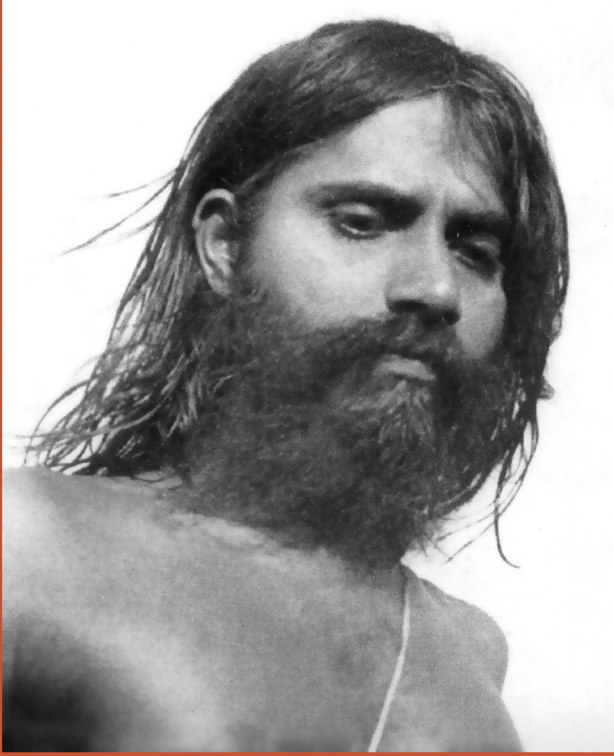
OUR BELOVED RANGDADA

PART-III



Author (In Gujarati) :
Prof. Kulin G. Upadhyay





P.P. Shree Rang Avadhuta Maharaj

Brahmaujasa Bhushita-Bhavya-Bhalam
Divyaujasa Deepta-Vishala-Netram |
Shanti-Pradam Yasya Mukharavindam
Rangavadhutam Pranatosmi Nityam ||



Shree Satishbhai Oza

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U.S.A.

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Blessings

My dear children,

You have been worshipping Rangdada, 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 Rangdada” is a series of small booklets trying to answer many of your questions. I hope you will enjoy reading them, understand Rangdada better and live your life on the path shown by him.

May Rangdada bless you.

With Blessings,

Yours

Premoodada

Dt: June 22, 2009

Foreword

Children are the messengers of God. The onus of molding these innocent, pure and loving kids is on their parents and teachers. Good books and story telling are the best tools to inculcate values in the innocent minds.

This book, Part III of ‘Our Beloved Rangdada’ is a result of Rang Bapji’s blessings. I recall Rev. Rang Bapji’s words that childhood is God’s gift. Bapji loved to be among kids and I am sure that this endeavour to publish a series of booklets for kids would surely please Him.

I feel Rev.Bapji has showered his blessings on my friend Shri Kulinbhai by making him write this beautiful series of booklets for kids.

Rev.Bapji’s mission is spreading across continents now. Such booklets talking about the life of Rev.Bapji and his value systems, written in a simple and lucid way that a child can understand, become all the more pertinent for our kids abroad.

I have been lucky to be closely blessed by Pujya Bapuji and I thank Shri Kulinbhai for making that happen.

I am grateful for giving me this opportunity of writing the foreword.

Ahmedabad

Prabhudas Patel

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.

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 the knowledge of Gujarati. Thus was born the English version of this book.

I am happy to dedicate this booklet to Shri Satishbhai Oza, USA. Satishbhai has been instrumental in furthering Rev.Bapji's mission in the USA. Owing to his dedicated nurturing, the seeds sown by Late Shri Dineshbhai Dave have not only grown into a tree, the tree is now blossoming with beautiful flowers and fruits. We all pray to Rev. Bapji and Pujya Bapuji to bestow upon him a long life and a lot more strength to work for the mission.

Rev.Bapji has blessed my daughter Hetal by making her a tool for translating this booklet into English. Shri Pankaj Dave (USA) has been an online support for editing the English version. Shri T.R.Joshi, Gandhinagar has been kind enough to give his scholarly inputs, as always, notwithstanding his very old age.

I feel very lucky for the eternal blessings of Pujya Prem Avadhootji. He is in fact the driving force behind all these humble efforts. I can only bow in the feet of Param Pujya Shri Rang Avadhoot Maharaj and Pujya Shri Prem Avadhootji.

Dt: June 18, 2009
Ahmedabad.

Kulin Upadhyay

(1)

SHUN YOUR WORRIES, GOD TAKES CARE

In July of 1919, our Pandurang was studying in college at Vadodara.

The financial position was weak, hardship of money prevailed.

He did not even have the money to buy books. How to study without books?

But... he had tremendous belief in God.

He also had complete faith in his Guru .

He used to remember God with complete trust that He will take care of everything.

Dattopant, an elder brother of Sarpotdar (of Godhra), used to live in Vadodara.

It somehow occurred to him that Pandurang was in need of financial help.

A company called Alembic Chemical Works Company, in Vadodara, used to keep funds to help the needy students.

But Pandurang would never ask for help from anyone.

He had firmly resolved to depend only on God.

One day Dattopant came to Pandurang and asked him to go with him,

Pandurang accompanied him.

Dattopant took him to the Alembic factory.

The person there gave him fifty rupees without even asking anything.

In those days, contribution of fifty rupees was a big favor.

Pandurang recalled a shloka of Bhagwad Geeta, which reads:

Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupashate
Tesham nityabhiyuktanam yog kshemam vahamyaham

The shloka says: God handles all matters of those who remember him with full dedication. ‘Yoga’ means to get what you don’t have and ‘kshemam’ means to protect and retain what you have. God undertakes the entire responsibility of yoga and kshemam once you create an affinity with him and remember him incessantly.

**Shun your worries; worship instead
Don’t be perturbed, pray instead**

(2)

MAMA'S EMBARRASSMENT ENDS

Our Pandurang used to live in Godhra.

He used to read lots of religious and Sanskrit literature.

His maternal uncle (Mama) used to participate and perform in religious ceremonies/ yagna (Yagna is a religious ceremony wherein fire is lit and offerings are made to fire-god 'agni'. Different mantras are chanted depending upon the theme of yagna for example in Vishnu yagna mantras are related to Lord Vishnu, in Navchandi yagna they are related to Goddess Durga, and in Datta yaag those related to Lord Dattatreya and so on).

Pandurang's uncle used to recite *Vishnu-sahastra Naam*.

Sahastra means 1000 in Sanskrit thus Vishnusahastra Naam contains one thousand names of Lord Vishnu.

Once, Mama accepted to participate in a yagna.

He was to recite the Vishnushahastra Naam.

But it so happened that on the day of Yagna,

Mama had to go elsewhere for his work.
If he goes elsewhere who will perform in the
yagna in his lieu?
And going out of town too was unavoidable.
So what to do?
Mama thought what if he sends Pandurang to
do the reciting.
He thought to ask Pandurang.
If Pandurang can perform the recitation, this
embarrassment could be avoided.
Mama asked Pandurang:
“My nephew! I need you for some work, will
you do it?”
“Sure Mama, I will definitely do if I can”
said Pandurang,
“What is the work, tell me.”
Mama asked: “Will you be able to recite the
Vishnushahastra Naam?”
At once Pandurang said: “Yes Mama, I can do
it. I will do it very well. Tell me where it is to
be done”
Mama told him that there was a Vishnu yagna
at one host’s place; the reciting was to be done
there.

“I have accepted to recite to the head priest; and if don’t go he will be in trouble” added Mama.

Pandurang agreed to go.

Mama was relaxed and free of tension.

(3)

TRUE RELIGIOSITY

Pandurang had amazing love for religion.

He had great confidence in his religion.

It was a matter of both pride and privilege for him.

He had a grand outlook for religious work, true religiosity.

Pandurang went to the yagna as per the words given to Mama.

He sat down for the reciting of Vishnushahastra Naam in the Vishnu Yagna.

Pandurang would recite it fluently with correct pronunciation.

He recited so nicely that a listener would love to listen.

He used to recite as if he were truly addressing God.

As soon as he finished first reciting of Vishnushahastra Naam, one elderly Brahmin came to Pandurang.

The old Brahmin asked Pandurang whether he could do him a favor.

Pandurang asked how he could help him.

The Brahmin said that he was supposed to give offering into the havan (sacred fire) and hence had to sit near the fire.

But he could not bear the heat of the yagna/havan.

He requested Pandurang whether he could exchange places with him (which would mean interchanging the work too).

But another Brahmin, who knew the secret of the matter, warned Pandurang and said “You should continue doing the recitation.

Don’t opt for the other job instead.

The one who does offering into the havan gets less remuneration/bequest.

The one who does recitation gets more.

The elderly Brahmin is cheating you in the name of the heat.

Actually, he is tempted for more remuneration/ Bequest.”

Pandurang replied with humility that he was not there for money.

He was there only to resolve mama’s embarrassment as mama could not attend.

He was there to guard the religion.

Pandurang agreed to the elderly Brahmin’s request.

If we preserve our religion, religion will protect us.

Religion protects the religious and pious.

Preserved religion protects us.

(4)

PANDURANG’S RESOLVE

Pandurang had true faith in his religion.

He believed that religion binds and safeguards the society.

Hence any activity related to religion should be done with sincerity.

He believed ‘devo bhutva devam jayet’, which means that while worshipping God, one be as one’s self becomes God.

Once Pandurang went to a yagna.

He witnessed as to how the Brahmins perform religious ceremonies.

He saw that Brahmins did the yagna, recitation and chanting properly till the host was present. But once the host was not around, everything would be haphazardly done.

Unnecessary gossip would begin and go on.

The Brahmins would even consume tobacco and other such things at the yagna place.

Pandurang was saddened on seeing all this.

He was perplexed at the way such religious ceremonies were conducted.

He was shocked that if done in this manner, how could it be it for the welfare of the host?

He wondered was this religiosity or dishonesty?

He thought that such yagna would not only lead to any positive outcome but also result into erosion of faith of the host.

Near the yagna place, a Ghanchi Muslim family was watching all this.

They felt that the Brahmins were cheating the host in the same manner in which a trader cheats a customer.

It was nothing but loot in the name of religion, The Ghanchi family whispered ‘are these Hindu brahmins or burglars!’

Pandurang heard this criticism, which was not palatable.

The comments pierced his heart. He was very sad.

This sadness and unease resulted in a resolve: “If God makes me His instrument for such yagna; if Guru Maharaj gives me the opportunity, then I will show what an ideal yagna or religious ceremony should be”

(5)

AVERSE TO PUBLICITY

Our Rangdada was in college then.

He was an ardent reader, a profound thinker and an avid orator.

He had a very good command over language.

His logical presentation had a great power of conviction.

But... he always avoided public speaking.

The reason: to avert publicity cautiously.

Many times, his name was proposed for delivering some or other speech but he always avoided.

Once he had to deliver a vote of thanks and he did so.

He started in Gujarati but switched on to English, due to the audience's demand.

He spoke for about ten minutes.

The audience was spell bound.

There was a pin drop silence in the room.

When the program was over, the organizer complimented him whole-heartedly and added "You are such an avid orator, your powerful speech can inject life even in a corpse, why do you shy away from speaking?"

Pandurang was aware of his strength but he did not like publicity and popularity.

He knew that publicity and popularity make one proud and becomes the stumbling blocks in the path of one's true development.

A Sanskrit shloka reads as under:

Abhimanam Surapanam Gauravam Rauravam Mahat p
Prasiddhisukarivishtha Tasmade Tat Trayam Tyajet

Meaning: Egotism is like alcohol, pride is a sure way to hell and publicity is as bad and insignificant as pig's droppings, so one should stay away from each of them.

Our Pandurang had imbibed these values and attained this self-control from such a young age!

(6)

COMPOSED 'BALBODHINI'

Pandurang quit his college studies in response to Gandhiji's call to the youth.
He then came to Gujarat Vidyapeeth.*

* An education institution established for Indians by Gandhiji as an alternative to the education system of the British; which he had asked the people to boycott. Gujarat Vidyapeeth was the hub of activities related to awareness creation for independence movement, specially the literature part.

There he came in touch with Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar; popularly known as Kakasaheb Kalelkar.

Kakasaheb, a well known Gujarati writer, was a teacher in Vidyapeeth.

Kakasaheb thus became Pandurang's master.

Kakasaheb once thought to mould the lives of the students by imbibing moral and religious values.

He pondered as to what could be done.

He was reminded of 'shataks' (a collection of hundred verses) written by Bhartruhari.

(Bhartruhari, initially a king, renounced material life and became a sanyaasi owing to bitter worldly experiences).

Bhartruhari had composed 100 sanskrit verses (couplets) on four different themes each.

The compilation on each theme was in form of 'Shatak' (which means hundred in sanskrit)

Thus there were four shataks:

Neeti shatak (hundred verses on morality)

Vairagya shatak (hundred verses on renunciation)

Shringar shatak (hundred verses on aestheticism)

and **Vigyaan shatak** (hundred verses on science).

Kakasaheb selected 108 verses related to morality and value system from the first three shataks (except Vigyaan Shatak).

This compilation was named “Sadbodh Shatak” (sadbodh means moral advice/ guidance).

He then felt a need for a commentary on these 108 verses, in Sanskrit.

While teaching Pandurang, Kakasaheb had already recognized his real worth.

He chose Pandurang for writing a review.

Pandurang respected his master’s wish and wrote commentary and exposition.

It was named ‘*Balbodhini*’ (a guide for moral life for children).

This creation by young Pandurang, aged 25-26 years, reveals his versatile strengths in form of creative excellence, profound knowledge, power of expression, and command over Sanskrit language etc.

Repeated readings of the two literary works, sadbodh shatak and balbodhini, is a sure guide to lead a moral life.

(7)

FLAVOR OF BALBODHINI

Sadbodh Shatak is a compilation of select 108 verses (couplets) out of the three hundred verses composed by Bhartruhari.

These verses are a guide to moral and ideal life. They include themes like the importance of learning, to restrain from imploring, eternality of religion, how to cultivate the virtue of being content in life etc.

All these themes lead the reader to enhanced value systems and better life.

We know, Pandurang wrote Balbodhini, a commentary and exposition on Sadbodh Shatak. Let us take one verse as an example to understand about the depth of Pandurang's work:

E Te Satpurusha Parartha Ghatakah Svartham Parityajyaye
Samanyastu Pararathamudyamabhurutah Svarthavirodhena Ye p
Te Mi Manavarakshasaha Parahitam Svarthaya Nighnantiye
Ye Tu Ghnanti Nirarthakam Parahitam Te Ke Na Janimahe p

In English it reads:

One who helps others putting aside one's self

interest is sagacious,
One who helps others without disturbing his
own interest is a common human being,
One who spoils the interest of others for his
self interest is a demon among men
But

There are no words to describe one who
harms others just for the sake of it, without
any motive whatsoever

Pandurang wrote a beautiful commentary and
detailed explanation of this verse. Not only
that, he referred to three other similar verses
from different literary collections which teach
us that we should help others even putting
aside our self interest.

Not only that, best people are those who oblige
even the ungrateful people.

Look at the depth of knowledge and the extent
of reading of Pandurang.

He quoted three verses to explain one verse
and that too from different books.

And just think of the sharpness of his memory?

(8)

PAIN TO DEPART

In 1857, there was a revolt against the British rule in India.

Unfortunately, the revolt failed.

And India continued to be ruled by the British. Then came the trinity of national leaders ‘Lal, Bal and Pal’ who gave a new impetus to the freedom movement.

‘Lal’ meant Lala Lajpatrai from Punjab,

‘Bal’ was coined for Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak from Maharashtra and

‘Pal’ referred to Shri Bipinchandra Pal from West Bengal.

The term Lal, Bal and Pal became very popular those days.

Among these patriots, Pandurang had a special respect and attachment for Lokmanya Tilak.

Pandurang revered Tilak as a true statesman.

Pandurang’s value system was greatly influenced by Tilak’s thoughts and life.

Tilak’s slogan, which had a far reaching effect on the freedom movement, was “Freedom is

my birthright and I will accept nothing less than that.”

One of the major contributions of Bal Gangadhar Tilak was converting the Ganesh festival into a large scale people’s celebrations in Maharashtra, thereby uniting the people at large.

(9)

RESOLVE FOR SPIRITUAL PURSUIT

Pandurang was a Sanskrit teacher at Ahmedabad in those days.

Engaged in worldly activities, internally he remained detached.

He had lost his father at a young age.

Hence the responsibility of mother Rukmini and a younger brother was his.

Their financial condition was average.

He had to earn his living and could not leave the occupation for sadhana.

However, mentally he remained occupied in sadhana throughout.

Spiritual pursuit was the only goal.

To see God was the only aspiration.
A strong yearning to lead a spiritual life;
A craving to live in the lap of mother nature.
But family circumstances were otherwise.
His mother wished to get him married.
He wished to remain unmarried.
A great dilemma prevailed; a mental conflict
occupied his mind-
'to get married and live a common life of a
materialist or to live for God and become
uncommon?'

It was the month of April, 1922; 6th day of the
month of Chaitra, Vikram Samvat 1978.
Pandurang mentally resolved not to marry.
The dilemma was resolved.
It was a firm resolution, the one from which
he would not budge.

(10)

A HUMBLE DISAGREEMENT

Pandurang was a teacher then.

He led a simple and straight forward life, and was a strict follower of truth.

Hypocrisy was one thing he hated the most.

He believed that one should appear as one is, no false pomp and show.

Pandurang and his two friends Amrutlal Modi and Ambalal Vyas shared a room in Swaraj Ashram.

All those who dwelled in Swaraj ashram led a simple life, economizing on the expenses in every possible way.

They ate simple food, did the work of cooking, cleaning utensils etc themselves so that each one of them had to share minimum expenses.

Acharya Gidwaniji was the rector of the ashram and took care of the occupants.

Swaraj ashram had a great prestige and was often visited by people from various parts of the country and abroad as well.

Many great people also used to visit it.

Once Jaykarji, a well known barrister (lawyer) at the national level, visited Ahmedabad.

The students at the Swaraj ashram invited him on lunch and he accepted.

The next issue was the menu.

Most of the people there felt that Jaykarji, being such a big man, should be served a lavish feast.

A person of his stature would not be visiting frequently he should be given a great treat.

There was one group which felt that there was no need for a special treat beyond their means.

Basically they felt that they should project what they were and not go out of the way for a special guest.

All the dwellers of ashram were soldiers of freedom movement and if they led a simple life and ate simple food, guests should also be treated the same.

Pandurang and his two friends belonged to this group which wished to avoid hypocrisy.

But they were in minority.

Finally as per the wish of majority of people, it was decided to serve a lavish treat.

Pandurang and his friends were not happy, they wanted to oppose but in a way that no disturbance would be created.

The seven of them, who were against such hypocrisy, boycotted the treat.

Pandurang was mentally relieved.

He was satisfied that they could stick to their view and express their disagreement as well, that too in a subtle way without disturbing the pride of the ashram.

(11)

FIRMLY ARGUES OUT HIS STAND

Pandurang was a staunch believer in truth.

His stance was very clear.

One should be ashamed if he does something wrong, if he speaks lie.

Why should one be ashamed of simple living?

Why should the volunteers of the ashram feel belittled if they cannot afford a lavish treat for the guest?

His boycotting the treat was a right step.

Shri Jaykar returned from the visit.

The next day in the prayer assembly, rector Gidwaniji addressed the volunteers.

He mentioned about the group that had opposed to the treat and had boycotted.

His tone was of a reprimand.

How could Pandurang keep quiet?

He respectfully argued, “While appealing to the people for freedom, we say that our country has about 40 million people who do not even get one meal per day. And on the other hand we throw such a lavish treat. What can one gather from our behavior?

This will send a message that we can afford extravagance.

Is it the reality?

If not, then why foster such hypocrisy?

And, another issue is it true that what majority of people feel is always correct?

Only because a few of us felt otherwise, does it become insignificant?”

His argument was logical and philosophical one. Suppose someone is sick in the family and all the members feel that he has malaria and the doctor is the only one to saying that he has

typhoid, whose opinion should be considered? The family members' due to the majority or the doctor's.

Gidwaniji listened to what Pandurang presented. He himself was a person wedded to simplicity. He also started pondering over Pandurang's thoughts.

Why should one be ashamed of being simple?

(12)

PRAISED BY GANDHIJI

The incident of Jaykar's visit and boycott of lunch by a group generated quite heat in the ashram.

It became a point of discussion and a thought to ponder upon amongst the volunteers.

Incidentally, during that time Gandhiji visited the ashram.

It was a four day visit.

The agenda was to spend some time with the students/volunteers there.

They would all assemble and interact on various issues.

One day during such interactions, someone mentioned about the incident of Shri Jaykar's visit and a different tune sung by a group of students.

He wanted to know Gandhiji's views on the issue.

The person asked which of the two stands was true.

Gandhiji smiled at first.

Then in a poised manner he explained that the present situation of the nation is such that we cannot afford to incur wasteful expenditure of a cent/pence.

Only if we use the national wealth effectively and economically, we can have an impact to alleviate poverty to some extent.

Thus Gandhiji agreed to the view point of Pandurang and his friends.

Not only that, he congratulated them for their noble thoughts and the guts to stick to the true point of view.

Pandurang and his friends were elated.

They were happy that they took the right path.
Clinging to the truth requires courage.
If one shows such courage, God is always
there to support.

(13)

DISLIKE FOR DISCOURTEOUS WEALTHY PEOPLE

We know that Pandurang lost his father at
a young age of five.

They were not financially well off.

His mother worked very hard to raise both
sons.

During those days he had experienced the
attitude of the wealthy towards the poor, it
was very rude.

He saw that the rich had a tendency to
dominate owing to their wealth and the poor
had an attitude of being the yes men to
wealthy for short term motives.

Pandurang was a different person.

He did not believe that wealth can fetch everything.

He wrote in Balbodhini

Fools believe that,

“Sarve Gunah Kanchanamashrayante”

Wise believe that,

“Sarve Gunah Shilam Ashrayante”

Meaning: The fools believe that all virtues rest in wealth, while the wise believe that all virtues rest in character.

He had witnessed the selfish attitude of the rich. They would be after you till the time they need you and thereafter they will not even look at you.

In one of his letters to his friend Amrutlal Modi, Pandurang expressed his detest for the proud and disgraceful behaviour of the wealthy.

He wrote “I read in the newspaper that the pet lioness of Jamsaheb (prince of one of the Indian provinces in those days) died due to snake bite. Her cubs are now fed by a goat. This is an example of how the company of the rich can put you in a humiliating condition.

Had the lioness been in the jungle instead of a palace, her cubs would have been fed by another lioness.

They would not have been put in such a precarious condition of being fed by a goat.

There could be exceptions but the rule is that company of the so called rich can put you in disgraceful situation.

Pandurang was not averse to the rich but to their discourteous behavior and selfish motives. He was not the one who would run after the rich.

(14)

NOT OBSESSED BY OPULENCE

Pandurang was not the one who would be carried away by luxury or riches.

Yes, one's virtues could definitely impress him.

This does not mean that he had a detest for wealth or disregard for the wealthy; but money only could not suffice as a merit to attract him.

At the same time, he would not mind to bow

his head to those who were both prosperous and pious, well off and well behaved, affluent and educated.

Ambalal Sarabhai, a renowned industrialist at Ahmedabad, was one such cultured and pious millionaire.

(do you remember we talked about him in Part II, Pandurang used to teach his daughter Ansuyaben!)

His wife Sarladevi was an equally virtuous person.

The couple used to spend a lot of money for the independence movement.

Pandurang had a liking and respect for them owing to their virtues.

In one of his letters to his friend Ambalal he wrote,

“Mrs. Sarladevi is coming to Godhara to spread her piety in the local people. Her coming to Godhara would be an ideal convergence of man and nature.

How I wish our country is endowed with many such pious couples!”

Such was an ideal teacher Pandurang.

He believed firmly that wealth without virtues is worthless.

Those attached to the noble profession of teaching must have such ethics in life; else they would be merely reduced to those wagging tails at the doors of the rich.

(15)

PRESERVING VALUES AND VIRTUES

Truth, non violence, integrity, honesty, love for all, being cautious not to hurt others even through words- these are all basic values of life. Notwithstanding the value of money, Pandurang was also clear from young age that one should not earn by hook or crook.

He was firm to earn money through right means and spend on right avenues.

He was sharp and upright.

He would not mince words when it came to preserving self respect and values.

At the same time he would not be discourteous too.

Once it so happened that Ansuyaben
(remember, the cultured lady whom Pandurang
used to teach. recollect the episode in
Rangdada part II)

was out of town. Her younger sister Nirmalaben
wished to study Sanskrit.

Pandurang called on her. She requested him
to teach her epic and other classic religious
literature.

Pandurang agreed.

Nirmalaben very casually asked Pandurang
about his fees for the same.

Pandurang got furious.

He felt insulted.

He said, do you want to decide a value of
brahmvidya i.e. such a scholarly pursuit?

If knowledge was so easily saleable, not a single
rich person would have remained foolish.

All the wealthy would have become scholars.

Nirmalaben was taken aback. She realized her
blunder.

Offering a rupee to him, she said politely “Sir,
please accept a rupee to pay for your transport.
Please do travel by a horse cart back home.”

Pandurang replied “You can pay the fare to the cart fellow directly. I will not take money from you.”

Nirmalaben asked “having taken the fare in advance, what if the fellow drops you half way?”

Pandurang promptly replied that he would not come and complaint about it to her.

If it so happens he would merrily walk through the remaining way.

He added, “But if I take a rupee from you and in case the transport fellow reports that he had taken only few paise and not a full rupee, you would believe in his words and feel that I earned from that transaction.”

Nirmalaben got his mood.

Laughingly she said “Do you think I would take up any crap so easily.”

Pandurang bluntly and boldly replied “Yes, you would”

Where did he get such a sharpness and guts from?

It was because of his immense faith in God and trust in his Guru-maharaj that made Pandurang so courageous and bold.

His clear intentions and determination not to compromise with values at any cost made him stronger.

(16)

GOD CARES FOR HIS DEVOTEES

Pandurang left the school because of the bad activities of the school managers.

Depending on God, he sat at home.

He had faith in God and a strong desire to do the right thing.

Once you take a conscious decision, you must be prepared to bear the consequences.

He decided to go and live in the ‘gufa’ (underground) of Kankaria (in Ahmedabad).

He used to go home only for food.

The rest of the time he would spend in the gufa, doing meditation.

God does test a person but then shows kindness also.

While shaping an earthen pot, the pot maker will keep his one hand inside and will pat the

outer side to give shape to the pot.
God ordained, so one person arranged for
Pandurang's meals.
Looking at his affection and insistence for
taking meals,
Pandurang's belief in God's kindness got
strengthened.
God takes care of those who live in this world
depending on him,
At home, mother's health was not good.
She had cough and fever, all together.
One person gave some tablet just like that
and the mother was cured.
Pandurang now decided to do meditation in
solitude.
But leaving the home also amounted to leaving
the mother.
This was a new calamity on the mother
already reeling under the pain of poverty and
widowhood.
Hence he had to find a way out such that it
would suit the mother.

(17)

THE PURPORT OF GEETA

Geeta or Bhagvad Geeta represents Lord Krisna's own words.

It is the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjun in the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

An amazing epic of the Hindu religion.

This has gained prominence in the entire world Pandurang had studied Geeta in great depth.

He had read Geeta's various versions: of Jnaneshwary, Shankaranandi and Chidananda.

He had done extensive reading and very deep contemplation.

His memory was also very sharp.

After leaving the job of the school, he used to explain the crux of our epics to Ansuyaben and Shankarlal banker.

One day Shankarlal asked him.

O! teacher have you read Annie Besant's Geeta?

Pandurang said 'No' and asked whether there is any specialty in it.

Banker said that its English is very good.

Pandurang said 'how can you derive that the

said Geeta is good only because its English is good; Anyway, let me see it.’

Immediately, Shankarlal gave him Annie Besant’s Geeta.

Pandurang remembered his Guru.

And while doing so opened the Geeta.

What opened was the thirty second verse of the eleventh chapter.

In no time, Pandurang told Shankarlal:

See! This translator, the foreign lady, has not understood the verse. She has not been able to reach to the depth of the verse. If you are not able to understand the crux, how can there be real force in translation?

Shankarlal was shocked.

Pandurang said that the word ‘rite-api’ in the shloka has been translated by Annie Besant as ‘without thee’ which is not correct.

In fact, Lord is trying to tell Arjun that these warriors are going to die anyway.

And the power which will kill them is something else.

Arjun is going to be a mere instrument.

Whereas the meaning of the translation done by Annie Besant is something else.

‘without thee’ would mean all others except Arjun are going to be killed.

If we go by Annie Besant’s version, the reader would understand that all have perished; only Arjun has survived.

It would be better if it is ‘irrespective of you’ or something like that instead of ‘without thee.’

Pandurang not only drew attention towards the mistake but also suggested the correction.

Such was the deep understanding of Pandurang. Such was his analytical mind.

(18)

ARDENT DESIRE FOR GOD’S ENLIGHTENMENT

Pandurang was on the path of Sadhana (penance) since his college days.

Thereafter, while serving as a school teacher, his sadhana intensified further.

1925, was to be a decisive year in Pandurang’s life.

Kakasaheb Kalelkar wished that Pandurang stays at Gujarat Vidyapeeth.

But our Pandurang was not inclined to stay there.

He was desperate for enlightenment of God.

He used to remain upset due to the desperation.

This also led to loss of sleep.

The desperation was very intense; as if he kept weeping within his heart for the desire of 'darshan.'

However this sadness was of a different kind.

It was driven by a need to achieve something great.

Hence it was a state of pleasure, not pain.

This disturbance was coupled by a severe headache.

He made many attempts to control the headache but in vain.

He applied ice, did hair massage, but nothing worked.

Pandurang realized that the headache was of a different nature.

As a person advances in yoga sadhana, it so happens that his 'prana' (breath) rises in the head leading to such a headache.

To progress in his quest of finding God, Pandurang felt like taking guidance and blessings of a few good saints.

As desperate as he was, he started looking for such souls.

(19)

COURAGE COUNTS

Our Pandurang was in the final stage of his quest for God's darshan.

‘Where do I go? Where do I undertake ‘sadhana’? Where will I find God?’

-these questions constantly kept hammering in his thoughts.

The natural choice was to go to the Himalayas. The serenity of the Himalayas makes it a preferred place for sadhana.

It is very dear to the seers and saints; as dear as maternal uncle's place for a child.

But God had destined otherwise.

He came to know about a saint in a place called Saikhedha in the eastern belt of Gujarat.

The saint was called Dada Dhuniwala and was known to be an enlightened soul.

There used to be a small fire-place in front of the Saint Dada and small logs of wood were kept constantly burning in it.

Whatever the devotees offered to him, however precious the item would be, Dada would immediately throw it in the Dhooni (fire) and would burn to ashes.

But then he would retrieve the same with his spiritual power in such a magical way that the onlookers would be astounded.

Our Pandurang left to get the blessings of this Dada.

He intended to stay with Dada for his sadhana. From a place called Zalod, Pandurang went to Dahod and then reached Gaadarwada.

Saikheda was about 100 miles from this place and one could reach by car.

The quandary was where to get money for the taxi?

Pandurang went walking and reached Saikheda. The place was overcrowded with visitors.

Normally, people have a habit to run around for such saints and places to get blessings to overcome their sufferings or satisfy desire for wealth and plenty.

But our Pandurang had come with a different intention.

As per the tradition one takes something when one goes to meet a saint, Pandurang had taken a mango for Dada Dhooniwala.

Pandurang knew about his eccentric behavior. Dada's behavior would astonish some but would also hurt many.

He had a habit of throwing things in fire.

With a lot of anxiety and apprehensions, Pandurang went with a mango to him.

But... Pandurang was thrilled with what happened to him.

What was it that thrilled anxious Pandurang?

(20)

BLESSINGS SHOWERED ON PANDURANG

Once God is with you, everything becomes easy. In the night, Pandurang went to meet Dhooniwala Dada.

The mango he had brought to offer was in his hands.

Having known about the habit of Dada, Pandurang was worried.

Whether Dada will accept my mango? Will he eat it or throw it in the fire?

With this anxiety in his mind, slowly he reached towards Dada.

Pandurang had enormous regards for Dada.

He also had deep faith in him.

He thought he would go and put the mango at Dada's feet.

But lo! Before, he could offer the mango at his feet.

Dada grabbed it and started eating it.

One could see that Dada was relishing the mango.

Pandurang was extremely thrilled and touched.
For him, it was a very good omen.
He felt as he had been endowed with the
blessings, he had come to seek.

(21)

ORDERED TO GO ON THE BANK OF NARMADA

Pandurang was joyous by the fact that
Dhooniwala Dada ate his mango.

This helped him to gather courage to go closer
to him.

He felt like meeting him again.

It was noon time.

Dada, as usual, was in his own world.

A cow was standing near him.

It was eating something.

Dada took a thick stick and started beating the
poor animal.

Pandurang was shocked and felt sorry the cow.

He wondered why is Dada beating the animal

though it is standing calmly?

Why such a torture on an innocent animal?

It was surprising to see the cow's reaction.

It was not moving a bit in spite of such a heavy beating.

It continued eating as if unaffected.

He thought, isn't the cow feeling the pain?

Is the stick love borne?

The cow was behaving as if the stick was caressing her!

Many questions came to the mind of Pandurang.

But the unexpected words from Dada put an end to them.

Dada shouted:

"He has set out for the Himalayas. What lies there? It won't serve. He should go back. He is destined to stay on the bank of river Narmada.

"Pandurang could not understand whom Dada was talking to.

He wondered, was the shouting meant for him.

He kept on thinking about it.

He felt like sitting with Dada and talking to him.

But given the ways of Dada, how to do that?

What did Dada's words mean? Whom were they addressed to?

He was puzzled.

He started looking for answers.

(22)

THE PUZZLE SOLVED

By now Pandurang gained confidence and comfort.

He decided to sit with Dada and discuss by hook or crook.

He also resolved of asking directly to Dada about the place to do penance.

But the problem was that the place was overcrowded.

How to approach Dada amidst the crowd of devotees?

On enquiring, Pandurang came to know that at midnight Dada is alone.

He decided to meet Dada then and talk at ease.

One Sikh devotee also joined him.

Pandurang warned him not to utter anything in front of Dada.

He asked the Sikh just to listen to what Dada says and do as per his instructions.

It is always wise to act as per saints' directions, thereby you get their blessings.

Both of them went to Dada and sat.

In spite of being warned, the Sikh started his story of his sufferings.

Dada said "just wait for six months and your sufferings would go."

But the Sikh continued crying as if the period was too long.

So Dada said "Ok three months."

The Sikh still continued Dada reduced the period to one month.

Sikh continued crying and Dada kept on relaxing the period.

Finally Dada got upset.

But there was a blessing in disguise for Pandurang in Dada's anger.

Dada hit four five times on the Sikh's hand with his stick and said "Go away."

The Sikh got up.

Pandurang thought he would also need to go along since they had come together, he too got up.

Dada shouted “Where are you going, sit down.”

Pandurang sat but was not sure what to do, so again tried to get up.

Dada again shouted “You sit down.”

After listening “sit down” for a couple of times, Pandurang could gather courage.

He asked “Can I put my head on your feet?”

Dada answered “Ya ya surely.”

As Pandurang politely bowed down on his feet...

Guess what happened?

Dada gently caressed him

He started moving his hand lovingly on Pandurang’s back.

Pandurang was too elated.

His fear for Dada was relieved Pandurang sat nearby Dada.

After a while Shree Rang said, “I wish to stay with you for one anushthaan. (a specific set of spiritual practice or reading as decided by the doer). Please permit me to do so.”

The anushthan Pandurang had in mind was to read Dattapurana for 108 times.

But Dada explained to him that his wish would not be fulfilled there.

He said “go back, go back *jungle me mangal jungle me mangal.*”

Meaning ‘go to a forest, it will turn to a heaven like spot in future due to your penance.’

Dada kept on repeating it for several times.

Shree Rang again bowed his head in reverence before Dada.

He felt he got the blessings that he had so desperately come to seek.

And just then a thought flashed in his mind.

He recollected what Dada had said during the day “He has set for the Himalayas but is destined to go to the bank of river Narmada.”

Pandurang realized that the words were certainly addressed to him.

What remained mystified in the noon was apparent now.

The puzzle was solved.

Pandurang was sure that it’s a call from ‘Ma Narmada.’

(23)

A FUTILE VISIT TO MORTAKKA

Pandurang thus got blessings of Dada Dhooniwala.

He was clear about the order to go to the bank of Narmada.

But what about doing anushthan in presence of some saint, in aura of some seer?

He remembered of another saint Swami Chandrashekharanand Saraswati.

He was a '*digambar*' saint, meaning did not wear even a piece of cloth, (nude).

There was a district named Nimad on the bank of river Narmada, within there was a village named Mortakka.

Chandrashekharanandji used to live in a tunnel near a bridge in Mortakka.

Pandurang thought of going to Mortakka to undertake his anushthaan in company of this saint.

How to get there?

He had no money.

He sold his wrist watch to that sikh devotee.

The Sikh gave Rs.10 as half the value of the watch.

With those 10 rupees he reached Mortakka.

Swamiji was not there.

He had gone to Indore.

So Pandurang sent him a message in which he introduced himself.

He wrote that he wished to stay for about 8-10 months with swamiji to do an anushthan and requested Swamiji's permission.

Swamiji gave a prompt reply.

He informed "I am planning to leave this world shortly (taking Samadhi). Your work cannot be done here. Go back."

Pandurang accepted the destiny as God's ruling.

He did get dejected but the visit to Mortakka did benefit him in a way.

His headache disappeared.

(24)

THE FINAL RESOLVE

Our Pandurang had sold wrist watch to go to Mortakka.

Stayed there for a week but his wish remained unfulfilled.

He requested Amrutlal Modi, his friend to send a money order for Rs.10 for the return fare. He received the amount and returned to Vadodara. Pandurang again met the saint named Bhagwan in Vadodara.

He got the instruction to meet one swami popularly named Langde Swami.

His original name was Moreshwar.

After becoming sanyasi, Moreshwar was christened Baalanand.

He hailed from Maharashtra (a neighboring state of Gujarat).

His guru was Sachidanand Saraswati, an enlightened soul at a place called Sinor.

Balanand was practicing yoga.

Errors in performing yoga could lead to serious consequences.

Balanand made some mistakes in practicing yoga and got disability in legs.

Such a person is called 'langda' (i.e. crippled or handicapped) in Gujarati and Hindi.

Thus he came to be known as Langde Swami.

Langde swami was in Vadodara.

He was very short-tempered.

It was not easy to go and meet him.

One could only go along with a close devotee of his.

Pandurang remembered of a very close devotee of Lange Swami.

The devotee was a teacher.

Pandurang somehow traced him hurriedly.

He requested him to accompany him urgently to meet Langde swami.

The devotee said "it is not the time to meet Langde swami, he won't even talk. He could lose his temper. I have to go for job, come some other time."

But for Pandurang, it was urgent.

He thought why delay it to later?

Why not today, why not now?

He found out a mid way.

He urged to the devotee, “let us go by two separate vehicles. I will wait till you seek permission from Swamiji for my meeting. If he agrees, you call me, else will return.”

God is great.

Swamiji agreed to meet Pandurang.

Pandurang met him joyfully.

Swamiji talked very lovingly with him.

Pandurang requested for guidance for his anushthaan.

He advised to go to the bank of river Narmada.

He asked him to find an isolated place somewhere between Bharuch and Shoolpaneshwar.

Now Pandurang was fully determined.

Bank of river Narmada was the final answer.

(25)

NARMADE! SHARMADE! SARVADE!

(meaning oh river Narmada, you are the benefactor, you are benevolent)

Pandurang got the Divine instruction to do '*parayana*'* of Datta purana** for 108 times in a village called Indravarna.

It was on the bank of Narmada.

He got Dattapurana from one Kalyanjibhai Desai of Bharuch.

Dada Dhooniwala had instructed to go to the bank of Narmada.

Langde swami also advised to find a secluded place on Narmada bank.

Besides, even as per the general belief, The Narmada bank is considered to be very ideal for penance.

A Sanskrit saying goes like this:

“Revatate tapam kuryat, maranam jahnvee tate”

Meaning: For penance prefer the bank of Narmada, for death bank of River Ganga.

* reading of the holy scriptures.

**the scripture describing acts of Lord Dattatreya.

And then what a coincidence it was!
Pandurang's guru Swami Vasudevanand
Saraswati has also done in penance on the
bank of river Narmada at Garudeshwar.
Connecting all these, he was firm in his mind.
He decided not to ponder or discuss on this
further.
Narmada bank was the final answer.
The next step was to find a secluded place.
He thanked God for all the help so far.
He prayed for additional help, in searching for
the right place.
Pandurang also prayed to Guruji for help.
He wanted to act as per Guruji's instructions,
who else could help to fulfill his wish other
than Guruji himself.
So, the holy bank of Narmada was the final
choice.
No looking back now.
Narmade! Sharmde! Sarvade!

From Call of Nareshwar

Let your Hands give a hand to His sanctuous
work.

Move your feet towards His blessed Abode.

With tongue recite His Holy Name.

In every word feel His tenderness.

Speak not a word that disturbs the complacency
of His world-consonance. Step not a foot;
do not a deed which you can not do before
His eye.

Think not a thought, take not a
breath that creates the slightest discord in
His universal peace!

All free from Hatred Be,
Welfare Mutual Cherish All!
All Peace And Plenty Attain,
Devoid of fear And Supreme All!!

Om

Peace Physical ! Peace Mental !! Peace Spiritual !!!

World-Friend,
Rang Avadhut

From Call of Nareshwar

“At every moment, in every place, under every circumstance, experience the divine presence of the All Merciful God. Walking or otherwise, sleeping or awake, standing, sitting, lying or doing your work feel deep His proximity. Live in the remembrance of His existence at every breath, harken His spontaneous selforiginated footsound at every heart beat!”

“In mountains behold His unshaking solidity, in rivulets His moving compassion; have a glimpse of His ever new beauty in Sun, stars, constellations! Realise that living eternal, Good, Grand, in every creature. In species born, learn to see that unborn, unspecified Absolute! Feel full your entire being-your every cell-with Him. Let your whole life be replete with His existence-form and substance. Be one with Him physically. Identify with Him mentally!!”

World-Friend,
Rang Avadhut