

GAUTAMI DARSHAN

GODAVARI PARIKRAMA



Original (Telugu) :

NARAYANA

English Translation :

N.V. PADMA



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OBEISANCE TO SRI GANESHA

Accomplisher of directions of Sridevi, oh wonderful One!
To Bramhagiri with Karthik down came you, Oh divine One!
Persuaded Gautama Maharishi to bring Godavari to earth
To you the primeval One I bow in adoration and mirth.

AN OFFERING

to



SRI TRIAMBAKESHWARA SWAMY

SALUTATIONS

OM

Goddess Saraswati

Oh Mother! Bless all and the people of Manthani
You who resides near Gautami as Brahma-rani
Attributer of wisdom, intellect and knowledge
To you Vidya Saraswati we bow and pledge!

Vyas Maharshi

Composer of Brahmasutras you are, Oh noble one!
Who spread the nectar of Gita, that Lord you are, Oh wonderful one!
Muni who wrote the decree on Vedas you are, Oh great one!
I prostrate to you, Oh the universally knowledgeable one!

Sri Sankaracharya

You who presented Advaita to us
Had lit the light of wisdom in us
Told the truth of Oneness of God and man to us
Oh, Noble one! Shower your blessings on us.

Sri Janardhana

With insights you learnt and taught the essence of Vedas
Practiced and preached us about Vedantas
Inspired people of whole Andhra in all Veda Sabhas
Oh, Janardhananda Swamy! Your blessings I ask.

Sri Guru

How to practice Vedanta demonstrated you
Enlightening light for all Telugus are you
Wonderful Gita Makarandam is written by you
Oh, Vidyaprakashananda Giri Swamy! My reverence to you.

Ramalinga of Sri Rama and Ishwara verily Advaita are you
Advaita of Siva and Shakti described beautifully you
Grace of Sri Sankara bestowed on Andhras you
Sri Advaiyananda Bharati Swami! I bow in humbleness to you.

Salutation to Sri Gautama Maharshi



Wrote Dharmashastras and established dharma in the world
Wrote Nyayashastras and showed the right path to the world
Brought Gautami Ganga to earth for salvation of the world
Oh, Enlightened One! Salutations to you the teacher of the world.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Gautami Darshan is a very extra-ordinary book presented by Sri Narayana Guruji. It is a wonderful travelogue, a guide to the yatriks who would / wish to undertake Godavari Parikrama. This book is not an abstract or a copy of any ancient or old literature, rather it is Guruji's original version of his ups and downs, pleasures and pains, experiences and insights. It is an authentic and useful personal diary of Guruji in printed form for the benefit of the society.

Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan established in 2003 at Manthani by Sri Narayana Guruji in honour and memory of his parents – Smt. Sitamma and Sri Ramanna renders various voluntary services to people and society. It's motto is "Manava Sevaye Madhava Seva" (Service to Man is service to God) and this service to man is provided by members voluntarily and with missionary zeal as per the vision, mission and inspiration of Guruji. Among its multi-folded tasks are serving senior citizens who have no economic support by providing food, clothes, medicines and other needs, besides other activities like tree plantation, training for self-employment of women, scholarships, medical assistance, ambulance service and medical service, computer training programmes, youth welfare centre, library, children's park, water services, play centre, a heritage house (Manthrapuri Darshan), renovation of old and ancient temples and many other activities. It also shoulders the responsibility of bringing about spiritual enlightenment in the society by publishing various books on spiritualism. The sadan deems as its responsibility to spread spiritual knowledge and 'chaitanyam' through its literary publications.

Sri Narayana Guruji's 'Gautami Darshan', originally written in Telugu was very useful and enlightening to Telugu knowing people. When the desire for the same came up from non-Telugus, the need for the English version of the book arose, since the river Godavari also passes through the states of Maharashtra and Chattisgarh. So,

the responsibility of the translation was entrusted to his daughter Smt. Padma. Smt. Padma and Smt. Lalita are not only daughters of Guruji, they are very “atmiyulu” (dear) to us and to Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan.

Translation work is a difficult job when compared to writing a new book. It requires a different mindset and skill as the translator has to place himself/herself in the shoes of the original writer, has to understand the original theme, writer’s aim, spontaneity and spirit. This English version of ‘Gautami Darshan’ justifies Guruji selecting Smt. Padma for the task. Smt. Padma has succeeded in doing a good job by taking up the challenge and bringing out the book in a fine manner without tampering the original flavour and essence. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to her.

The book written in simple English is easy to read and understand. We express our thanks to our daughter Smt Padma for the wonderful work and for availing the opportunity to serve the society.

Both the sisters Smt. Lalita and Smt. Padma are an asset to Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan. Whenever there is a need to translate a book from English to Telugu or from Telugu to English, we acquire their services.

We hope that the English version of Gautami Darshan will be well received and will be of great use and help to whosoever wish to take up Godavari Parikrama.

Offering sincerely with love

Dr. Suvarna Lakshman Rao

President – Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan, Manthani.

SHRI. MAHESH HIRE

Shankaracharya Nyas
4/5 Kalyani, Tirupati Town
Near Akashwani Tower
Gangapur Road
Nasik.

Pranam Guruji,

I was excited beyond words when Mr. Shriniwar showed me a copy of the English manuscript of Gautami Darshan and I felt inspired to thank you once again.

We still treasure those wonderful moments when you and Sujanabhen visited us at ' Venkatesh Balaji Mandir ' at Nasik during Godavari parikrama. We all who were present and were fortune to meet you then feel it was a privilege and a great honor to have got your blessings. We are very thankful to you Guruji. Also, we feel that we were extremely lucky to know and realize the importance and significance of doing Godavari parikrama.

Your presence inspired us to do Godavari Parikrama.

On behalf of all the trustees, I pray to you to visit Nasik and the temple in near future.

Thanking you, I once again express my deep sense of gratitude to you for all your 'ashirwads'.

With regards
Gratefully yours

Hire

Trustee

AN INSIGHTFUL JOURNEY

I was totally surprised when Guruji asked me to write foreword for this book. It was like a small fountain justifying the infinite vastness of the sea. A lamp cannot praise the sun's light, as the brightness of the lamp is nothing when compared to the brightness of the sun. Guruji's request is like an order for me and I had to follow it inspite of my incapacibilities.

Deep down in this universe, everything is connected to everything. Some things are visible some are invisible. May be my invisible connection of past life got manifested in this life. My first meeting with Guruji was at Baroda during one of the training programs on customer focus. Guruji narrated an example during the training session which changed the entire direction of my thinking.

Shankryacharya once while teaching his disciples asked them to utter AHAM BRAHMASMI and he said to his disciples TATTVAMASI. Same is the nature of Guruji he gets immense happiness in giving something to others, materialistic as well spiritualistic. He gives as if happiness of others is an essential energy for him. The miracle of his teaching lies in the fact that he fulfills the needs of others while also teaching them how to be self-reliant in his absence. He always asks them to go beyond his knowledge and understanding so that they explore by their own means the treasures that still remain unearthed.

There are many followers of Guruji from ministers to ordinary persons, from knowledgeable to innocents, and from doubtful to faithful, but he treats them all equally. Just as the rays of the sun does not differentiate anything on earth, so does Guruji.

Today, I'm a totally transformed person by just being with him. I have uplifted myself to a different dimension of unconditional love, peace and humanity under his tutelage.

When I was the President of Baroda Management Association, we came up with a Leadership Development Centre which had to be named. Discussions began. During one such meeting, a member proposed Guruji's name and it was unanimously accepted by all other members of the committee.

We approached Guruji for his consent but Guruji did not agree. We were amazed at the simplicity of this man. Then after much persuasion, he accepted on the condition that we should also get the opinion of all the other past active members. As advised, we approached nearly fifty people and to our astonishment, without any exception every one readily accepted, justified and appreciated our idea. Some of the members felt and expressed as to why such a novel idea didn't strike them earlier. It clearly shows how Guruji is acknowledged in the society with love and reverence. His contributions, services and help will be cherished for ever not only by BMA, but all who came / come in contact with him.

He is indeed the man of modern management while collaborating the ethics / principles of modern management and the teachings of rishis.

The book 'GAUTAMI DARSHAN / GODAVARI PARIKRAMA' is actually one of the many spiritual journeys undertaken by Guruji. This book is unique in the sense it explores not only the external quest of the Godavari yatra, but also unravels the deeper messages hidden therein internally, besides the fact that the journey of a sage, like Guruji, makes it more meaningful.

Moreover, Guruji's narration of his personal observations, experiences and insights makes this pilgrimage a bridge which makes our mind transcend from materialism to spirituality. Different

TEERTHAS, their importance and fruits are explained excellently. Not so well-known facts related to GAUTAMA MAHARSHI, GAUTAMI GODAVARI, VAITARNI, makes the reading interesting and unstoppable.

If how different Rashis affect different rivers is informative, then understanding the different CHAKRA PARIKRAMAS of the river and the KUNDALINI OF GODAVARI DEVI is simply mind-blowing.

The journey is very minutely explained with distances and important places and the DO'S and DONT'S. If one follows all the guidelines of Guruji, one will feel that Guruji himself is accompanying one on the journey. Infact, without GPRS it is like written GPRS and better than any GOOGLE MAPS. The small book is incomparable, so there is no question of good, better or best. Yes, it is true that one will not be able to resist oneself from taking the parikrama after reading the book.

Last but not the least I simply cannot overlook the translator's efficiency of transcending the thoughts from Telugu to English. Mere translation of words is an easy job but to understand the subject, the mind of the author, his emotions, his feelings and the intensity of his expression is very crucial and essential. One can easily see the reflection of Guruji in the translation. The understanding of the subject to its core level can only create such a master piece of translation. I heartily congratulate Ms. N.V. PADMAJI for her wonderful effort and result.

I heartily wish Guruji for the fulfillment of his pious motive in benefiting his disciples.

I feel honoured and blessed for being given this opportunity to pen down my association and admiration for Guruji and his work.

GOVIND SHRINIWAR

Former President of Baroda Management Association – Baroda
Former Vice-President HR- Asea Brown Boveri Ltd.(ABB) - Nasik

My Word

*Akhanda mandalaa kaaram
Vyaptam yena charaacharam
Tat padam darshitam yena
Tasmai Shree Gurave namah!*

[I prostrate to the Guru, who awakens in me
The realizations of ‘That’ Supreme consciousness
Which pervades and fills all moving and non-moving objects
And whose universal form comprises the world.]

Guruji, I extend my humble gratitude for being ‘that Guru’ to me. If not for you the treasures of knowledge and learning would have remained unearthed for me and the world. ‘Gautami Darshan’ like the “Pilgrim’s Progress” opened the doors of wisdom to assimilate how much ever I can. I who is still in the “A B C.....” of learning, was thrilled beyond words to learn, understand and fathom some finest jewels of ancient wisdom and Telugu language, both of which I always desired to explore.

Indeed you are the best teacher Guruji. I bow with reverence to you the resplendent One, who stood by me and with me all through my journey while translating this book from Telugu to English.

*Agnaana timiraandhasya
Gnaana anjana shalaakayaa
Chakshur unmeelitam yena
Tasmai Shree Gurave namah!*

[I salute the Guru, who with his teachings
Opens my eyes which are closed by the cataract of ignorance
And are not able to differentiate
Between ignorance and knowledge.]

Pranams Guruji
- **Padma**

INNER PARIKRAMA

It is a matter of great joy for both of us that our dear Smt.N.V. Padma Jagan has done an inspired translation of our “Gautami Darshanam” in Telugu into English.

Our Godavari Parikrama in 2008 was an exciting, exhilarating, exploring experience of ecstasy.

We shared our experience for the use of all Telugu speaking people through “Gautami Darshanam”.

During our Parikrama, Shri.Govind Shriniwar, former President of Baroda Management Association and a very dear co-contributor in the path of Spirituality in Management provided an exemplary service to us by making all arrangements at Triambak, Panchavati, Gangakhed and Nasik.

On the penultimate day in Nasik at the Venkatesh Balaji Mandir on the bank of Godavari, we were well received by Shri.Shriniwar, Smt.Sindhuben Shriniwar, Trustees of the Temple and honoured senior citizens of Nasik city.

On that occasion, there was a suggestion that a book on Godavari Parikrama in English and Marathi would be very useful. Then and there both of us made a “Sankalp” to fulfil that requirement.

After the Parikrama, we wrote “Gautami Darshanam” in Telugu, which was published by Sri Seetha Rama Seva Sadan of Manthani. This was well received and was admired as a valuable guide for those who wish to accomplish the Parikrama around the great Godavari.

However, the requirement for the book in English and then in

Marathi remained unfulfilled. We were not sufficiently inclined to translate our own writing. We were sure a most suitable person would appear soon. Then two years ago, two wonderful persons Smt N.V. Padma Jagan and Smt.Lalitha Vyas, one a master in English language and another a master of Telugu language, were introduced to us by the destiny of time.

The spirit of Indian values, sharing of knowledge and wisdom, responsibility to serve the society and the interest in exploring beyond the horizons joined us and they became members of our family of love and light.

They both came to Manthani and had an inspired darshan of the wonderful Godavari. The dip that they took in the “Amrita Kundam” near the Sahasralinga Island filled them with conscious joy and bliss of unity with the Supreme Spirit and Godavari became synonymous with flow of life.

Dear Padmaji is a vivid reader and an intensive enthusiast for unending learning, which helped her to become an outstanding teacher, professor and principal. She expanded her reading and writing capabilities in Telugu in a very short time. Though Telugu is her mother tongue, her Telugu was not at all proficient, since she was in North India throughout her school and college education.

She enjoyed “Gautami Darshanam” in Telugu and it improved her inclination and determination to be well-versed with the language. Then she endeavoured to study many books in Telugu, including Bhagavad Gita, Narada Bhakti Sutras and Shri.Atma Nirvahana Gita, which was written because of her inspired enquiry and suggestions.

One day, Shri.Govind Shriniwar reminded us for the book on Godavari Parikrama in English and then in Marathi.

We had no need to look much farther because Smt.Padmaji was enthusiastically ready for the noble task just at the right time. Her interest and dedication to Godavari are exemplary. Her mastery in English is excellent. Her sense of commitment is admirable. Her readiness to dip into new river of Telugu “Gautami Darshanam” and bring out the pearls of English version was full of consciousness.

One day we placed Telugu “Gautami Darshanam” in her hands for translation and transformation into English. She endeavoured like a yogi, studied like a professor preparing for a lecture, explored like a researcher and wrote like a master.

“Gautami Darshan – Godavari Parikrama” in English is the expression of that yogic endeavour.

The translation of slokas into English poems is beautiful. Her style of writing is skilful. Narration of the journey is wonderful. The itinerary and the tables are more systematic and information-full. The spirit in the stories are excitement-full. The explanation of Kundalini is thrill-full.

In this Godavari Parikrama, one can visualize the Inner Parikrama of Padmaji.

We congratulate her for this wonderful journey to the Spirit of Holy Mother Godavari.

We are deeply thankful to many wonderful people who supported us during this divine pilgrimage. We are especially indebted and thankful to Shri.Dipesh Shroff at Mumbai, Shri. Govind Shriniwar at Nasik, Shri.S.Laxman Rao and members of Shri Seetha Rama Seva Sadan at Manthani and Shri. I. Sambiah at Dharmapuri.

We are sure this book will be of great interest and of use to all nature lovers, explorers and all devotees of revered Gautami Ganga Godavari.

With love and light,
Sujana-Narayana

Date : 11th November, 2010

Place : Mumbai

CHAPTER – 1

GODAVARI DARSHAN A FLOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The cosmic world is the resultant of the five fundamental elements of creation – earth, water, fire, air and ether. The conscious that flows therefrom fills the cosmos with divine consciousness. This in turn strengthens the bond between the atma and the paramatma, i.e., the ordinary and the extra-ordinary. When one realizes this connection and its synchronism with nature, one is filled with indefinable joy and happiness. Gautami Darshan gave us this experience. It filled, enhanced and enlightened our spiritual consciousness.

Our experiences are precious and invaluable. Here, an attempt has been made to present some of our reminiscences that had played a key role in the transmigration of our personality from then to now. Both nature and divine have been very kind to us.

When we are tired the elements of nature smoothens our spirit like our father and mother. In the comfort of their lap we find solace and forget our weariness. Earth like a mother gives us food, water like a grandmother in the comfort of her coolness and love quenches our thirst, fire like a father gives us strength and direction, air like an uncle gives us life and takes care of us and ether like a grandfather gives us love and experience. In all these we see the reflection of the unknown, the divine.

Of all elements water has always been given primary importance since times immemorial. It is the very breath and life of existence. I recall, when I was just a little boy my mother told me about the worth of water while I was assisting her in applying mud on the walls of our house (our house was made

of mud and stone). She said, “Son, water is very essential. With water this mud can be applied on the wall and the same water can be used to wash it off. Water has no form. It takes the form of the container it is placed in. It teaches us about life. Infact, it is the life (therefore, in Hindi it is called ‘pani’). When water mingles with earth it becomes nourishing. This ‘jala upanishad’ of my mother sank deep into my heart. My love, adoration and respect for water grew.

Manthani, Manthrapuri is a divine place, also known for its rich culture. Manthani (from Sanskrit Mantra Kutam – the house of Vedas), Manthrapuri (the town of hymns) or Manthana is popular as a land of Vedas, Shastras, Mantras, Vedic Pundits (scholars) and also for being embedded with ancient and modern education and temples. It is the place that has bestowed upon us knowledge, energy and consciousness.

Manthrapuri emerged as a place of confluence of two rivers Godavari and Vageeshwari (or Vagu). Godavari is ‘Shakti swaroop’ (form of power) and Vageeshwari is ‘Saraswati swraoop’ (form of knowledge and wisdom). The river Pranahita which is ‘Lakshmi swaroop’ (form of wealth) joins the rivers at Kaleshwaram, a place little away from Manthani. As a consequence of being in the fold of three rivers, the people of Manthani are blessed with strength, good education and wealth (it comes along as we progress in life.)

There are many beautiful lakes and ponds in and around Manthani. Tammacheruvu and Ravulacheruvu are the two lakes in the village of Manthani. Earlier a big lake by name Penjeru existed. For the purpose of drinking we used to depend on Ayyagari cheruvu (pond). It used to be full of lotuses and nectar like water. Though there are many lakes which brought in remarkable prosperity to the people inhabiting near it, the lakes Sila Samudra and Banne cheruvu were more important. The small but beautiful river Vageeshwari is the main source of water

for these lakes. The water that flowed through the channels of the mini dam constructed at Kannala is the lifeline for these lakes. It is due to the consumption of holy water of Godavari and Vageeshwari, the people of Manthani are intellectually bright and physically strong (Brain and Brawn).

It used to rain heavily in Manthani. As a child I loved getting drenched in rain, swimming in lakes and bathing in the river Godavari. It was my mother who taught me swimming, besides hymns and other sacred recitations. (In those days when women did not swim, my mother not only swam but also encouraged young girls to learn swimming.) In this way my love for water began at quite an early age.

Godavari was commonly referred to as ‘Ganga’. Expressions like “going to Ganga”, “the way to Ganga”, “Ganga water”, “Ganga temple” and the like were regularly used. For the child in me this river Godavari was itself the Ganges. With age, I grew up to learn that this river Godavari is also known as Gautami and the Ganges I heard was the river that originated in the Himalayas. This meant there are two Gangas – Bhagirati Ganga (river brought to earth by king Bhagirat) and Gautami Ganga (river brought to earth by Maharshi Gautama). Sage Bhagirata through penance appeased Lord Shiva and pleaded with him to send Ganga to earth so that he could wash off the ashes of his forefathers, while Maharshi Gautama on having pleased Lord Shiva by his severe penance requested him to send Ganga to earth to relieve him of his sin (Gohatya). In addition to the mythological reference to the evolution of these rivers, I also kept abreast of the geological information of these. Then it became clear to me why Godavari was also called ‘Vridha Godavari.’

Initially earth was a super continent (Pangea), which gradually split into two different land masses Eurasia (Angara) and the Southern land mass (Gondwana). Northern India was

part of Eurasia. The present mountains or rivers did not exist then. On the contrary, the southern land mass already had formations of mountains and rivers and also river Godavari. Later, Eurasia and the Indian sub-continent moved closer and closer. Indian plate moved north, then the collision happened and this uplifted the highest and the youngest ranges (the Himalayan ranges) on the earth. With this came rivers including the Ganga, unlike the Godavari which was already present much much before. This study of science, yet in another way proves that the river Gautami Godavari is older than the Ganges.

There are many reasons and instances as to why I have always been fascinated by the river Godavari since my younger days. First, the beauty and majesty of the river attracted me quite naturally. Second, I was inspired by the story of how the great poet Potana when meditated in 'Ganga Godavari' Lord Sri Rama appeared before him and inspired him to write 'Bhagavatam'. This story was narrated to me by my mother. Third, when I visited Triambak, Nasik and Panchavati as a young boy I was captured by its exquisiteness. Then, it was my first personal experience which confirmed the divineness of the place and the temple on the bank of the river Godavari near Manthani.

I was in the fourth class. I was very weak in the mathematics subject, so poor that even getting pass marks was impossible. One day my father, Ramanna garu summoned me and told that seeking the blessings of Goddess Saraswati is essential to become learned. Therefore, he asked me to pray the Goddess. My mother Sitamma taught me the Saraswati mantra written by Maha Kavi Potana (Talli ninnu dalenchi...). For me Sarawati meant the Goddess residing in the temple on the bank of the river Godavari in Manthani. I went there and prayed whole-heartedly. I pleaded her to extend her grace on me so that I could fare well in maths. I went to the river Godavari and repeated my prayers. Soon I was showered with their blessings.

This came in the form of my maths teacher Sri Lakshmi Kantam garu, in my fifth standard. He closely observed me and even slapped me one day. This was the turning point. It brought about a miraculous improvement in my performance in the subject and I excelled throughout. This further strengthened my bond with the Goddess Vidya Saraswati and the river Godavari. Her blessings made me competent and helped me to win laurels and scale great heights in my life. Today, people with reverence address me as 'Guruji', 'Brahmaparayana', 'Maharshi' and many more such titles.

If the above mentioned incidents strengthened my belief of the divine presence in the temple and the Godavari, there is another reality which actually made me experience and witness the touch of the divine. I was a good engineer and my expertise in management fetched responsible positions in VOLTAS and AGFA. My success took me to Baroda where I started my own companies first PROCON and later PRISM. All wasn't well after two years, since the P.C. (computers) captured the market and we began incurring heavy losses in PRISM. It was the most difficult period of my life. The company floundered and I got the first taste of failure. I came to Manthani. One morning, Sujanaji, my cousin brother Sri Pangunuri Ramanna, my sister-in-law Smt Pramamma went to the river Godavari to have a bath. While bathing with the hope that some path will soon take me out of the tough time, I asked my brother if I could get an idol from the old Pratap Rudra temple. Surprisingly at that very moment my cousin exclaimed he felt something near his feet. He pulled out two Shiva lingas on a single pedestal like the Kaleshwara-Mukteshwara in Kaleshwaram. He placed them in my hands.

It was a fantastic experience and I had touched another dimension. I felt the divine and the message. I had immense faith that all my hardships will soon come to an end. My

realization got reconfirmed for a second time, when on the same afternoon my brother-in-law Sri Gopal Krishna placed in my hands a copy of “Gita Makarandam” written by Sri Vidya Prakashananda Giri Swamy on our visit to my in-laws house in Kottapalli. My journey of spiritual consciousness began from that moment onwards. The ‘18 days Gita Yoga’ which I initiated and did on the bank of the river Godavari transformed me further. All problems solved, a new energy and vision came in along with multiple successes.

During these thirty years of my life in Baroda, I was happy to keenly observe the systems, customs and religious fervor of the Gujaratis. Just as in Andhra Pradesh there are sacred rivers Krishna and Godavari, in Gujarat Narmada and Tapi are the most sacred rivers. A good number of people and devotees take up parikrama of river Narmada which flows in the states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. This reminded me of my grandmother, Gattu Annama who undertook Godavari parikrama along with few others on foot 70 years back (even before I was born). It took them six months to complete the parikrama. In Andhra not many venture out on Godavari parikrama, unlike the people in Gujarat who set out on Narmada parikrama quite often. Inspired by the Gujaratis I decided to take up this less common path and make a difference. I thought my personal experience would enable me to provide relevant and necessary information to others who wish to take up Gautami Godavari parikrama in future.

After three years of thorough study and gathering of information from various quarters, finally Sujanaji and I in the company of Hasmukh Upadhaya, Manohar Singh Rathod and Lalji commenced our Gautami Ganga Godavari Parikrama on 8th February, 2008 and returned on 25th February, 2008. We are very thankful to our dear Mr. Dipesh Shroff for arranging Innova for us. With the grace of the divine, blessings of our

parents, good wishes of our near and dear and the co-operation of people all through, we completed Gautami Ganga Godavari Parikrama in 18 days.

We had been to many places both in India and abroad, but this experience is the most different one – the various forms of darshan of Gautami filled us with indescribable flow of Supreme and Supra consciousness. Our salutations to the Divine Mother!

This book “Gautami Darshan” is a presentation made to all those who would want to have similar experience.

Wish you all happy darshan of Gautami Ganga Godavari.

In your service....
Sujana-Narayana

CHAPTER – 2

PILGRIMAGE

Embarking on a journey for pleasure, adventure, in pursuit of truth and happiness, solace, to discover oneself (inner self) and to understand our union with God, etc., has always been a powerful motive and reason for people to visit mountains, rivers, sacred places and other places of interest. In synchrony with purpose, time and availability of other predominant resources the destination is determined.

India being a vast land with diverse culture in terms of customs, traditions and practices is valued for being a confluence of different religions. As a home to innumerable temples, mosques, churches it has numerous pilgrimage centers which have been attracting the attention of many pilgrims across the world since ages.

Great seers, seekers, wanderers and people with austerity have added many dimensions to the word ‘pilgrimage’ (theertha). Commonly understood as ‘a holy place’ or ‘a sacred place’, it has several interpretations such as – a place which directs one’s numen spirit towards a divine goal, a path to ablution and liberation, a place where one’s sins are redeemed, a crossing that takes you to the other side of the materialistic world, a renunciation, a yagna, a source, an answer to a situation, a righteous path, a spiritual path, a philosophy, a form of truth, a fulcrum to merge with the Supreme, a leader, a teacher, a revered Brahmin, a teaching, a ritual, a shastra, an advice, an example, an offering, etc.,. Hence, pilgrimage is a spiritual journey, a travel, a walk, a wander; moving forward on a virtuous path with internal and external purity, and with a supple and modest mind. In other words, it means a pious journey, a purifying journey. Meeting renowned men, learned people, sadhus and

several other inspiring people help us to progressively climb the heights to enlightenment.

In **Padmapurana** there are quite a number of references to pilgrims and pilgrimages. It cites some wonderful examples on how a pilgrim when associates himself with holy men (sadhus) experiences the divine spirit and attains 'Him'.

1. *valeepalita dehova, yauvanena anvitoopivaa,
gnyatvaa mrutyu manisteeryam harim sharanam aavrajat*
(Padma pu. 19-10)

Body ripens when
Youthfulness disappears when
Unsurpassable is death is realized when
Seek shelter in the Lord then.

2. *Tat keertane tat shravane, vandane tasya poojane
matireva prakartvyaa nanyatra vanitaadishu*
(Padma pu. 19-11)

In hearing and singing the hymns of the Lord
In obeisance, in worship of the Lord
Your mind steadfast must be
In the worldly comforts let not it be.

3. *Sarvam nashwaramaalkya kshana sthaya sukha dukhadam
Janma mrutyu jaraateetam bhakti vallabham achyutam*
(Padma pu. 19-12)

When thoughts come that all will be doomed
Realizes one when happiness and distress only for a moment looms
Then seek refuge in the eternally high Lord of devotion
Who is beyond birth and death implication.

4. *Sa harir gnaayate sadhu sangamaat paapavarjitaat
Yeshaam krupaatah purushaa bhavantya sukha varjitaa*
(Padma pu. 19-14)

In the knowledge of the divine One is when
In the company of devout sadhus is one when
In the deliverance of sins one is when
In the blessings of sadhus one is when
Free from all grief that one will be then.

5. *Te saadhavah shantaraagaah kaama lobha vivarjitaah
Bruvanti yanmaaharaaja tatsansaara nivartakam
Teertheshu labhyate sadhu Raamachandra paraayanah
Yaddarshanam nrunanaam paaparaashi daahoshushukshanih
(Padma.pu 19-15)*

Those sadhus are at peace and are away from lust and greed
With their teachings one transcends the world, indeed!
In holy places you find them worshipping Rama with devotion
In darshan of such sadhus one's sins burn in conflagration.

6. *Tasmaat teertheshu gantavyam naraih saansaarabheerubhih
Punyodakeshu satatam saadhushreni viraajishu
(Padma pu. 19-16)*

Therefore, to holy places on pilgrimage you go
If the anxious world you want to leave and forgo.
Near the sacred rivers ever you can spot
An assembly of sadhus present in respectful lot.

In this way, the above references from Padmapurana clearly exemplify how by being in association with the sadhus one seeks the blessings of God. Having relinquished the materialistic world and being away from desires, we mostly find them along theerthas offering prayers, doing meditation, interacting with people and providing guidance in spiritual attainments. Therefore, setting oneself on pilgrimage is like obtaining the benevolence of both the sadhus and the Supreme Lord.

CHAPTER - 3

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage (theertha) helps one to transcend. It is a bridge that makes it possible for one to cross the materialistic world to the world of spiritualism. Different kinds of theerthas which help us in achieving THAT are discussed below.

A. Bhakta Theertha

The great Yudhistara said like this to Vidura –

1. *Bhavavidha bhaagavataaha theertha bhutaa swayam vibho
Theerthi kuruvanti theerthani svaantaha sthena gadaabhrutaa.
(Sri Madbhagavatam – 1/13/10)*

O’Vidura! A devotee like you
Is in himself a symbol of theertha true.
Only you who transcends the world can illuminate
A theertha, as in Lord’s grace you are in ever shining state.

B. Guru Theertha

2. *Divaa prakaashakah suryaha shashee raatrau prakaashakah
Gruhaprakaashako deepah tamo naashakarah sadaa
Raatrao diva grahasyaante guruh shishyam sadaivahi
Aagnaanaakhyam tamastasya guruh sarvam pranaashayet
Tasmaad guruh param theertha shishyaanaam avaneepathe.
(Padma pu. 85/12-14)*

During the day the sun shines bright
At night the moon shines with light.
The lamp in the house shines bright
Both, at day and night fill the house with light.
Likewise, a teacher fills knowledge light in a student’s heart
To drive away darkness and make him shinningly smart.
Therefore, O’ king for every student you see

A teacher is himself a great theertha you see.

C. Maata Theertha

D. Pitha Theertha

3. *Naasthi maatrusamam theertham putraanaamcha pituhu samam
Taaranaaya hitayaiva ihaivacha paratracha
Vaiderapi kim vipra pitaa yena na pujitaha
Maata na pujitaa yena tasya vedaa nirarthakaah
Esha putrasya vai dharmasthathaa theertha niresviha
Esha putrasya vai mokshasthathaa janmaphalam shubham.
(Padma pu. 63/14,19,21)*

There is no theertha like that of a mother
There is no theertha for a son like his father
For getting across (transcending) and for one's own benefit
Either here or there this best befits.
What can Vedas do to the one who doesn't worship his father
Vedas are a waste for one who doesn't worship his mother.
Serving mother and father is dharma and theertha in itself,
It is a blessing of good birth and salvation of self.

E. Pati Theertha

4. *Savyam paadam svabharthuscha prayaagam viddhi sattama
Vaamanacha pushkaram tasya yaa naari parikalpayet
Tasya paadodaka snaanaat tatpunyam pariyaayate
Prayaaga pushkara samam snaanam strinaam na sanshayaa
Sarva theertha mayo bharthaa sarva punyamayaa patihi.*

Her dear husband is Prayaga for a devoted wife
Only he is the pushkar for a loving wife.
Together with her husband the wife shines as a pair
Just like going on yatra to Prayaga and its pushkar fair
Life partner is all-in-one theertha symbol
For, he is a husband who is all virtuous and responsible.

F. Patni Theertha

5. *Sadaachaara paraa bhavyaa dharma saadhana tatparaa
Pativratarataa nityam sarvadaa gnana vatsalaa
Evamgunaa bhaved bharya yasya punya mahaasati
Tasya gehe sadaa devaah tishtanti cha mahaujasaa
Pitaro gehamadyasthaa shreyo vaanchanti tasya cha
Gangaadyaah saritaaha punyaah sagarastatra naanyathaa
Punyaa sati yasya gehe vartate satya tatparaa
Tatra yagnaascha gaavascha rushyastatra naanyathaa
Tatra sarvani theerthani punyani vividhaanicha
Naasti bhaarya samam theertham naasti bhaarya samam sukham
Naasti bhaarya samam punyam taaranaya hitaayacha.*

A woman ever contributing and in divine service she is
At all times like a true partner with husband she is.
With tender knowledge and splendor dedication she is
A woman with elegant qualities a pious wife she is.
Her household Gods dwell in her house with all brightness
Extending blessing spirits of forefathers reside in all pleasantness.
Godavari, Ganga, other sacred rivers and oceans
Too come to stay in sublimation.
In the house of that magnificent and truthful lady
Even yagnas, cows and rishis shine greatly.
There is no theertha like a wife; there is no happiness like a wife,
There is no virtue like a wife; there is no transcendence without wife.

CHAPTER - 4

MIND THEERTHA AND ITS GREATNESS

The Skanda Purana presents vividly and beautifully some aspects of Mind theertha and its greatness. Let us journey down the memory lane to enjoy with in-joy the essence of mind (manasa) theertha.

1. Truthfulness is theertha, forgiveness is theertha
Controlling one's five senses is theertha
Kindness towards all is theertha
To be righteous is yet again a theertha.
2. Charity is theertha, austerities is theertha
The various ways of happiness is theertha
Living a life of celibacy is a great theertha
Endearing words and language is also a theertha.
3. Knowledge is theertha, steadiness is theertha
Penance is a great precept of theertha
Of all theerthas cleanliness is the best theertha
A pure mind is the most excellent theertha.
4. Wetting your body with water
Cannot be treated as bath or shower
True bath is bathing in kindness
With a pure mind which is full of piousness.
5. He who is miser and slanderous
Addicted, wicked and pompous
Cannot wash off his stains and sins
Even if in all theerthas he bathes in.
6. By rinsing the body of all impurities
Man does not become a person with purities
Only when malice is removed from the mind
Boundless pureness he shall find.

7. They are born there, they die there
Creatures under water are always there
Yet, unless the dirt in their mind is washed
Attaining the state of supreme joy is squashed.
8. One who craves for pleasures always
Has an impure mind, so the wise one says
From cravings remains detached who
For purity he is quoted as an example true.
9. Whose intellect, mind and heart is full of wickedness
Taking bath in a theertha doesn't fill him with sacredness
Even if he takes dip in water a thousand times
His mind will be impure and not divine.
10. Donating, performing yagnas and doing penance is purification
Also, doing service at theertha and listening to shastras with attention
But, if the mind lacks a sense of purity
It is not a theertha, but an unclean city.
11. In whom controlled senses are in place
And that man lives in whichever place
Then and there it becomes that place
A Naimisha, a Pushkara, and all theerthas in one place.
12. Due to water like flow of complete wisdom and meditation
The impurities of Raga and Dvesha got ablution.
In the mind theertha whoever takes bath
Reaches zenith through the supreme path.

CHAPTER – 5

ELIGIBILITY FOR FRUITS OF THEERTHAS

How can one become eligible for obtaining the fruits of theerthas is well described in the Skanda Purana.

1. Hands and feet under control keeps who
And whose mind is in harmony too
Educated, remembered and lauded is who
Begets the fruits of theertha for sure.
2. Craves not for the results of his action who
With whatever comes he is satisfied too
Free from all ego is who
Begets the fruits of theertha for sure.
3. Unboastful and not arrogant is who
Can control diet and senses too
From all impurities free is who
Begets the fruits of theertha for sure.
4. Angerless and soft is who
Is truthful and stable too
All elements within self sees who
Begets the fruits of theertha for sure.
5. He who follows a theertha courageously
He who is dedicated and treats all equally
He becomes free from all impurities
But much more gets one who does good deeds.
6. Undedicated, sinful and atheist is who
Irresolute and sincere only in words is who
These five traits possesses who
Begets not the fruits of theerta for sure.

7. Who goes to theertha after committing sins
He only washes away his earlier sins
If he who goes to theertha is a pure soul
Deserving fruits he shall get in whole.
8. Having won over desires, anger and greed
He when on theertha yatra treads
What all is present he gets everything
Even that what in this world is missing.
9. He who sets on a theertha destination
With dedication and follows rules as mentioned
And he who has crossed all duality
Begets Supreme bliss, joy and serenity.
10. In Ganga theertha fishes live in ample
Birds fly in and across the temple
Since feelings and wisdom have not they
Fruits of theertha and temple come not their way
He whose lotus heart is full of feelings and devotion
Experiences the oneness of theerthas and gets salvation.

CHAPTER - 6

GAUTAMA MAHARSHI – GAUTAMI

Of all the Gautamas, Gautama Maharshi as one among the Saptarishis (the seven sages of the Manvantara) is the most renowned one. He is well known not only for being the progenitor of the Gautama gotra (as an originator of a particular lineage), but also for the works ‘Gautama Dharmasastras’ and ‘Gautama Nyayasutras’, which he had authored.

There are many references to him in the Vedas, Brahamanas, Upanishads, and even in the Ramayana. In the Ramayana, he is the most celebrated husband of Ahalya. In the Vedas, Brahamanas and Upanishads, names such as Nodha Gautama, Radha Gautama, Gaatri Gautama, Sumanta Gautama, Babhrava Gautama, Shankara Gautama, Nachiketa Gautama, and Vaamadeva Gautama are mentioned. This illustrates how Gautama Maharshi and his lineage have contributed to our culture.

A legend says, Gautama Maharshi who belonged to the class of Saptarishis did a penance on the hills of Brahmagiri, a part of the Satmala mountain range to the west of the Western Ghats, to invoke rain. For a long period (12 years) the place was severely affected by famine. There was not enough water to sustain even a green leaf, let alone higher forms of life. All the Munis (sages), people, even birds and animals started leaving the place. He meditated on Varuna Deva (God of Rain) and Vayu Deva (God of Wind) for six months. Varuna Deva appeared before him and offered him a boon. He blessed him with a well of inexhaustible water in his hermitage (ashram). With the help of water drawn from that well Gautama Maharshi began to cultivate the land and grow grains to suffice the needs of sages and other people in the ashram. Because of the miraculous water, on the very day the seeds were sowed, the crops were produced.

As the word spread, many more rishis thronged the place and sought shelter in Gautama Maharshi's ashram. Normalcy was thus restored. There was never a drought again.

In Brahmapurana there is an interesting narration about Gautami Ganga and Bhagirati Ganga. It says, Lord Brahma himself came to solemnize the wedding of Lord Shiva and Parvati. While Parvati as a bride was being brought to the dais, Lord Brahma caught a glimpse of Parvati's little toe and felt infatuated. On having realized his own impurity, Brahma exited the dais to leave. But the ever merciful Lord Shiva stopped him. To redeem him of his sin and make him chaste once again, Lord Shiva made a kamandalam (a bowl) using all essence of the elements of the earth. Likewise, from all the elements of water collected, he extracted the most refined and pure water and filled it in the kamandalam and gave it to Brahma. Lord Brahma used the water to purify himself. He became sanctified. The kamandalam remained with him. The significance of this water given to Lord Brahma finds a mention later in the episode of Vamana and Bali Chakravarti.

Bali Chakravarti offered Vamana a gift of land that could be covered by three steps. Vamana expanded his form. With his first step he covered the entire earth. His second step moved towards the Brahmaloaka (above heaven) to cover it. Lord Brahma began to think how he should pay respects and honour his heavenly father Lord Vishnu (in Vamana avatar) who has come to his abode. He used the water in the kamandalam to wash the foot of his father. This pious water that flowed from the washed foot of Lord Vishnu (Hari) divided into four streams. Lord Shiva bore one stream in his matted locks (jataajuta), the second was refilled by Lord Brahma in his kamandalam, the third one was received by Lord Vishnu and taken to his world, Vaikuntam and the fourth stream was received by Gods, Forefathers, and the Lords of eight directions and taken to heavenly sky.

The stream of water that flowed from the matted locks of Lord Shiva came to be known as Ganga. Lord Shiva became more inclined towards Ganga bound in his locks. He began ignoring his consort Parvati. Ganga became a formidable competitor to Parvati. Unable to withstand the indifference towards her by her husband Lord Shiva, Parvati began to think as to how Ganga could be driven away from him. She discussed this matter with her sons Ganesha and Karthika and her maid Jaya. Ganesha the intelligent and the knowledgeable one thought for a second and came up with a brilliant idea. He told his mother Parvati that only Gautama Maharshi could help them. Taking the form of a Brahmin Ganesha went to Brahmagiri along with Karthika and Jaya and lived in the hermitage of Gautama.

As advised by Ganesha, Jaya took the form of a cow. One day on seeing the cow eating paddy Gautama tried to ward it away with a darbha grass (a strand of straw). By the yogic power of Gautami Maharshi the grass blade turned into a shining weapon and struck the cow. The cow collapsed and fell dead. This news upset the rishis and they refused to luncheon at his ashram and even started to leave. Gautama pleaded the rishis to stay and requested Dvija (Ganesha in form of a Brahmin) to show a way out of this sin of 'Gohatya.' Ganesha with a glint in his eyes and a spark on his face advised Gautama to approach Lord Shiva and request him to release Ganga from his locks and send her down to Brahmagiri. Only the pure water of Ganga would purify him, the land and all the people there. Moreover, the dead cow's body purified with the holy water of the Ganga would help him in the redemption of his sin. Gautama did rigorous penance. Lord Shiva was pleased by his worship, granted his wish and released Ganga from his locks. Ganga appeared on Brahmagiri and flowed down. Since the Ganga was brought down by Gautama, it came to be called Gautami here. It is also named Godavari as it relieved Gautama Maharshi of his sin (gohatya).

Parvati rejoiced. Later in order to immerse the ashes of his forefathers in the Ganga, king Bhagirata performed a great penance to appease Lord Shiva. Impressed by his devotion Lord Shiva granted his wish and sent Ganga to the earth. This Ganga is known as Bhagirati Ganga. This is how Gautami Ganga as Gautami and Bhagirati Ganga as Jhanavi came into existence in India. Gautama Maharshi blessed us not only with the flow of his Dharmasastras and Nyayasutras, but also with the river Godavari. We pledge our salutations to him.

CHAPTER – 7

GODAVARI

Water being the chief source of all the five elements it is worshipped and revered as the most important one. It is not only a source of life, nourishment and enrichment but also a substantive entity for purification and attainment. Hence, it isn't surprising that due to the unsurpassable stratum water holds, especially water of sacred rivers, names of holy rivers are invoked during any auspicious and ritualistic worship or sacred bath to a deity. The invocation in 'Mangalashatakam' runs as follows:-

*Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada,
Krishna, Bhimarathi cha, Phalgu, Sarayu, Srigandakee, Gomati,
Cavery, Kapila, Prayaga, Viraja, Vetravati,
Ityadaayo nadya Sri Hari pada punkajabhavam kurvantu sada mangalam.*

[Ganga, Sindhu, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Krishna, Bhimarathi, Phalgu, Sarayu, Srigandakee, Gomati, Cavery, Kapila, Prayaga, Viraja, Vetravati water that flows from the feet of Lord Vishnu (Hari) are always auspicious and blessed.]

This is how a devout and orthodox hindu/priest invokes the sacred rivers and Godavari is one of them.

While the Himalayas on the top like a crown adorn our country, the rivers in the north add grandeur like ornaments worn around the neck; the Godavari River like a waist band beautifies our country. It being a major waterway in central India, it originates in the Western Ghats near Triambakeshwar in Nasik district of the Maharashtra state. Born at a height of 3500 ft on Brahmagiri hill it flows across the Deccan Plateau to finally converge with the sea in the east. It travels 1465 kms (910 miles)

to unite with the Bay of Bengal.

The river Godavari is said to be the daughter of Maharashtra, a child reared by Chattisgarh, the only queen of Telangana region and the mother of coastal Andhra. It has a Catchment Area of 1,21,000 sq miles which includes the areas in the states of Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. This constitutes about 9.5% area of the country. The catchment area in Maharashtra is about 58,764 sq miles, Chattisgarh 25,195 sq miles, Karnataka 1,701 sq miles, Andhra Pradesh 28,263 sq miles and in Orissa it is 6,854 sq miles. The catchment area of Godavari is indeed very vast.

The Andhra region in the state of Andhra Pradesh is the highest recipient of Godavari water. The river meanders through Nasik, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Beed, Parbhani and Nanded in Maharashtra, passes through Nizambad, Adilabad and Karimnagar districts in Andhra Pradesh, and re-enters Maharashtra at Gadchiroli. In Chattisgarh it touches Dantevada district and once again in Andhra Pradesh it navigates through the districts of Warangal, Khammam, West Godavari and East Godavari. It then divides itself into two branches namely Gautami Godavari and Vasishta Godavari. While the Gautami Godavari merges with the sea at Yanaam (Pondichery administered region), the Vasishta Godavari meets the sea at Narsapur. It is said that the Godavari river branches out into seven small streams before it finally joins the Bay of Bengal.

In India the river traverses through 4 states and 16 districts. These regions are also called Godavari valley region. This region consists of black soil, red soil, lateritic soil, alluvium soil, mixed soil, salt and alkaline. The Godavari basin includes 14 major towns (population over one lakh). The density of population in these basins is about 195 people per sq km. Town growth rate is 33%, reserved land 4%, wet land 1%, dry land 43%, forests

7%, agricultural land 63%, cultivatable land 27%, improvised land 7%, bushes and shrubs 2%, grasslands 20%, and barren land is 0%. It also has 3 huge lakes.

Pravara, Purna, Manjira, Kadem, Vageeshwari, Maneru, Pranahita, Indravati, Kinerasani and Sabari are the important rivers which discharge an enormous volume of water into the Godavari system. Many more rivers, streams and rivulets unite with the Godavari.

The places inhabited by people along the Godavari are Triambak, Nasik, Panchavati, Shiridi, Kopergaon, Nevasa, Paithan, Majalgaon, Patri, Parbhani, Gangakhed, Nanded, Biloli, Basar, Kandukurti, Dharmapuri, Lakshettipeta, Mancherial, Ramagundum, Godavarikhani, Gunjapadugu, Manthani, Chennur, Kaleswaram, Sirivencha, Venkatapuram, Cherla, Burgumpadu, Bhadrachalam, Kukunooru, Koti, Papikondalu, Kovvuru, Rajamundry, Tanuku, Yanaam, Mummidivaram, Amalapuram, Rajolu, Antarvedi and Narsapur.

The Godavari river is a major waterway. Its annual average water flow before it joins the sea at Dhavaleshwaram went upto 85,000 cc (cubic meters) i.e., 30 lakh cubicle per second. The Godavari basin can produce about 5,091 mega watts of electricity.

On the river Godavari several multi-purpose projects have been constructed at Gangapur in Nasik district, Paithan in Aurangabad district and Sriram Sagar in Karimnagar district. In addition, a good number of dams have been built on various tributaries of Godavari. These multi-purpose projects and dams have been a constant source of irrigation and power supply. An important mega thermal power project located at Ramagundam is built on the banks of the river Godavari.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say all regions along

the Godavari are wealth centers for industries, agriculture, hydro and thermal power, sugar, paper and other industries. It is another name of quantum prosperity.

GODAVARI MAHATMAYA SANGRAHAM
(*Grasping the Greatness of Godavari*)
BRAHMAPURANA - 77th Chapter

1. *Sri Triambako uvachah:*
2. *Iyanthu gautami vatsa yatrakvaapi mamaajnyaa (77.6)*
3. *Sarveshaam sarvadaa nrunnaam snaanaan mukti pradaasyati
Kinchitkaale punyatamam kinchitheertham suraagame (77.7)*
4. *Sarvesham sarvadaa theertham gautami naatra sanshayah
Trisrah kotyarthakoti cha yojanaanaam shatadvaye (77.8)*
5. *Theerthani munishaardhuula sambhavishyanti Gautama
Iyam maaheshvari gangaa gautami vaishnaviticha (77.9)*
6. *Braahmi Godavari Nandaa Sunandaa Kaamadaaini
Brahmatejah samaanitaa sarvapaapa pranaashini (77.10)*
7. *Smaranaadevaa paashau dahimtri mama sadaa priyaa
Panchaanaamapi bhutaa naamaapah shreshhtvamaagataah (77.11)*
8. *Tatraapi theertha bhutaastu tasmaadaapah pariaah smrutaah
Taasaam Bhagirathee shreshhtaa taabhyopi Gautami tadhaa (77.12)*
9. *Aneetaa sajataa gangaa asyaa naanyaachhu bhaavaham
Swarge bhuvitalevaapi theertham sarvaardhatam mune (77.13)*

This is what Lord Triambak told Gautama Maharshi –

O' Son! He shall seek liberation who takes my permission and bathes anywhere in Gautami. Some rivers become sacred only at a particular period of time when the celestial beings come

and take bath in them. [77-6/7] But, Gautami Godavari at all times and for all people is a holy place.

O' Great Muni! The sacred spot (field) which extends up to three crores, fifty lakhs, two hundred yojanas (8/10 miles) has many pilgrimage centers and many more will come into existence. [77-8/9]

Godavari is also known as Maheshwari, Ganga, Gautami, Vaishnavi, Brahmi, Nanda, Sunanda and Kamadayini. Godavari brought to earth with the luster of Brahma can destroy all kinds of sins. [77-9/10]

Among the five elements Water is the chief. Among waters the water of theerthas (sacred places) is most excellent, among these sacred places of water Bhagirati is the most supreme, Gautami Gadavari is even more virtuous than Bhagirati. [77-11/12]

O' Muni! All theerthas (places of pilgrimage) on heaven, earth and nether fulfill desires. Nevertheless, there is no other theertha that is more auspicious than Gautami, which has been brought down along the matted locks (of Shiva). [77-13]

Gautami Godavari, in this way, is deemed to be the most supreme and sacred river. It is the mother of all rivers.

GODAVARI MAHIMA

- 1. Amrutam jaahnavi toyam amrutam swarnamuchyate
Amrutam gobhavamcha aajyamamrutam soma evacha.
Gangayaa vaarinnaajyena hirannyena tadhaivacha
Sarvey bhyopy adhikam divyamamrutam gautami jalam.
(Brahma pu.133/13-17)*

Water of Ganga is nectar, and nectar is gold too
Products of cow are nectar, nectar is ghee and soma juice too.

More than Ganga, gold, products of cow, ghee and soma juice
And of all other things, Gautami water is divine nectar and pure.

2. *Tatoo godavari praapya nitya siddha nishevitam*
Rajasuuya mavaapnoti vaayulokam cha gachhati.
(M.B.III-75/33)

Godavari which is always served by sages and saints
With its grace you too shall surely attain
The fruits of performing Rajasuya yagna just as fair
And rise to the divine world of wind and air.

3. *Sapta godavareem snaatvaa niyato niyataashana*
Mahaapunya mavaapnoti devalokam cha gachhati.
(M.B.III.85/43-Padma.pu.39/41)

Takes bath in sapta Godavari who
And principled in taking food daily is who
Great blessings will be showered on him
And the divine world will be attained by him.



Smt. Sujanadeviji on the bank of lake built on Vaitharani river on the western side of Brahmagiri hill.

CHAPTER – 8

GAUTAMI – VAITARANI

From the hill of Brahmagiri the Godavari glides down through Gangadwar, it emanates at kushavatra in Trimbak in all gladness. Then it appears directly in the Shiva lingam (in a bowl form) and takes the form of a small pond near the Triambakeshwara temple. As it heads towards Panchavati and Nasik it forms a big river joined by river Kashyapi near Gangapur.

Brahmagiri hill is at about 3500 ft on the top of the Western Ghats. This mountain range which extends from the Arabian ocean in the west to Kasara Ghat and other smaller ghats, stands straight and tall reaching the sky. The states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra lay to the east of Brahmagiri. Hence, the Godavari river which flows through these states is like the flow of nectar.

To the west of Brahmagiri another river originates there. This river is called Vaitarani. In Puranas Vaitarani (the river of fire) is the name of the river that is on the way to hell. But, this river flows towards the city of Mumbai. Unlike the paradoxical river in the hell, this river is a boon to Mumbai. As sacred as its sister Godavari, Vaitarani is a source of life to the people of Mumbai and one of the main supplier of drinking water to the city.

Rivers are life givers and life savers, a great hope, an inspiration and a sustaining source to any state or place they flow. One river of consciousness at Brahmagiri divides into two, and slips down to form Godavari and Vaitarani, two rivers of bounteousness.

As a twin sister of Gautami
For Mumbai and its people it is Vaitarini
Unlike the river on the way to hell
It is like Gautama's prosperity well.



Mahantas taking holy dip in Rama kundam at Nasik

CHAPTER - 9

GODAVARI PUSHKAR

The term pushkara is used in connection with purification of the sacred rivers of India. While the rivers are sacred all the time, there is a special time when they are energized and spiritualized with divine energy. There are twelve sacred rivers in India – Ganga, Narmada, Saraswati, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Tamrapani, Sindhu, Bhadra, Bhimavati and Pranahita which become purified and energized once in every twelve years.

Astronomically, of all the nine planets, Guru (Bhrihaspati /Jupiter) is said to be the most significant one. It is believed that the grace of the Guru is essential to cleanse one's sins and for accomplishment of one's goals in life. It takes 12 years for Jupiter to revolve around the sun. During the 12 years of its journey, it transits in each of the 12 Rasis (zodiac signs).

Rashi	River
Mesha	Ganga
Vrishibha	Narmada
Mithuna	Saraswati
Kartaka	Yamuna
Simha	Godavari
Kanya	Krishna
Tula	Kaveri
Vrishchika	Tamrapani
Dhanus	Sindhu
Makara	Bhadra
Kumbha	Bhimavati
Mina	Pranahita

There is some significance in this co-relation between the rasi and the river. Whichever house the Guru (Jupiter)

occupies for a year, that particular river gets sanctified. According to the Skanda Purana during this period congregation of all deities with the 'rishis' (holy men) enter the particular river for a holy dip. Thence for a year, the river transforms into a pious river. It is a belief that the rituals like 'snana' (bath), 'dana' (charity), 'japa' (recitation), 'archana' (worship) and 'dhyana' (meditation), performed during Pushkaram bless the people in every sphere of their lives.

Pushkaram is a holy happening once in every 12 years at each of the 12 major rivers of India, the Godavari being one among them. Every 12th year Jupiter's entry into the constellation Leo (Simha rasi) marks the Pushkaram for Godavari. Many sadhus, saints, noble men, digambara (naked) sadhus and people from all walks of life come in large number to take a holy dip in it. Though all the theerthas along Godavari become sanctified during the pushkar year, the one at Triambak and Nasik become most important.

It would be interesting to know hundreds of years ago Maharashtra was under the rule of Peshwa. Once during pushkar an altercation took place between mahantas (noble men) and digambar sadhus (naked sadhus) on the issue as to who would take bath in the sacred river first. This led to stampede and three hundred sadhus and mahantas were said to have died. Then it was decided by the Peshawa government that mahantas would take bath in Rama kundam at Nasik, while the sadhus (naked) would go to Kushavarta at Triumbakeshwar.

Today, all kinds of people come together to enjoy the festivity and the spirit of oneness and sacredness to various bathing ghats (as beautifully shown in the picture). We may not be fortunate to visit Triambakeshwar or Nasik for every pushkar, what best we can do is to go to a place nearby and have an all inspiring and illuminating experience.

CHAPTER – 10

GODAVARI PARIKRAMA – AN ORDINANCE

(SKANDA PURANA – 18th CHAPTER)

1. *Sri Skanda uvacha:*

*Tripuraantaka! Vishvaatman! Rahasyam shraavitam tvayaa
Tadhaa truptim nagachhami hitam kathaya tattvataha*

(O'Tripururantka! Vishvatma! You just told me the secret, still I'm not content. Kindly tell me about that which is more befitting and good.)

2. *Sri Shiva uvacha:*

*Ittham yaatraa vidhim krutva tadantetu pradakshinaam
Krutva phalam prapnoti shrutyuktum naatra sanshayahah*

(When one sets on Gautami Ganga parikrama after following thoroughly all the rules, he/she shall yield fruits as mentioned in the Vedas. There is no doubt about it.)

3. *Sri Skanda uvacha:*

*Katham saa kriyate taata gangaayaastu pradakshinaa
Samudrantaa mahaadeva! Bruhi me vanchitam prada*

(O' Father Mahadeva! How can one take up parikrama of Gautami Ganga which ends in the sea. Please narrate and fulfill my desire.)

4. *Sri Shiva uvacha:*

*Senaani! Shrunume vaakyam yasya shaktirmahattaraa
Tenasaadhya samudraanta Godavari pradakshinaa*

(O'Warrior! Listen to the powerful words. This will make it possible for you to do Godavari parikrama up to the sea.)

5. *Moolasthanam samaarabhya moolasthanane samaapayet
Yadvaayataha samaarbdha tatraiva tu samaapanam*

(One must start from the first point (place of origin) and end at that original point. Or else from wherever you begin your journey you must end there.)

6. *Tasyaah prakaaram vakshyaami shrunu shanmukha! saadaram
Pratyaham pratha rutthaya snaanam krutvaa tadambhasaa*

(I will tell you the way of doing parikrama. O' Shanmukha! Listen happily and attentively. Every day early in the morning you must take bath in the holy Godavari.)

7. *Samaapyaa vahsyakamchaiva savyatho maargamaacharet
Madhyaahnetu samutthirya krutvaa madyahneekeem kriyaam*

(After completing the daily morning activities set out on time on the journey with the river Godavari to the right. In the afternoon complete the afternoon activities.)

8. *Saayam sandhyaa tatraiva niyataatmaa charetsadaa
Marge kasyapi nagraahyam turnakaashtaadikam budhaih*

(In the same way complete all your evening activities. On the way, not even a morsel (bite) should be taken by a noble person.)

9. *Pratyaaham pujayeddevim tat kathaa shravanam tadha
Evam putra! Prakuryanti phalam teshaam nashakyate.*

(O' Son! Worship Goddess Godavari daily and listen to stories related to her. The fruits that you shall get therefrom will be unfathomable. It is not possible for anyone to describe it.)

10. *Vaktu maya tatonyena brahmana phaninapichaa
Atah saa dhurlabha loke purva panyena labhyate*

(Not only I , even Brahma or Adishesha cannot tell. Godavari parikrama is very difficult. One's past meritorious works / actions can only make it possible.)

**11. *Prityarhtam te vadishyami bhaktitah shrunusaadaram
Madhyamaa nabhi paryantam uttamaa saagaraavadhih
Kanishtaa kaashyapim yaavat evam saa trividhaamataa***

(I'll tell that which will delight you. Listen with respect and devotion. Parikrama up to the sea is the best, till the centre (navel) is medium and atleast till the Kashyapi river is the least. Mahatmas are of the opinion that there are three ways of doing parikrama.)

Three ways of doing Godavari parikrama are mentioned below:

1. The minimum route – start from Triambakeshwar, cross Kashyapi river to reach Ganga Sagar dam. At Ganga Sagar go to the other side of the Godavari bridge across the river Godavari and then return to Triambak.
2. The medium route – start at Triambakeshwar, travel through Ganga Sagar, Panchavti, Paithan, Nanded, Basara to reach Kaleshwaram. At Kaleshwaram take a boat to Sirivencha and to the point where the rivers Pranahita and Godavari unite. Then go across the river Godavari, visit Kaleshwara–Mukteshwara temple and return to Triambak via Manthani, Gunjapadugu, Sundilla, Dharmapuri, Nanded, Gangakhed, Nevasa, Shirdi and Nasik.
3. The maximum route – start from Triambakeshwar toward north of the river, cover all the pilgrimages on that side and reach Yanaam (where a branch of Godavari flows into the sea). Take a launch to Narsapur (you would be passing through the streams of Godavari opening into the sea). Now from Narsapur return to Triambak after seeing all the pilgrimages to the south of the river.

By the grace of God, blessings of Goddess Ganga Godavari, best wishes of gurus, elders, and probably due to some of our past good deeds Sujanaji, Myself, Hasmukh Upadhya, Rathod and Lalji could successfully complete Godavari Parikrama (the third route) from 8-02-2008 to 25-02-2008. The whole trip was holy, pleasurable, and awe-inspiring. We did it, you too can accomplish it.

Any task taken up with determination and zeal is bound to succeed.

* * *

CHAPTER – 11

GODAVARI PARIKRAMA – LINES AND GUIDELINES

Pilgrimages generally have a religious significance, and anything that is ritualistic or sacred have a set of rules and regulations to be followed. The ‘Dos’ and ‘Donts’ as guidelines listed below would definitely help in successfully taking up the yatra with no tension and only right intention.

Dos

1. It is advisable to travel by car (like Innova or Sumo) or by bus.
2. Start the 18 days yatra/parikrama of the Godavari from Triambakeshwar and end at Triambakeshwar. Ensure that throughout the journey the river Godavari is to your right side and that at no point you cross the river in between. Parikrama should be one full circle and complete. From Triambakeshwar reach Yanaam, take a launch to Narsapur and then return to Triambakeshwar, encircle Brahmagiri and again come back to Triambak. (Along the route visit the river, its tributaries, merger (sangam) points, temples and ghats.)
3. In case going on 18 days parikrama in one stretch is not possible, then choose one, two, three, four, five or six chakra parikrama (refer to Chapter-15 for details) which can be covered in two, three or more days depending upon the chakra parikrama you choose.
4. Before you start the yatra, first take a pious bath in the Godavari and visit a temple (preferably Lord Shiva’s) and seek blessings of God for a hassle free and successful trip.
5. Men should (preferably) tonsure their head and leave a tuft of hair at the base of head.

6. To the extent possible wear white clothes (especially men). Men should have a towel or an angavastram on their shoulder.
7. Carry a kamandalam and a bottle filled with Godavari water. Also carry a staff (stick) of 5 ft long.
8. Use a few drops of Godavari water in the bottle to mix at all points of Godavari along the journey. The remaining part of the bottle should be refilled with Godavari water at that point.
9. Everyday in the morning before you start to continue yatra take a holy dip in the river. In case of any inconvenience, add a few drops of Godavari water from the bottle to the bucket of water and bathe.
10. Godavari parikrama is a tapasya (penance), hence it is required that you take only one meal (sattvic food) in a day, i.e., after completing the days journey. Eating in hotels or anybody's house is prohibited. It is advisable to cook for yourself or eat at ashrams /matts. During the day you can have fruits.
11. Tea/coffee should be taken limitedly – half cup each in the morning and evening. If you can totally avoid it it is better.
12. Seek shelter nearer to the river for retiring at the end of the day (to the extent possible).
13. Dana (donation), dhyana (meditation) and japa (naama smaran) have always been rated as the highest form of worship. This yatra is sacred therefore spend the time in the above mentioned activities in addition to singing bhajans and listening to stories of Godavari and other mythological tales.

14. At various pilgrimage centers along the Godavari you shall come across sadhus, saints and other learned men. Spend time to hear their discourses and seek their blessings.
15. Everyday before you start the parikrama recite “Har, har Gange. Har, har Gautami” and “Jai Gange, Jai Gautami” or just “Godavari Mata Ki Jai.” This should be recited whenever and wherever you come across Godavari or its tributaries.
16. Walk barefoot on approaching the river by leaving your footwear a little behind. (Footwear should be preferably rubber, plastic or canvas slippers / shoes.)
17. Be truthful, honest, dedicated, gentle, peaceful and helpful throughout the trip. Take up the yatra with firm resolution.
18. On the concluding day feed atleast seven Brahmin couples (Saptarishis) with dignity, sincerity, and respect.

Donts

1. Avoid wearing leather slippers or shoes. Instead choose footwear made out of rubber, plastic, canvas or wood.
2. Men must not tonsure their head or shave beard after the commencement of the yatra.
3. Consumption of liquor of any kind, smoking cigarettes, bidis or even taking ghutka or tobacco is strictly prohibited.
4. Should not eat in hotels or anybody’s house; even a morsel at a noble man’s house is not encouraged.
5. Don’t take non-vegetarian food during yatra. Also, avoid eating onion and garlic.
6. Any kind of suddhi kriya should not be done facing the sacred river.

7. Arguments, quarrels, verbal or physical warfare, use of filthy words or language must be avoided.
8. Do not wander recklessly in unknown areas (like forests).

‘All’s well that ends well.’ The above stated guidelines are just a few important ones prescribed in the scriptures. Following them would be auspicious, since the ultimate aim of a pilgrimage is –

***Sarve bhavantu sukhinaha, sarve santu niraamayaha
Sarve bhadrani pashyant, maa kaschit dhuhkhabaag bhaved***

In good health and happiness let all be
Cause no pain to others, all good things you see.

Some Cautions and Precautions

For a smooth and comfortable yatra few suggestions are given below:

1. Less luggage more comfort.
2. Travel kit must include torches, candles, match boxes, bed sheets, foldable mats, a few essential groceries for cooking and milk powder.
3. Maps and route maps of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh must be kept. A diary and a pen to take down important details would be required.
4. Plan your itinerary well in advance by sorting out all details like route plan, places you would pass by and booking of accommodation wherever possible.
5. Godavari parikrama is an experience of a lifetime, therefore carry your camera / handycam and capture the best of your memories.

6. Medicines for headache, stomachache, fever, stomach upset and cold should be carried. Also, keep some bandaids, ointments, balms and sprays for muscular pains.
7. In case you have B.P (blood pressure), sugar, thyroid or any other health problems, you must carry the prescribed medicines. It is advised to consult a doctor before you start yatra.
8. Always carry change for Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes. Getting small change at all places may not be possible.
9. Don't go deep into the forests.
10. Have banners written in English, Hindi and Telugu on your vehicle with all details like the name of the association (sanstha), the place from where the parikrama has commenced, dates of yatra, etc. This will fetch goodwill of all people along the route.
11. Follow instructions given on the road side boards carefully.
12. Don't leave your articles with unknown people.
13. Stay away from people who would try to evoke your sentiments to perform rites in the name of your deceased parents or forefathers and thus extract large sum of money.
14. Avoid Godavari parikrama during the rainy and peak summer season. The most favourable period for Godavari parikrama is any time from October to April.
15. Any time of the year is good, but setting out on a sacred trip on an auspicious day and time during uttarayanam is the best.

CHAPTER - 12

GODAVARI PARIKRAMA – OUR EXPERIENCES

Celebrations came to an end with the end of Godavari Parikrama but the invincible spirit, the blissful journey, the spark on our faces, the zeal in our hearts, the ecstatic mind, the gorgeousness and mystery of nature that unfolded during our 18 days tour and our experiences are overwhelming and profound. Sujanaji, myself, Hasmukh Upadhya, Manohar Singh Rathod and Lalji travelled 4600 kms in the Innova arranged for us with goodwill by our dear Dipesh Shroff.

On the way we came across wonderful landscapes of the river Godavari, its tributaries, mountains, hills, forests, trees, lakes, bridges, birds, animals, farms, sunrise, sunset, the rising moon, the setting moon, temples, deities, pundits, learned men, saints, munis, boatmen, cart pullers, people going to fairs (jattras) and tribal people to list a few. Each of these had volumes to speak, to enlighten and enhance our consciousness.

We shall cherish for long these great experiences – our interaction with Sri Yadavrao Thungar, the President of Jothirlinga Temple Trust at Triambak; the discourse of a pandit of Sri Ganga Godavari Panchakoti Purohita Sangam at Panchavati; the reservoirs and lakes built on the river Godavari at Ganga Sagar, Nath Sagar and Sriram Sagar; the thick forest in Adilabad district; the love and affection of the people of Dharmapuri; the endearment of the Manthani people; the yoga siddhi of Vedam Sri Narahari Sastri at Chennur; the view of Pranahita river from Arjun hill in the north; the forest Dandaka at Gadchiroli in Chattisgarh; the Pyramid Meditation Centre at Bhadrachalam; Sir Arthur Cotton Museum at Rajamundry; the journey by Simhadri Venkanna launch from Yanaam to Narsapur and the majestic Antharvedi.

In addition to these above , the significance, grandeur and lusture of temples and other places excited us - like the Goshpada kshetra in Kovvur; the wonderful Satyamma Mahadevi temple at Timarajupalem; the beauty of Pattiseema; the majesty of the Godavari river at Kaleshwaram (here we were fortunate to meet Sri Maunibaba Premdasji Maharaj and his disciples who were doing Godavari Parikrama on foot); the union of Godavari and Maneru; the secrets of Kaleshwaram and Mukteshwaram; the testimonial footsteps of Goddess Lakshmi and Rudra; the Ganga Theeranivasam at Manthani; the Hari-Hara Seva at Dharmapuri; the Orphanage run by the couple Avadhanula Mahadev and his wife Lata in Sriram Sagar; the Goddess Godavari and the idol of Lord Venkateshwara formed from sand at Gangakhed; the gorgeous waterfall of Godavari at Nasik; the devotion and powerful knowledge of the Srinivas couple and many more memories are stored in our hearts.

This yatra gave us the best of the best. Not a single untoward incident like violence, theft, ill-treatment or cheating did ever take place. Instead, wherever we went we were greeted cordially and affectionately. We had seen how kindness, friendship, love, devotion, service mindedness and trust exists in villages, towns and places inhabited near the forests and sea. In this way, we felt the Godavari river was conveying a justifying message that even today humanity and humaneness are intact and continue to foster.

We were also privileged to meet some eminent and great people of the present day. Among them we could identify the Saptarishis of today – Sri Vedam Narahari Sastri in Chennur; Sri Sita Ramanujacharyulu in Bhadrachalam; Sri (Dr) Salaka Raghunath Sarma garu, Sri Imani Seshadri Sarma garu and Sri (Dr) Prabhala Subramanyam Sastri garu in Rajamundry; Sri Nori Bhogeeshwara Sarma garu (and his wife Srimati who is like

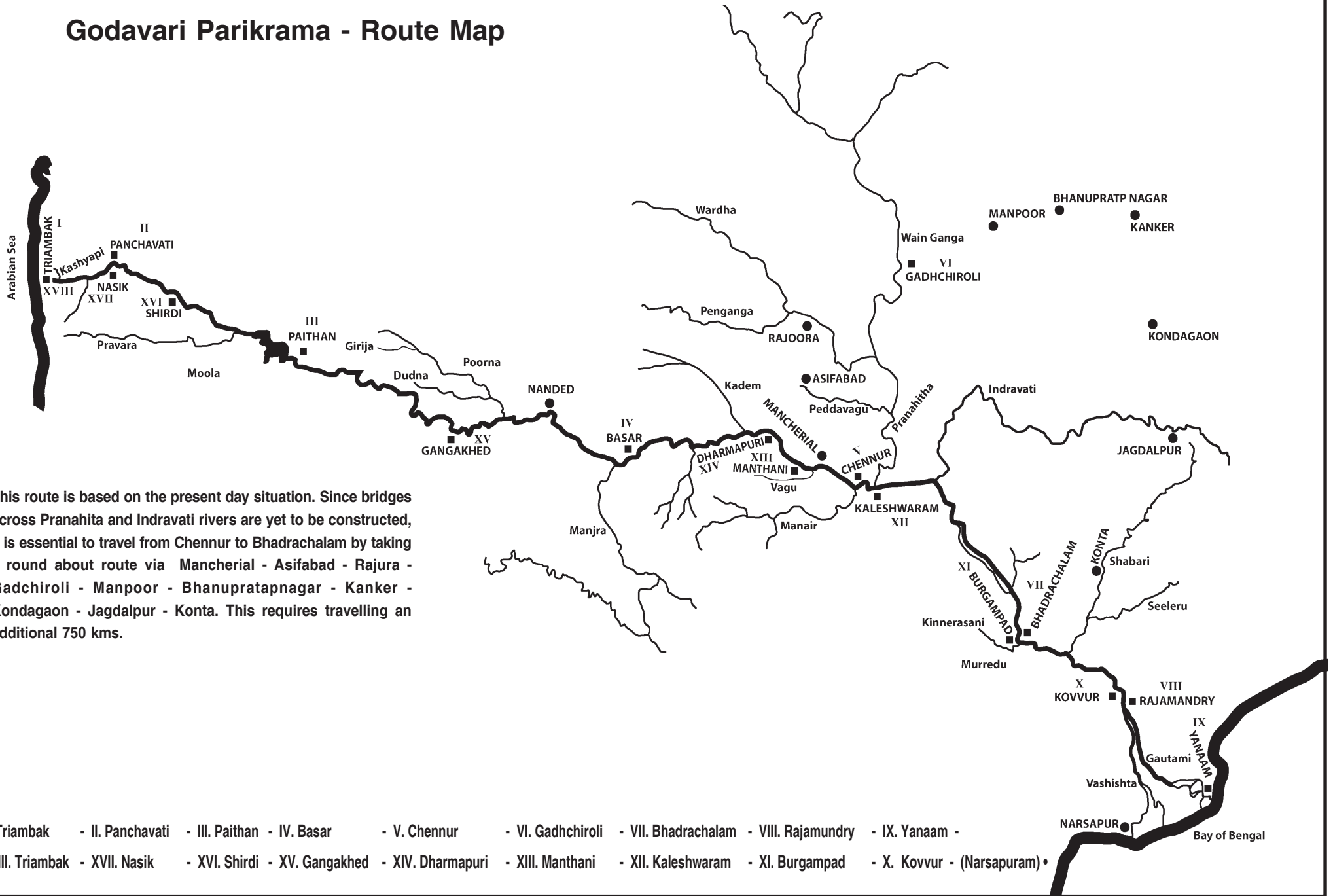
Arundhati) in Kovvur and Sri Maunibaba Premdasji Maharaj in Kaleshwaram.

Sri Vedam Narahari Sastri's dedication to yoga, Sri Salaka Raghunath Sarma's knowledge of Indian Culture, Sri Imani Seshadri Sarma's simplicity, Sri Prabhala Subramabyam Sastri's exponents in Classics and Vaastu Shastra, Sri Nori Bhogeeswara Sarma's dedication to Vedic practices and principles, Smt Nori Bhogeeswara Sarma's friendly nature and Sri Maunibaba Premdasji Maharaj's distinctive qualities have made Sujanaji, me, Hasmukh Upadhaya, Rathod and Lalji bloom with joy and happiness. What has been said in the puranas about one meeting mahatmas and great men on pilgrimage was true.

The Godavari as a form of Kundalini and the seven chakra parikramas are the most intuitive experiences, besides the intellectual enhancement on meeting the enlightening sadgurus along the holy river. The above are just a few, while many more experiences remain inexpressible and unfathomable. The parikrama is parikrama of not only the Godavari, but also of the atma (soul) and Brahma.

Hope you too shall have your own share of experiences to narrate when you take up the parikrama of the sacred Gautami Godavari river.

Godavari Parikrama - Route Map



This route is based on the present day situation. Since bridges across Pranhitha and Indravati rivers are yet to be constructed, it is essential to travel from Chennur to Bhadrachalam by taking a round about route via Mancherial - Asifabad - Rajura - Gadchiroli - Manpoor - Bhanupratapnagar - Kanker - Kondagaon - Jagdalpur - Konta. This requires travelling an additional 750 kms.

- I. Triambak - II. Panchavati - III. Paithan - IV. Basar - V. Chennur - VI. Gadchiroli - VII. Bhadrachalam - VIII. Rajamundry - IX. Yanaam -
- XVIII. Triambak - XVII. Nasik - XVI. Shirdi - XV. Gangakhed - XIV. Dharmapuri - XIII. Manthani - XII. Kaleshwaram - XI. Burgampad - X. Kovvur - (Narsapuram) •



श्री. क्षेत्र त्र्यंबकेश्वर मंदिर

Sri Triambakeshwar Temple built in Hemad Panthi system during the rule of Peshwas



Godavari Mata in Gangadwar



Kashyapi River



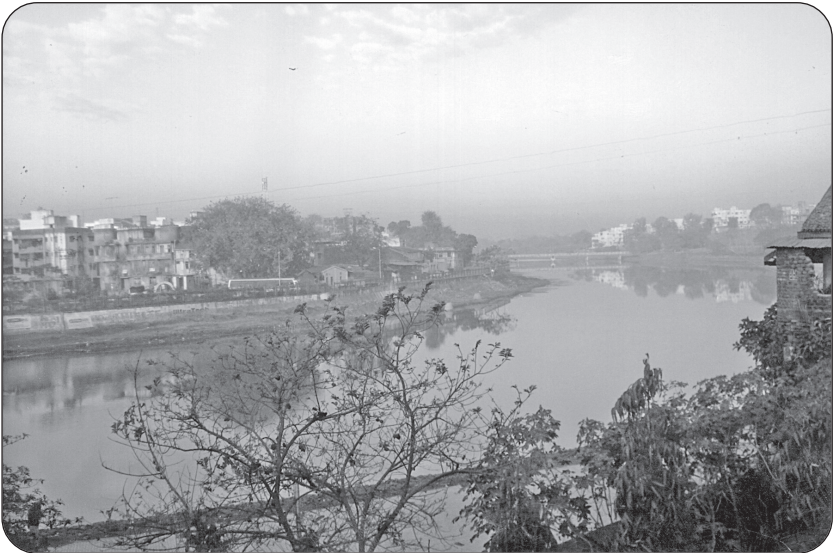
Panchavati



Lakshmanji Temple in Panchavati



Panchavati - Lakshmana chopping nose of Surpanaka



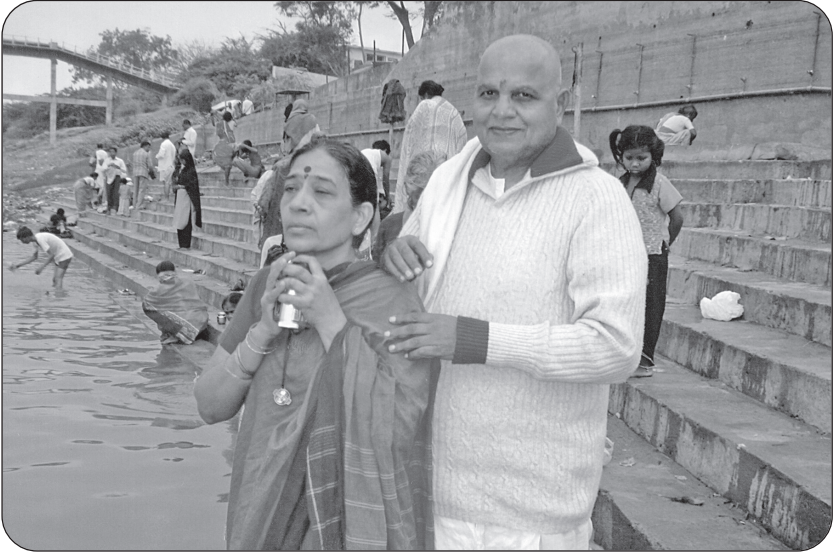
River Godavari at Nasik



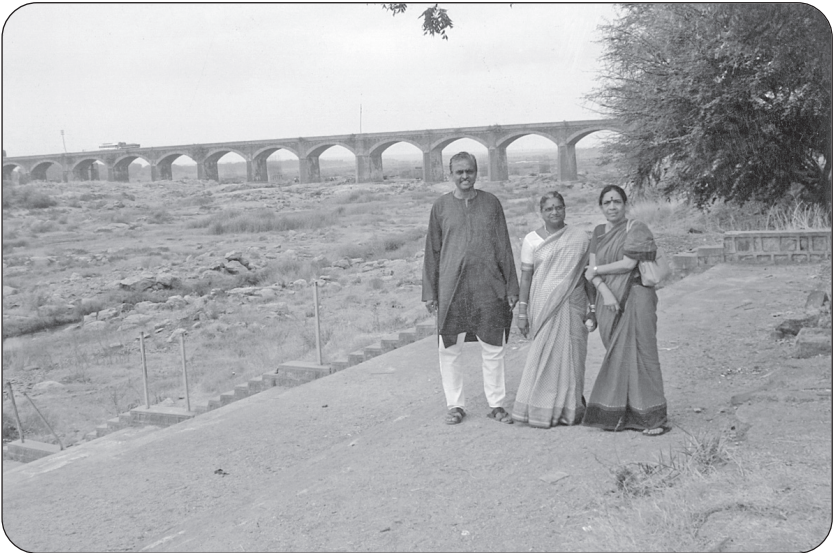
Nath Sagar Dam on river Godavari at Paithan



River Godavari at Paithan



Offering prayers to Godavari at Basara



Soan bridge near Nirmal



A smiling vegetable vender in Nirmal



107 yrs old Vriddh Mata in Soan



People of Manthani extending welcome near Velala Hill



Velala Mallayya Swamy



Satsang at Pavunur



Venu Gopala Swamy in Pavunur



Taking holy bath in north-bound Godavari near Chennur



A boat taking people across river Pranahita from Arjun hill to Sirivencha



River Indravati near Jagdalpur



Waterfall at Theerathgadh in Chattisgadh



Respected Sri Sita Ramanujacharyulu at Bhadrachalam



Pyramid Meditation Centre in Bhadrachalam



Godavari at Bhadrachalam



A place of scenic beauty near Maredmilli



Bathing in Godavari at Rajahmundry



Respected Smt. & Sri (Dr.) Salaka Raghunath Sarma
in Rajahmundry



Respected Smt. & Sri Imani Seshadri Sarma in Rajahmundry



Sir Arthur Cotton



Konaseema after Dhawaleshwaram bridge across river Godavari at Rajahmundry



Bhimeshwara Swamy Temple in Draksharam



Sapta Godavari pond in Draksharam



Respected Dr. Prabhala Subramanyam Sarma at Kotiphali



The stream Gautami (Godavari) uniting with sea
at Someshwaram



Launch Simhadri Venkanna journeying across the sea

CHAPTER - 13
GODAVARI PARIKRAMA – 18 DAYS TRAVEL PLAN

(Bus, Innova or Sumo are most comfortable vehicles for journey)

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
1.	Triambakeshwar Bank of Godavari District.: Nasik State: Maharashtra	0	0	Brahmagiri – Gangadwar – Kushavarta – Triambakeshwar – Samadhi of Nivruttinath. Guru: Gautama Maharshi and Nivruttinath
2.	Panchavati Bank of Godavari District: Nasik State: Maharashtra	71 km From Triambakeshwar	3.15hrs	Hermitage of Sita and Rama – Lakshmana’s tapovanam – places where Maricha was killed, Surpanaka’s nose was chopped – Kapaleshwaram – temples of Kalaram, Gore Rama – kunds of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita – simhastha sthan, place where Samartha Ramdas did penance(Tekdi). Guru: Samartha Ramdas
3.	Paithan (Pratstanapuram) Bank of Godavari District: Aurangabad State: Maharashtra (you will come across many hillocks between Nanded and Basara)	210 km From Panchavati	5.30hrs	Eknath Maharaj’s Samadhi, his house and puja mandir – birth place of Jnaneshwar 10 km away from Paithan – weaving place of Paithani sarees – Nath Sagar dam –Patri (Shiridi Sai Baba’s birth place.) Guru: Jnaneshwar Maharaj, Eknath Maharaj and Guru Gobind Singh (in Nanded)

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
4.	Basara (Vyasara) Bank of Godavari District: Adilabad State: Andhra Pradesh (you will come across forest areas and dams on this route till Chennur)	407 km From Paithan	12.10hrs	Saraswati temple – place of Maharshi Vyasa – an important place for performing Aksharaabhyasam for the people of Andhra and Maharashtra. Guru: Maharshi Vyasa
5.	Chennur Bank of Godavari District: Adilabad State: Andhra Pradesh (on this route upto Gadchiroli you will come across forests and mountains)	323 km From Basara	11.50hrs	Here Godavari flows towards north – a very holy place – view of river Pranahita from Arjuna hill – temples of Bhavani, Agestyeswara and Shiva. Guru: Yogi Vedam Narahari Sastry and Sri Rambhatla Sankara Sarma.

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
6.	Gadchiroli Area of Wain Ganga District: Gadchiroli State: Maharashtra	371 km From Chennur	12.15hrs	Famous Markendeya temple near Asthi at Wain Ganga – bridges across Pranahita (b/w Chennur & Sirivencha) and river Indravati (b/w Sirivencha & Bhopalapatnam) Guru: Markendeya Note: We travelled an additional 750km from Gadchiroli to Jagadapur since the bridges across the river b/w Sirivencha & Bhopalapatnam were incomplete. Once these bridges are ready you can reach Bhadrachalam directly from Chennur via Sirivencha, Bhopalapatnam and Venkatapuram. This distance would be about 200km only.
7.	Bhadrachalam Bank of Godavari District: Khammam State: Andhra Pradesh (via Gadchiroli, Jagadapur and Konta. You will come across Dandaka forest and Western Ghats.)	602 km From Gadchiroli	12.15hrs	Famous temple of Sri Sita Ramachandra Swami – Teerthagadh waterfalls – temples of Shiva and Parvati at Jagadapur – river Indravati near Jagadapur. Guru: Bhakta Ramadas (Note: It is advisable to reach Bhadrachalam before 5:30 pm since it is the border of Chattisgadh and Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh.)

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
8.	Rajamundry Bank of Godavari District: East Godavari State: Andhra Pradesh (on this route via Chintur and Maredmilli you will come across forests, Western Ghats and the Sabari river)	199 km From Bhadrachalam	9.00 hrs	Temples, ashrams, vedic schools along the river – temple of Goddess Godavari – statue of Gautama Maharshi – Godavari bridge – dam – Sir Arthur Cotton Museum – Nurseries in Kadiam – Sri Bhimeshwara Manikyamba temple – Kotiphali Sameshwara temple. This place is the birth place of Adi Kavi Nannaya. Gurus: Nannaya, Tirupati Vankata Kavais, Salaka Raghunath Sarma, Emani Seshadri Sarma, Dr.Prabhala Subramanya Sarma. (A little away from Rajamundry river Godavari branches out into seven streams.)
9.	Yanaam Bank of Godavari and Bay of Bengal District: Yanaam State: Pondichery	118 km From Rajamundry	13.15hrs	This is the place where the first ranch of Godavari flows into the Bay of Bengal – a French colony was established here once upon a time -It is said, as desired by Samudra, the Saptarishis divided Gautami Ganga Godavari into seven streams. Guru: Saptarishis (Note: Launches are available at Savitrinagar. When doing parikrama it is from here you have to take the sea route to Narsapur. From Narsapur onwards Godavari flows in the north direction.)

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
10.	Kovvur Bank of Godavari District: West Godavari State: Andhra Pradesh	195 km From Yanaam	7.15hrs	Kovvur is known as Govvur-Goshpada Shetra – Devi Kota Sattemma temple at Thimmarajupalem – Veerabhadreshwara temple at Pattisam lanka. Guru: Sri Nori Bhogeeshwara Sarma
11.	Burgampadu Bank of Godavari District: Khammam State: Andhra Pradesh (Known for Paper industry and Coal mines)	230 km From Kovvur	5.30hrs	Sight of Godavari river and the temple of Sri Sita Ramachandra Swami on the other side of the river. Guru: Bhadrachalam Ramadas
12.	Kaleshwaram Bank of Godavari District: Karimnagar State: Andhra Pradesh	239 km from Burgampadu	8.00hrs	Sangam of Godavari and Pranahita rivers – temple of Kaleshwara and Mukteshwara, Adi Mukteshwara, Chandrashekara Swamy and Saraswati – form here Godavari flows in the north direction (4 km away). Guru: Bhakta Potana

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
13.	Manthani (Manthrapuri) Bank of Godavari District: Karimnagar State: Andhra Pradesh	87 km From Kaleshwaram	6.00hrs	Temples of Gautameshwara, Sri Rama, Vidya Saraswati - Koti Linga dweep (island) –Veda Nilayam – temples of Dattatreya, Mahalakshmi, Omkareshwara, Biksheshwara, Siddeshwara, Sai Baba, Lakshmi Narayana and Anjaneya (Hanuman). Guru: Muddu Balambhatt, Rangi Rami, Devarakonda Rami, Golla Gongulu, Vajjala Siddhanti, and Muddu Ramakrishnayya.
14.	Dharmapuri Bank of Godavari District: Karimnagar State: Andhra Pradesh	28 km From Manthani	10.30hrs	Temples of Yoga Lakshmi Narashima Swami, Rama Lingeshwara Swami, Ugra Lakshmi, Narashima Swami, Venkateshwara Swami and Dattatreya –place of historical significance, Sanskrit language, Veda shastras, temples and Vedic institutions. Guru: Seshappa Kavi and Janardhananda Swami.
15.	Gangakhed Bank of Godavari District:Pharbari State:Maharashtra	360 km From Dharmapuri	10.30hrs	Temples of Venkateswara (Balaji), Panduranga, Shiva and Gangadevi – Nevasa and Shani Shingnapur on the route between Gangakhed and Shirdi. Guru: Sant Janabai.

S.No.	Place	Distance	Time	Important Details
16.	Shirdi Bank of Godavari District:Ahmednagar State: Maharashtra	359 km From Gangakhed	12.45hrs	Sai Baba temple – Dwarakamai – Chavadi – Mosque (where Sai Baba used to stay) – Kopergaon is nearby. Guru: Sai Baba
17.	Nasik Bank of Godavari District: Nasik State:Maharashtra	130 km From Shirdi	3.00hrs	A great pilgrimage centre – temples of Uma Maheshwara, Dattatreya, Shiva (near Godavari) – Yashwant Shiva temple, Dwi Mukhi Hanuman temple – temples of Balaji Venkateshwara, Sameshwara and many other temples. Guru: Samartha Ramdas
18.	Triambakeshwar District: Nasik State: Maharashtra	42 km From Nasik	2.00hrs	Returning to the source - Gautami Godavari river parikrama . (End is beginning anew.)

- A) Onward Journey – (North direction)
• Triambakeshwar to Yanaam • Distance travelled : 2301km
- B) Return Journey – (Sea & South direction)
• Yanaam to Triambakeshwar • Distance travelled : 1770 km
Total 18 Days Journey
- C) • Triambakeshwar – Yanaam – Triambakeshwar • Distance travelled : 4071km

CHAPTER -14
DETAILED ITINERARY OF 18 DAYS GODAVARI PARIKRAMA

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
1st Day	Triambakeshwar	0	0	<p>➤ Before reaching Triambak village from Nasik, there is a petrol bunk to the left side where you can see the small stream of Godavari. Visit the river. Don't cross the stream.</p> <p>➤ Enter Triambak village through the lane before the petrol bunk and find a suitable lodge.</p> <p>➤ After freshening up visit Kushavarta Kund and sprinkle some water as ablution. Seek Lord Triambakeshwar's blessings.</p> <p>➤ Visit Gangadwar (700 steps high – can take 'doli' if you can't climb) and enjoy the enchanting Brahmagiri Hills. Also visit the temples of Ganesh, Kolambika and Godavari Devi. Perform Gautami-Ganga pooja.</p>

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ After coming down do Kushavarta parikrama, take holy bath and partake theertham (sip sacred water). ➤ Do parikrama of Triambakeshwar temple without crossing the river Godavari. Visit the temple and offer prayers (abhishekam and Laghu Rudram). ➤ Also visit other places in Triambak like the Gangadwar Ganesh temple, Kolambika Devi, Varaha Kund, Sri Rama temple on the steps of Gangadwar, the cave of Goraknath, the temple of Niruthinath, Indira theertha, Chakrav theertha, and Neelamba theertha. <p>[It is advisable to consult the pandits / priests there and seek their advice.]</p>

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Amboli Vaghera Devargaon Girnare Kashyapi lake and bridge Gangapur Dam (visit the Godavari and again take the road to Panchavati) (Another river) Panchavati [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	10 15 18 15 12 9	 3.15hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Without heading towards Nasik proceed in the northern direction of the Godavari. ➤ Visit Kashyapi river. This is the first tributary of Godavari. See Mariyu reservoir. ➤ First big dam on the river Godavari. This is famous for the growth of paddy, vegetables and grapes in the Nasik district.
2nd Day	Panchavati	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the river Godavari. ➤ Visit Kunds of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Panchavati (5 vatavraksh), Sita's cave, the place where Maricha appeared in the deceiving form of a golden deer,

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Chandor Nishad Yevala Wajapur Gangapur Kaygaon Sakta Bidkin Dhorkin	25 15 30 40 35 10 20 5 15		Tapovanam, Lakshmana Temple, the place where Surpanaka's nose was chopped Kalarama and Gorerama temples,etc., [Cover these places the very same day by evening. Next day, bathe in Rama kund, seek blessings of Lord Kapaleshwara and continue your onward journey.] ➤ Visit the river Godavari near the bridge. ➤ This route is a bit tough. Better to enquire before you proceed. (It is advisable to take the Aurangabad highway from Kaygaon, enter Aurangabad and see the Drishtieshwara Jyothir Lingas.
	Paithan [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	210 km	5.30hrs	➤ After visiting the Kailashnath temple in Ellora caves once again take the highway to reach Paithan.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
3rd Day	Paithan	0	0.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Through Aurangabad route it is 9.30 hrs – 309 km (about a 100 km more from Panchavati). ➤ Visit the river Godavari. ➤ Visit Eknath temple, Samadhi, house, his place of worship, place where Lord Panduranga stood and also the place where Jnaneshwar Maharaj made a buffalo recite Vedas. ➤ See the Nathasagar Dam on the river Godavari. ➤ It is worth paying a visit to Jnaneshwara Gardens (like the one at Mysore) and Jnaneshwara memorial. ➤ 10 km away from Paithan. It is the birth place of Jnaneshwar, Nivruttinath, Sopandev and Muktabai. ➤ Identified as the birth place of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba.
	Apegaon Shahgad Ambed Ashti Parti	10		
		147	5.00	

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Majalgaon Bridge Parbhani Purna river Basmat Aasna river Nanded [Better to confirm the route to Bhokar]	52 89	1.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The house of the “Bhusari” brahman is said to be the place where Sai Baba was born. You must visit the Sai temple and the old house. ➤ Visit the river Godavari. ➤ Tributary of Godavari ➤ Tributary ➤ Bank of river Godavari. ➤ Sacred place of the Sikhs. This is the place where the 10th and the last Sikh Guru Gobind Singh has been laid to rest. One of the five important Gurudwaras is here.
	Basara [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	407 km	12.10hrs	(Here you enter the state of Andhra Pradesh) (Find out the way to Mudhol even before you reach Nirmal)

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
4th Day	Basara	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is a long journey. Hence, it is better to follow time strictly. ➤ Visit temples of Jnana Saraswati Dattatreya and Vyasa. ➤ Also visit Veda Vaati Sila (near bus-stand), Shiva temple (near Godavari), and Papaharshwara temple (in Basara town).
	Mudhol			
	Nirmal Road	69		
	Sihda river			
	Nirmal	54	4.50	➤ Visit the Godavari –Soan bridge, Sriram Sagar Dam, and river Godavari
	Soan Bridge			
	Soan Village			
	Sriram Sagar Dam			➤ At Soan see the Madhva temple and Madhva matt.
	Nirmal			➤ The beautiful Sriram Sagar lake is a blessing to the Telengana region.
				➤ Nirmal paintings and other handicrafts are very famous.
	Lakshettipet	111	1.15	➤ It is worth paying a visit to the handicrafts shops.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Rayapet Bridge Kadem Bridge (111km from Nirmal) Mancheril Godavarikhani Road, Chennur Road junction Velaala			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ You can see the Godavari from the left side of the road.
	Pavunur Chennur [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	67 22 <hr/> 323 km	<hr/> 11.50hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the Velala Malleshwara Swamy temple. It is the place of jatra during Maha Shiva ratri. ➤ Also see the Mallayya Gutta.
5th Day	Chennur	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Godavari is uttara vahini (flows in the northern direction) here. Visit the river, take holy dip and perform puja. ➤ Visit the holy Bhavani Agastheshwara temple.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Arjuna Gutta	97	7.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both the rivers Gadavari and Pranahita are near to Chennai. ➤ A little away from Chennai is Kaleshwaram where you can see the sangam of Godavari and Pranaahita. ➤ Visit Godavari, take a holy dip and perform 'Ganga' pooja. ➤ Take a holy dip in the Pranahita. On the otherside of Pranahita near Arjuna Gutta is Sirivencha. ➤ It takes about 3-4 hours to go upto Pranahita and return to Chennai.
	Mancherial	30 from Chennai		
	Bellampalli			
	Tanduru			
	Asifabad	73		➤ Andhra-Maharashtra border.
	Rajoora	48		➤ Maharashtra
	Gondpimpri			

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Wardha river			➤ Wardha and Godavari join to become Pranahita.
	Wain Ganga			➤ Chattisgarh state begins as soon as you cross Wain Ganga.
	Ashti	55		➤ Visit the wonderful Markandeya temple a little inside (about 10km). (You'll find Markandeya's footsteps.)
	Gadchiroli [Dinner and Night halt]	68	5.00	➤ Have early dinner and retire for the day. Next day the 13 hours journey to Bhadrachalam will be very tiring. Hence, you need to finish your morning activities early and start your journey by 5:00 a.m.
	(Total travel)	371 km	12.15hrs	
6th Day	Gadchiroli Dhanura Murangaon Manpur Kotri river	0 30 27 30	0	➤ Maharashtra-Chattishgarh border.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Bhanupratapnagar Chinar river Keskal Jungani river Narangi river Kondagaon Indravati river Jagadlpur Theerthagedh waterfall	122 51 73 37	6.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mountain region. ➤ Thick forest area. ➤ Eastern Ghats ➤ A magnificent river. ➤ It is 4 km from main road. Many interesting sights to view on the right side. ➤ Visit the Shiva temple. ➤ Eastern Ghats. Way through forest. ➤ It is a little disturbed area. It is better to travel non-stop till you reach Bhadrachalam in A.P.
	Sosangedh Sosanpal Sukuma Konta (A.P.) Bhadrachalam [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	85 602 km	13.15hrs	

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
7th Day	Bhadrachalam	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the Sita Rama Chandra Swamy temple and the river Godavari. ➤ Can also visit other temples there.
	Chintur (Sabari river) Maredu Milli Rampachodavaram Rajamundry [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	64 50 85 199 km	9.00 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thick forest. You can see the Eastern Ghats mountains. A place of scenic beauty.
8th Day	Rajamundry	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the river Godavari and take a holy bath. ➤ Visit the temples near the bank of the river. ➤ Visit Sir Arthur Cotton Museum who built the famous Godavari Barrage. ➤ After the barrage the river Godavari becomes the Sapta Godavari.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Bhimeshwaram	77		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also visit the gardens at Kadiyam. ➤ Visit the renowned Bhimeshwara Swamy temple. Perform abhishekam and pooja. ➤ Also, seek the blessings of Manikyamba temple.
	Pond of Sapta Godavari	11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two streams flow (in north direction) towards Yanaam.
		30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two streams flow (in south direction) towards Narsapur. ➤ The other three streams of Godavari are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one joining the Gautami, the second joining the Vasishta and the third joining the sea .The three form a triangle – Trikona Seema, i.e., Kona Seema.
	Yanaam [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	118 km	8.30 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit Kotiphali Sameshwara temple.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
9th Day	Yanaam	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the first stream of Godavari – Gautami river at Yanaam. ➤ Bridge is the main face. ➤ (French colony started here. It comes under the state of Pondicherry. ➤ Water is salty here.) ➤ Take a launch and journey through the sea to reach Narsapur, thus taking darshan of all the streams of Godavari which merge with the Bay of Bengal. (There is another option in case the above is not convenient – take a boat to cross the Gautami river. Then cross the other streams by taking the road route and the bridges across the rivers to reach Narsapur.) ➤ When passing through the the streams of Godavari offer prayers and recite “Har har Gange! Har har Godavari!”

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	SavitriNagar (Chepalpur)	12	0.20	<p>➤ You can take a launch from here. Better to hire in advance.</p> <p>➤ It is 8 hrs journey to Narsapur from here.</p> <p>➤ It is a big ocean.</p> <p>➤ During your journey you shall come across long beaches, ONGC Drilling Rigs, boats, steamers, fish, birds and other sea creatures.</p> <p>➤ You will be passing through Polavaram, Mumidivaram, Kandikuppa, Amalapuram, Bodasakuuru, Banuvamuri, Lanka, Rajolu, Antarvedipalam and Antarvedi Narashima Kshetra and finally Narsapur.</p>
	Bay of Bengal			
	Narsapur shore	91	8.00	➤ Sea route from Yanaam
	Narsapur	115	3.15	➤ Road route after crossing Gautami river by boat.
	Palakollu	12		
	Veeravasaramu	49		
	Kovvuru	19		
	[Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	195 km	12.00 hrs	(You can stay at Narsapur also)

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
10th Day	Kovvuru	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take holy bath in Godavari. ➤ Visit Govupada kshetra, Gautama Maharishi Ashram, Someshwara temple, Maa temple, Sai Baba temple. ➤ 23 km away from there is a wonderful Kota Satyamma temple. It is worth paying a visit. ➤ This region lies along the bank of the Godavari. ➤ See from this side of the Godavari. Visit the beautiful temple of Sri Bhadrakali Veera Bhadreshwara Swami temple on Pattiseema islands of Godavari. ➤ After visiting the temple near the river return to Gopalapuram from Pattiseema.
	Patapatti Seema (Patti Seema)	30		
	Gopalpuram	30		
	Koyalagudam	12		
	Jangareddygudam	3		
	Talleru river	14		
	Ashwaraopeta	18		
	Pamuleru river	68		

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Kinnerasani river Burgampad [Dinner and Night halt]	15		➤ A graceful river. ➤ From here on the other side of the Godavari you can see the famous Bhadrachalam temple.
	(Total travel)	230 km	11.05 hrs	
11th Day	Burgampadu Mannuguru Kamalapuram Eturunagaram Jangalapalli Ghanpur Bhupalapalli Mahadevapur Kaleshwaram [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	0 39 52 10 52 24 13 22 27 239 km		➤ After paying a visit to the Godavari river and seeking the blessings of Bhadrachalam Sita Rama Swami from here commence your journey. ➤ On the way you shall come across the rope-way which supplies coal to ITC Paper Mills (near Singerani). ➤ You shall come across Medaram on the route. ➤ Sannakka-Saralokka jatara is famous here.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
13th Day	Manthani (Manthrapuri)	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take holy dip in the Godavari and offer prayers. ➤ Take darshan of Koti Lingas and the Shiva Linga and Brahma Linga on the bank of the river. ➤ Near the river visit the temple of Gautameshwara (a very ancient temple) and also take the blessings of Vidya Saraswati - a very powerful Goddess. Also see the wonderful Sri Rama temple. ➤ Also visit the temples of Omkareshwara, Bhimeshwara, Anjaneya, Sai Baba, Lakshmi Narayana, Mahalakshmi, Sileshwara, Siddheshwara and Dattatreya. ➤ Godavari Khani road. ➤ Visit Lakshmi Narashima temple on the bank of the river.
	Gunjapadugu		1.55	
	Sundilla	28		
	Peddapalli	33	1.00	

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Medaram Dharmaram Kotilingas (Dharmaram) Godavari Bridge Dharmapuri [Dinner and Night halt]	26 5 15 10 12	0.50 0.10 0.20 0.40 0.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A beautiful lake and idol of Naga Devata. ➤ Temple of Koti Shiva Lingas. ➤ Visit the Godavari. ➤ A very pious place. ➤ Visit the Yoga Lakshmi Narashima Swami temple.
	(Total travel)	128 km	6.00 hrs	
14th Day	Dharmapuri Jagityal Metpalli Sri Ram Sagar Dam	0 33 33 59	0 1.15 0.30 1.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take bath in the holy Godavari. ➤ Visit the temple of Rama Lingeshwara Swami (Lord Sri Rama is said to have consecrated the lingam here) and perform abhishekam. Also visit Ugra Lakshmi Narashmi Swami and Venkateshwara Swami temples. ➤ See the Godavari and the dam from here.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Nizamabad Bodan Biloli Naris (Manar river) Mudkhed Khandar Loha Gangakhed [Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	51 28 23 19 17 9 35 11 142 360 km	3.00 0.45 0.30 10.30 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also see Dattavatsalya Nilayam. ➤ After this you enter the State of Maharashtra.
15th Day	Gangakhed	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bathe in the scared Godavari. Visit Gangakhed fort, temples of Panduranga, Shiva and Balaji.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also visit the Shiva linga and idols of Naga Devata and Godavari Mata on the bank of the river Godavari. ➤ Take time to see the place of Bhakta Jana Baba and Jyothir Linga (perform abhishekam).
	Parli Vaidyanath	41	2.00	➤ Place of Pravara sangam. Visit the Godavari.
	Beed	90	3.00	
	Gevrai	34	1.15	➤ 'Jnaneshwari' was composed here by Sant Jnaneshwar in a temple.
	Shevgaon	60	2.00	➤ Here you can see Pravara lake.
	Nevasa	35	0.45	➤ Visit the well known and the biggest temple of God Shani.
	Shani Shinganapur	25	0.45	
	Shirdi	69	2.00	➤ It takes about 12.45 hours to travel 359 km to reach here.
	[Dinner and Night halt] (Total travel)	359 km	12.45 hrs	

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
16th Day	Shirdi	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the renowned Sai Baba temple and seek his blessings. ➤ Also visit Dwarakamai, Chawadi, Baba Mosque, Samadi of Baba's devotee Abdul and Sai Museum. ➤ Visit the Godavari.
	Kopargaon road (Shiridi)	10		
	Sinnar	70		
	Urand Bridge (Dhana river)	17		
	Nasik	23		
	[Dinner and Night halt]			
	(Total travel)	130 km	3.00 hrs	Great pilgrimage centre. Travel distance 130 km.
17th Day	Nasik	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take holy bathe in Ganga ghat. ➤ Visit Dwimukhi Hanuman, Yashwant Maharaj Shiva, Uma Maheshwara and Ekmukhi Dattatreya temples on Gangapur road.

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
	Triambakeshwar [Dinner and Night halt]	42 km	2.00 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit the Godavari river, Someshwar Temple (9 km away) and Venkateshvara Balaji temple which is about 24 km away. Adjacent to the temple is the Godavari waterfall. ➤ Without crossing Godavari, go upto the petrol pump (which is before you reach the Triambak village) and take the road that is across the Godavari bridge. ➤ Visit Kushavarta kund either take a sacred bath or sprinkle some holy water from the kund on self. ➤ Mix all the sacred water collected from various pilgrimage points along the Godavari in the Kushavarta kund and also perform abhishekam of Lord Triambakeshwar with holy water thus gathered.
	(Total travel)	42 km	2.00 hrs	

Day	Place (Route)	Distance (km)	Time Taken (hrs)	Important Information
18th Day	Triambakeshwar	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take holy bath in the Godavari. ➤ Offer prayers to Gautami Godavari and Triambakeshwar Swami. ➤ Feed Saptarishis (7 Brahmin couples) with honour, love and respect. ➤ Gautami Godavari parikrama has been successfully concluded.

Note: The time and distance mentioned above is approximately given. It is bound to vary depending upon how you schedule your itinerary and utilize your time in gathering of information and visiting important places and temples.



Smt. Sujanadeviji in Simhadri Venkanna launch. Also seen is Mr. Ravi who made arrangements for the journey.



Trails left behind by Simhadri Venkanna



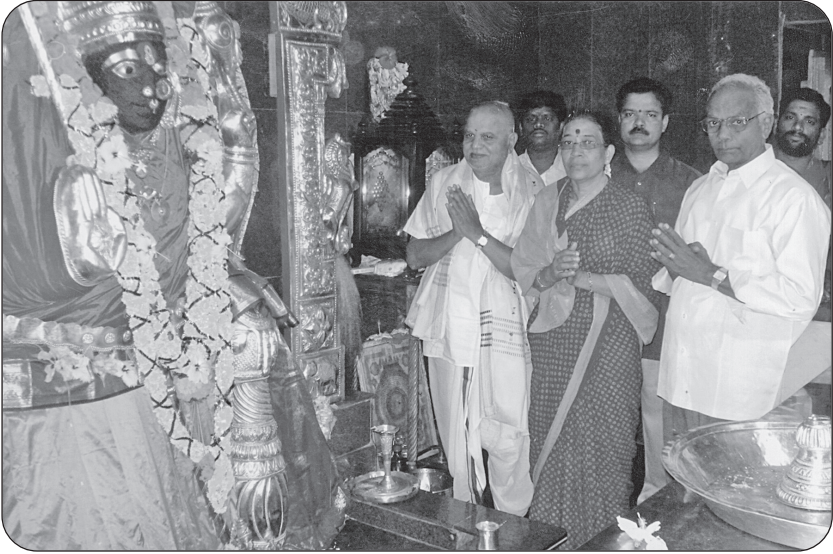
The stream Vasishta (Godavari) merging with the sea at Antharvedi



Respected Smt. & Sri Nori Bhogeeshwara Sarma in Kovvur



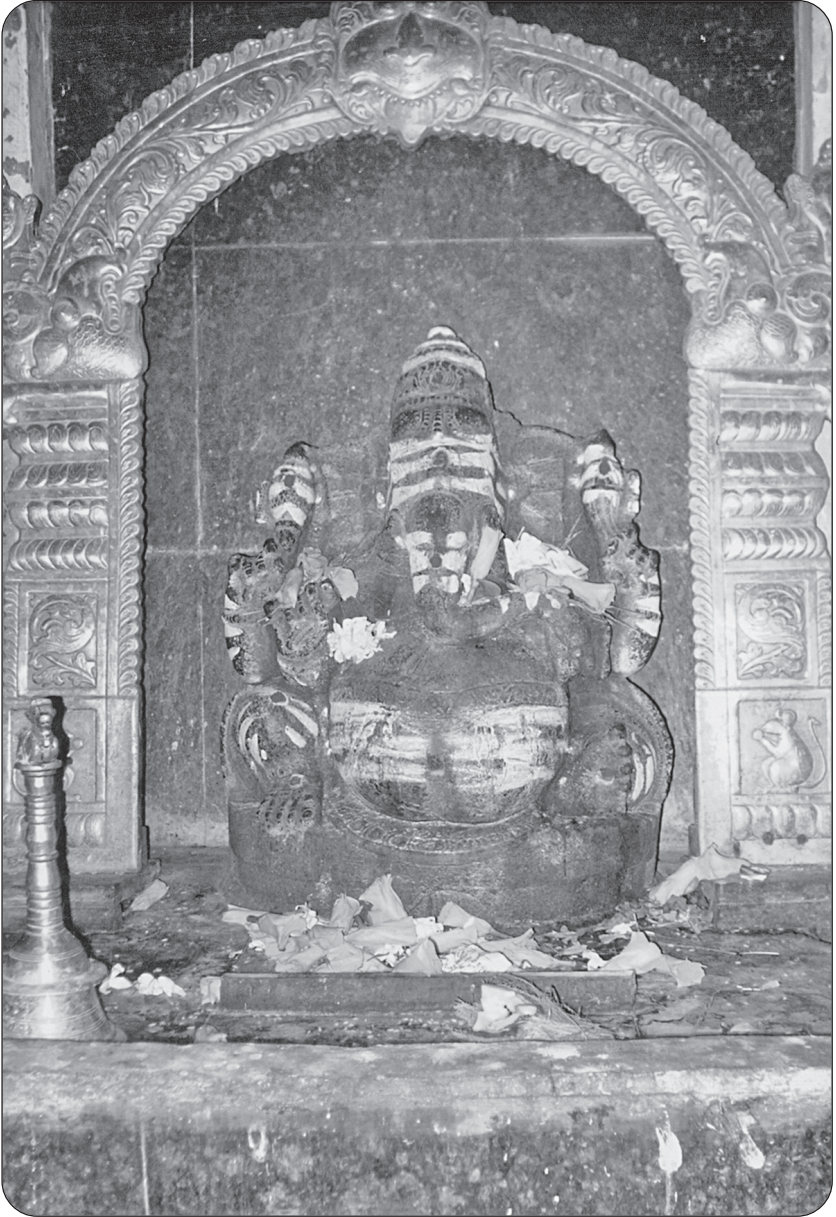
Powerful deity Satyamma Devi in Timmarajapalem



Seeking the blessings of Satyammadevi at Timmarajapalem



Bhadrakali - Veerabhadreshwara Swamy Temple on the Pattiseema Island in the middle of Godavari



Lord Ganesha at Kaleshwaram



Sunset near Bhadrachalam



Adi Mukteshwara Swamy in Kaleshwaram



Respected Sri Sita Rama Sarma &
Sri Lakshiminarayana Sharma in Kaleshwaram



A joyful ride on a bullock cart near Kaleshwara Sangam



At Kaleswaram with Mouni Baba Premdasji who is doing Godavari Parikrama on foot.



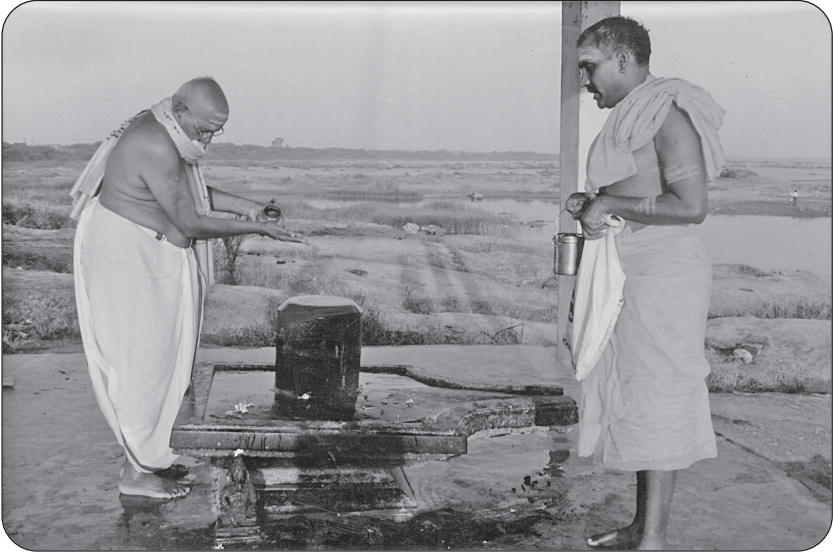
With Khanapuram youth at Lakshminadugu near Manthani



Kotilingas island near Manthani



Respected Sri Srirama Sharma and Sri Madhukar Sharma on the bank of Godavari near Manthani



Offering prayers to lord Rameshwar on the bank of river Godavari near Manthani



Being welcomed by Brahmana Sangham at Dharmapuri



Smt. Sujanadevi taking holy bath in Godavari at Dharmapuri



Datta Vatsalya Children Care Centre at Sriram Sagar



Godavari mata at Gangakhed



Dwarakamai at Shirdi



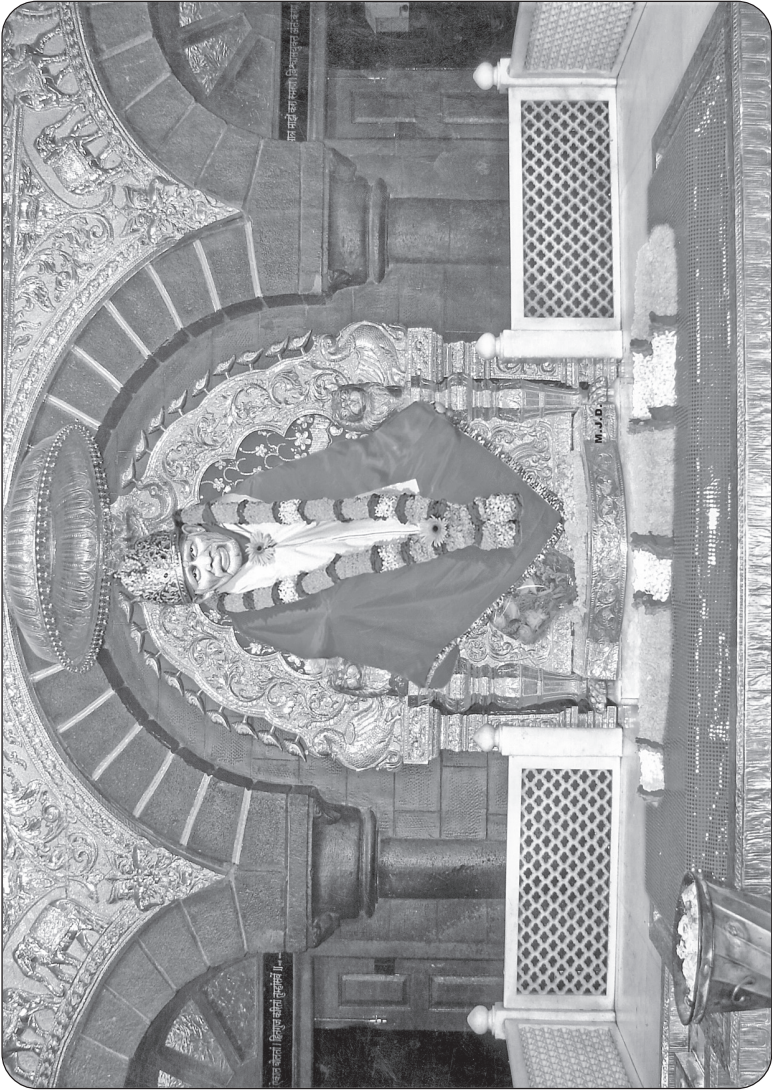
Lord Balaji at Gangakhed



The pillar against which Sant Jnaneshwar leaned while reciting Jnaneshwari



The golden dome of Sri Sai Baba Temple at Shirdi



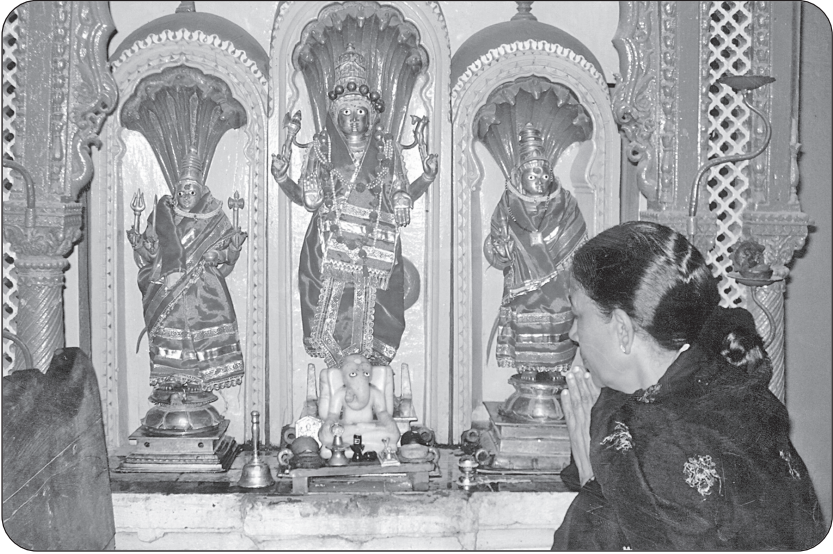
Sri Sai Baba Temple in Shirdi



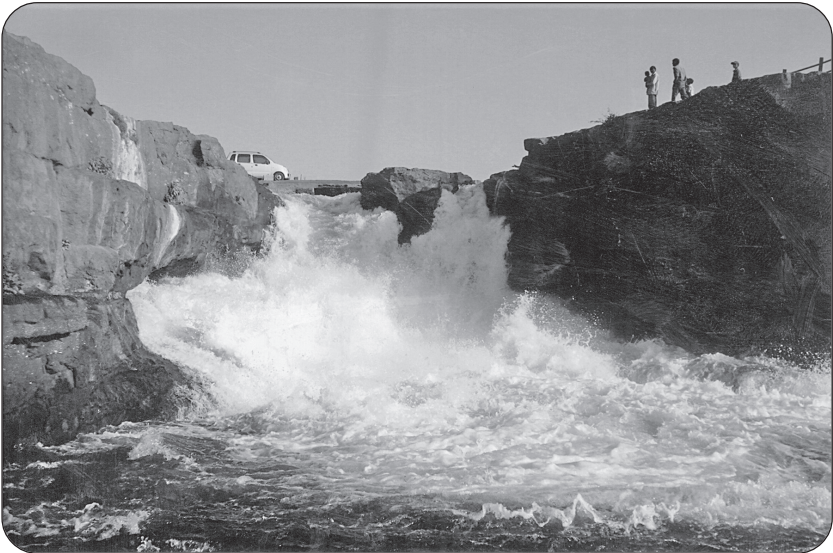
Welcome extended by members of Sri Balaji Mandir Trust
at Nasik



Dwi Mukhi Hanuman in Panchavati at Nasik



Uma Maheshwar Swamy at Nasik



The splendid waterfall of Godavari near Nasik



Godavari at Triambakeshwar



Devotees at Triambakeshwar who came to perform rites for forefathers



Honouring Saptarishis at Triambakeshwar after completing Godavari Parikrama



With Dipesh Shroff & Preeti Shroff and other colleagues at Mumbai after Godavari Parikrama



With Parikrama Team and the vehicle Innova



Respected Sri Suvarna Lakshman Rao (President - Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan) & Sri Duddilla Ananda Rao (Vice President - Sri Seeta Rama Seva Sadan) on the bank of river of Godavari near Manthani

CHAPTER – 15

RIVER GODAVARI – AN EFFLUENCE OF GREAT MASTERS

It was the eleventh day of our parikrama of the nectar-like flowing Godavari. All of a sudden I woke up at 3.00 a. m. My body, mind and intellect were flowing with an enlightening consciousness. A supra secret unfolded and a new realization dawned on me.

Many revelations unfolded and flashed in my inner being – Gautami Godavari is an entity of Kundalini; its parikrama is an ultimate manifestation of the seven chakras; and it is the secret confirmation of having a glimpse of the Saptarishis. A strong vibration within me was like the Godavari's perennial flow of knowledge and the collective flow of the various aspects of the sadgurus (great masters) in a single flow. My kundalini now was fully awakened to become the illumination in the Sahasraara Chakra; the experience in the Ajna Chakra; understanding in the Vishuddhi Chakra; joy in the heart in the Anaahata Chakra; power in the Manipura Chakra; the feeling of love in the Swadhishtana Chakra; and the firm belief in the Mulaadhara Chakra. The entire thing was simply amazing and stupefying. A good number of gurus, renowned masters who had made great contributions to the spiritual upliftment of the world and its people have been born along the river Godavari which extends from Brahmagiri to the Bay of Bengal. Not only then, even today and in the years to come we have and shall have many more adorable masters.

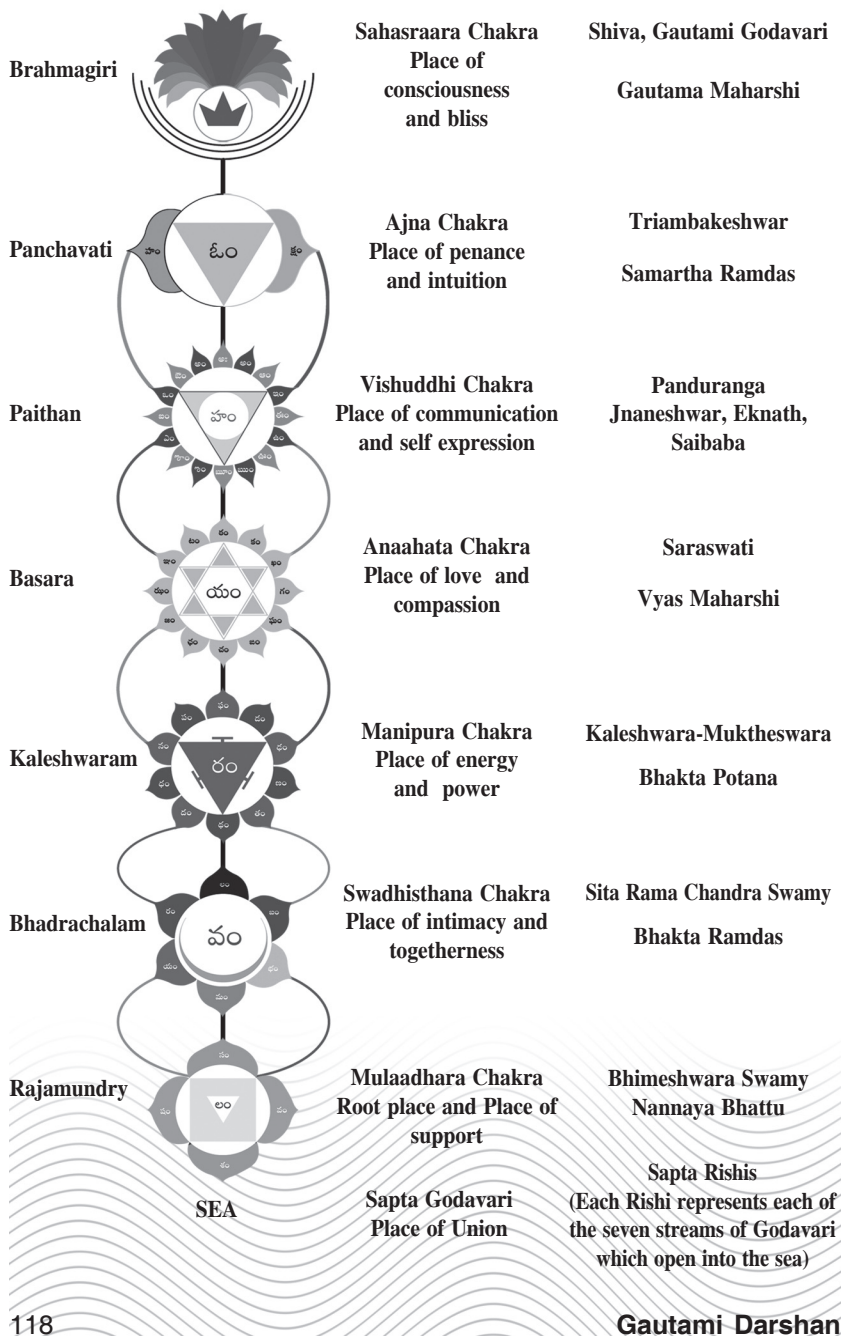
Gautama Maharshi and Goraknath are regarded as the revered gurus in Brahmagiri and Triambak. Likewise, Nivruttinath in Triambakehwar, Samartha Ramdas and Yeshwant Maharaj in Nasik and Panchavati, are the gurus.

Sant Jnaneshwar, Eknath Maharaj, Saibaba and Janabai in Paithan; Guru Gobind Singh in Nanded; Seshappa Kavi, Moteram Krishna Sastry and Sri Janardhananda Swami in Dharmapuri; Rangi Rami, Devarakonda Rami, Muddu Balambhattu, Narayana Sastri, Hare Rama Swami, Muddu Ramakrishnaya, Vajjala Sidhanti in Manthani are some of the great masters.

In the Karimnagar and Warangal region the great poet Potanna, Vanamamalai Vardacharyulu in Chennur, Adi Kavi Nannayya, Triupati Venkata Kavulu, and Sir Arthur Cotton in Rajamundry are the most honourable masters. At the place where the Godavari finally merges with the sea, the Saptarishis are the gurus.

Hence, the river Godavari is the flowing river of knowledge and sadgurus.

KUNDALINI FORM OF GODAVARI DEVI



CHAPTER – 16

7 WAYS TO GODAVARI PARIKRAMA – IN SMALL IS ALL

When circumstances are not in favourable to us for pursuing an assignment in accordance with certain norms prescribed, there is always an alternative. But, one thing that should not deter our spirit is firm resolution. Depending on various factors one can take up Godavari Parikrama by opting for one of the seven ways – each way represents a chakra. This was another realization I got when my kundalini was fully charged. Godavari Devi is another form of Goddess Sridevi, a symbolic representation of the seven chakras.

You can choose any one of the seven ways of Gautami Godavari Prikrama –

1. Brahmagiri is the top of the head location of Godavari. It is the place of thousandfolded consciousness and understanding – Sahasraara chakra
2. Panchavati – Nasik is the centre of forehead (between the eyebrows) location. It is the place of meditation, imagination and intuition – Ajna chakra
3. Paithan is the throat location. It is the place of creativity (knowledge) and communication. It is also the place of Guru – Vishuddhi chakra
4. Basara is the heart location. It is the place of love, peace, joy and compassion for all – Anaahata chakra
5. Kaleshwaram is the navel (center) location of Godavari. It is the place of great energy and power. It is the place where Pranahita and Godavari unite – Manipura chakra

6. Bhadrachalam is the sacrum (lower abdomen) location. It is the place of male and female integration and unification – Swadhisthana chakra
7. Rajamundry is the perineum (lower back of spine) location. It is the place of stability. It is the place where Godavari branches out into seven streams – Mulaadhara chakra

It is not imperative that the Godavari parikrama should extend up to the sea, though the parikrama from Triambak upto the sea and from sea to Triambak is most preferable. Alternatively, Godavari parikrama can be taken up from any point, place or pilgrimage centre. What you should keep in mind is – i) River Godavari must be to your right side while travelling. ii) Start from a particular place, go around Godavari by making sure that you cross the river at two points only, and end at the starting point. Only then your parikrama will be complete. Further, yatra can be taken up by traveling within the circumference of any of the chakras mentioned above. The details of places that constitute each chakra are given below.

1. Sahasraara Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Triambakeshwar, encircle Brahmagiri and reach Kashyapi river. Then proceed and reach Gangapur lake. After paying a visit to the Gangapur lake return to Triambak by crossing the bridge across the Godavari river.
2. Ajna Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Nasik, reach Gangapur. Visit the river and cross it to reach Panchavati. From Panchavati journey through Yevla and Kopargaon. At Kopargaon cross the Godavari and return to Nasik via Shirdi and Sinnar. (Ensure to pay respects to Godavari where ever it comes along the route).
3. Vishuddhi Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Paithan. After seeing Nathasagar travel through Apegaon, Varigodri,

Theerthapuri, Patri and reach Manjalgaon. Visit the Godavari there and cross it. Pass through Gevrai, Nevasa and Kaigaon. Here cross the Godavari and via Bilkin and Dorki come back to Paithan.

4. Anaahata Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Basara and proceed through Nirmal, Soan and Sriram Sagar. At Sriram Sagar see the Godavari to your left. Cross the Soan bridge and now see the river to your right. Visit the Datta temple of Sri Datta Vatsalya Kendra. From Nizambad return to Basar via Bodan, Biloli, Varshi, Nanded (cross the river here), Bhokar and Mudhol.
5. Manipura Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Kaleshwaram. Travel through Damarakunta, Manthani, Dharmapuri, Jagityal to reach Sriram sagar. Here see the sagar to the right, visit the Datta temples and the Godavari near the Soan bridge. Cross the bridge here and travel towards Nirmal, Mancherial, Velal, Puvunur, Chennur, cross the river Pranahita near Arjun hills (gutta) to reach Sirivencha. After the Kaleshwaram sangam point (merger point) cross the Godavari and return to Kaleshwaram.
6. Swadhishtana Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Bhadrachalam. Pass through Chintur, Maraedmilli, Rajamundry and Bhimeshwaram to reach Dhavaleshwaram. Here cross the Godavari and come to Kovvur, pass through Pattiseema and Burgampadu, cross the river Godavari and return to Bhadrachalam.
7. Mulaadhara Chakra of the Godavari – Start from Rajamundry, visit Sir Arthur Cotton Museum and Dhavaleshwaram barrage, reach Yanaam through Bhimeshwaram and Kotiphali. At Yanaam take a launch to reach Narsapur. From Narsapur journey towards Kovvur,

cross the river Godavari and return to Rajamundry.

Depending upon various factors and the availability of time one can choose any one, two, three, four, five or six chakra/s journey around the sacred river Godavari. Just as an atom encompasses the whole universe and in 'small there is all', if one opts for even one chakra parikrama, one obtains the same fruits as one would get on doing complete Godavari parikrama for 18 days. 'Where there is a will there is a way.' Hence, avail the opportunity and have a first hand experience of the grandeur, beauty, sanctity and divinity of the Godavari river and the places of pilgrimage along its melliferous flow.

CHAPTER - 17

A COLLECTION OF GODAVARI THEERTHAS

Pilgrimage centers on the bank of the sacred river Gautami Godavari have many interesting, mysterious, miraculous instances, legends, stories, biographies, fables and tales for narration. Whatever many of these may be, one thing has to be accepted as a fact and truth - many scholars and eminent religious and spiritual leaders have emerged on the banks of this sacred river.

I. Theerthas of Godavari

Brahmapurana lists various places of pilgrimages along the river Godavari right from the place it originates at Brahmagiri to the point it joins the sea by dividing itself into seven streams. It also describes stories connected with these theerthas. Some kinds of theerthas are stated as follows –

Brahmagiri –the place of evolution of Gautami Ganga Godavari, Varahi theertha, Kusavarta theertha, Neelaganga, Kapota theertha, Dashaswamedha theertha, Paisacha theertha, Kshudaa theertha, Ahalya Sangama theertha, Tanasthana Asva theertha, Bhanu theertha, Aruna-Varuna Sangama theertha, Garuda theertha, Govardhana theertha, Sweta- Shukra theerthas, Indira theertha, Paulastha – Agni –Runamochana theerthas, Suparna Sangama, Pururava theertha, Pancha theertha, Shami theertha, Soma theertha, Vruddha-Sangama theertha, Ila theertha, Aapasthambha theertha, Shukla theertha, Sri Vishnu theertha, Lakshmi theertha, Chakra theertha, Pippala theertha, Shanaischara theertha, Dhyana theertha, Vidharbha Sangama theertha, Revati Sangama theertha, Purnaa theertha, Govinda theertha, Sri Rama theertha, Putra theertha, Yama- Aagneya-Kapota- Uluka theerthas, Tapas theertha, Indra theertha, Vrushakapi-Abjaka theertha, Khadgha theertha, Aatreya theertha,

Paarushti theertha, Narashima theertha, Paishachanashana theertha, Nimnabheda theertha, Shankhahrudaya theertha, Kishkindha theertha, Vyasa theertha, Kushatarpana theertha, Pranita Snagama theertha, Saraswati theertha, Chichika theertha, Bhadra theertha, Paatatri theertha, Vipra theertha, Samudra theertha, Spta Godavari theertha and Saptarishi theertha.

We were blessed to have had an opportunity to cover quite a lot of these places during our Godavari parikarama.

II. Samartha Ramdas – Nasik-Panchavati

Samartha Ramdas was a great saint of Maharashtra. He was the guru (preceptor and guide) of Chatrapati Shivaji. Born in the 1608 A.D. as the second son of Suryaji Pant and Ranu Bhai in Jamb, he was primarily responsible for the rejuvenation of Hindu religion and society by inspiring Shivaji.

Since his early childhood, Samartha Ramdas was inclined towards spiritualism. For 12 years he meditated relentlessly on Lord Rama in an enclosed room. When he turned 12 years old all arrangements were made for his wedding. But, on the nick of time he leaped out of the marriage hall and ran away never to be caught in the web of worldly life. He devoted next 12 years of his life in tapas or austerities at a place called Takali on the sacred river Godavari near Nasik, a famous place of pilgrimage. It has been noted that Samartha Ramdas had recited the name of Sri Rama for about 13 lakhs times. He toured all over India to vigorously propagate Hinduism among the masses and arouse their pride in their religion, culture and motherland.

Samartha Ramdas left behind two immortal works in Marathi: Dasabodha and Manache Sloka. The magnum opus and famous work ‘Dasabodha’ which comprises 7756 metrical stanzas or ovis, deals with various aspects of philosophy and spiritual life. ‘Manache Sloka’ is very popular among the Maharastrians. It is recited and learnt by heart in every household

even today. He being an ardent devotee of Sri Rama and Hanuman not only composed religious treatises, but also built a number of temples in various towns.

It was under the influence and inspiration drawn from Samartha Ramdas, king Shivaji converted his Parali Fort as an ashram for his guru and named it “Sajjanghad”. He also protected the rich Indian culture, religion and spiritualism. The relationship shared by Samartha Ramdas and Chatrapati Shivaji is often compared to that of Chanakya and Chandra Gupta.

Samartha Ramdas had many disciples who were trained under him. He built many temples and stood firm by his religion and spread it across the world (in those times) with the same fervor as Swami Vivekananda did in the modern times. In 1992 it was a privilege for us to establish a voluntary organization “Samartha Vikas Trust” through Excel Company, Mumbai in Lote Parsuram in Konkan.

III. Eknath Maharaj – Paithan

In the olden days Paithan was known as Pratishtanapuram which shined as the capital kingdom of Satavaanas. With the flow of time and with the flow of river Godavari, the place became a place of gurus and great saints. Saint Jnaneshwar was born in Aapegoan which is 10 kms away from Paithan on the bank of the sacred river Godavari. His Samadhi is located here in Paithan.

Eknath Maharaj was born in the family of a holy Brahmin. He was brought up by his grandfather since he lost his parents early in life. His grandfather was a Rugvedi Maharashtra desastha brahmin, a sect which belonged to Aswalayana. He had a son Chakrapani and a grandson Suryanarayana. Eknath was the son of Suryanarayana and Rukmini. Ever since a child Eknath Maharaj was highly

disciplined and devoted. His guru was Janardhana Swami of Devagiri, who had attained the grace of Dattatreya and with whom he had several mystical experiences. He could intuit the greatness of Eknath. Therefore, he readily accepted him as his disciple. It was under the grace of his guru Janardhana Swami, Eknath Maharaj had the vision of Dattatreya.

Once it so happened, when Eknath Maharaj was doing penance a big black cobra wrapped around him. Eknath Maharaj did not move. The dangerous and poisonous snake could cause him no harm. It became mild and soft when it came in contact with Eknath's calm and composed body. It is said for many days it trailed behind him wherever he went. The message in the Gita "See one in all, and all in one," enabled him to experience it with the snake. Infact, he succeeded in winning the friendliness of the cobra.

Eknath Maharaj was a paragon of knowledge, was highly devoted to yoga, was a person of peace and forgiving nature. One day while he was returning after taking a sacred bath in the Godavari river, a muslim man spit on him. Without saying a word, Eknath went back to the river for another dip. This time too, on returning that man repeated his act. Once again Eknath went to the river for his sacred bath. Yet again the man spit on him, yet again Eknath went back to the river and took a holy bath. This repeated many times. Finally on realising that all his attempts to cause pain and anger to Eknath had failed, he gave up. He asked Eknath how he could remain so calm even after being repeatedly humiliated. Eknath smiled and replied. "Sir, infact I'm very thankful to you. It is because of you I had the opportunity to bathe several times in the sacred river." The Muslim man felt ashamed, pleaded forgiveness and paid homage.

Not only his nature, his works too attracted the attention of the world. Some great works like 'Eknathi Bhagavata' in

Marathi have been contributed by Eknath Maharaj. It is believed he drank the nectar of Jnaneshwari and prepared a fair copy of it and named it 'Jnaneshwari Bhagavat Gita'.

Eknath Maharaj took Jala Samadhi (walked away into the water till he was seen no more) at Paithan.

Paithan which was ruled time to time by Satavaanas, western Chalukyas, Yadavs, Kakatiyas, Sultans of Bahamani, Shivaji, rulers of Peshwa and Nizam Lords, was also known for saints and people who worked for religious and spiritual upliftment of the society like Sant Jnaneshwar, Nivruttinath, Sopandev, Muktabai and Eknath Maharaj. It was the dedication and devotion of these great men that had won for Paithan the status of a holy place, a famous pilgrimage centre.

IV. Sai Baba – Shirdi - Patri

Worshipped by a large number of devotees all around the world, especially in India in the states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, Sai Baba is one who lived long enough to spread the true meaning of religion as spiritual evolution. He was a great saint, a divine person like Dattatreya. He preached the oneness of all religions. Many Sai temples have been built across India and worldwide. The temple constructed on his Samadhi at Shirdi attracts millions of people today. Hence, it has become an important place of pilgrimage.

Shirdi is located about 10 km away from the sacred river Godavari in the Ahmednagar district. Sai Baba's place of birth and childhood is shrouded in mystery. Many discussions and versions came up with context to his origin and religion (whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim). V. B. Kher and M.V. Kamat wrote wonderful books on Sri Sai Baba in English.

V.B.Kher had done both intensive and extensive research

to identify and confirm the birth place of Sai Baba. On the basis of the books he referred to, discussions held with quite a good number of his devotees, proofs collected from Sai Baba's near and dear, Sai Baba's own actions and words and after scrutinizing several other evidences, the place of birth of Sai Baba and about his family dawned on him. The truth established on the basis of his research was that Sai Baba was born in a village called Patri in Parbhani district which was in the state of Hyderabad then (at present it belongs to the Maharashtra state).

Patri is situated 10 km away from the bank of the river Godavari. It is 16 km away from Manvat railway station which falls along the route from Secundrabad to Manmad. This confined to the fact that Sai Baba was not only born on the bank of the river Godavari but also took Samadhi on the bank of the sacred river.

In Patri, Sri Parshuram Bhusari of shukla yajurvedi desastha, madhyandina sakha had five sons – Raghupati, Dada, Hari Bhavu, Ambadas and Balwant. His third son Hari Bhavu went behind a fakir when he was just a child. Hari Bhavu Bhusari himself is Sai Baba is what Sri V.B.Kher emphasizes in his book “Shri Sai Baba – Janma Sthana Mandir, Pathri – Hand Book of Information”.

South is famous for being a land of yogis, wise men and fakirs and also as a land of meditation, knowledge and wisdom. It won't be wrong to say the coming together of vedic culture and suffism has blessed us with gurus like Sai Baba. One look at the ancestral house of Sri Sai Baba (today a beautiful temple of Baba stands there), reaffirms the truth of it being the birth place of Sai Baba.

During Godavari parikrama or when you are at Shirdi do make it a point to visit Patri and experience Baba's divine presence there.

V. Nanded – Gurudwara – Guru Gobind Singh

Sikhism is a religion founded by Guru Nanak, who was followed by a succession of nine more Gurus. This pontifical tradition ended with Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth in the series, who had carved out a permanent place for himself by his contributions to the growth and success of Sikhism.

According to Sikhism there is only one God and to realize him the help of a sadguru is essential. Hence, in this religion guru is placed prominently high. The aspect of ‘onkar’ is paramatma, parmatma is all-pervasive and by the blessings of Guru everything becomes possible. These are some of the beliefs of the Sikhs.

Takht Sri Keshghar Sahib in Anandpur, Sri Akal Takht in Amritsar (situated within the precincts of the Golden Temple where Guru Granth Sahib is kept), Takht Sri Damdama Sahib in Bhatinda near Talawandi Sabo village, Takht Sri Patna Sahib, Takht Sri Hazur Sahib in Nanded on the bank of the holy river Godavari are the five most significant places or takhts (thrones). These takhts are considered to be the seats of the sikh religious authority.

Guru Gobind Singh was born in 1666 A.D. to the illustrious ninth sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur and his wife Mata Gujri in Patna. In 1675, at the age of nine years he became a guru. His life and teachings have had a lasting impression on Sikh ideology as well as on daily life. He was responsible for having moulded the sikh religion to its present shape. He started the nucleus of the ‘khalsa’ fraternity in 1699 in Anandpur and had ordained the sikh to wear the following articles popularly known as 5 K’s – Kesh (unshaven hair which represents the natural appearance of sainthood), Kangan (a comb to clean the hair), Kachha (an undergarment to indicate virtuous character), Kara (an iron bracelet on the wrist as a symbol of dedication to the

Divine Bridegroom) and Kirpan (a sword symbolizing dignity, power and unconquerable spirit). In 1705 he completed the Guru Granth Sahib which he declared should be treated as the Guru and honoured as such, in this way putting an end to the line of sikh gurus.

Though all the gurus had contributed to the growth and success of Sikhism, the struggle and hardships faced by Guru Gobind Singh were most significant. He fought many battles against the Muslim kings and the Mugal emperor Aurangazeb to safe guard Hinduism and Sikhism. It was he who transformed Sikhism into a dynamic religion and the Sikhs into a race of warriors in defense of their dharma. He reached Nanded in Maharashtra in 1708 and camped on the bank of the Godavari river. It was here on 7th October, 1708 Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last. A monument has been built here in his honour.

In 1830 Maharaja Ranjit Singh's endowment saw the construction of a beautiful Gurudwara in Nanded near the river Godavari. The gurudwara features an imposing golden dome with intricate carvings and a breathtakingly beautiful artwork. It is known as Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib. From then onwards Nanded began to be listed as an important pilgrimage centre in the south for the sikh community. It is worth paying a visit to this Gurudwara during Gautami Godavari parikrama or on other times.

VI. Bhadrachalam – Bhakta Ramadas

Bhadrachalam is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the river Godavari. It once formed the part of the Dandakaranya forest visited by Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana during their exile (vanvas). Today it is one of the most renowned places of pilgrimage in south. The town is blessed with a beautiful temple of Lord Rama, his consort Sita and brother Lakshmana on a hill encircled by holy river Godavari flowing

towards southern direction. The specialty of this temple is the main deity facing westside towards Godavari. Brahmapurana elaborately describes the history and significance of this shrine.

According to Stalapurana, Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana appeared before Bhadra (personification of the mountain Bhadragiri – son begotten by the mountain king Meru and Menaka after long penance) and transformed themselves into stone images at his request to stay there permanently on his head. Since the deities are seated on the top of Bhadra achalam (hill), the shrine is called Bhadrachalam.

For centuries the idols remained covered under an ant-hill. One day Sri Rama appeared in the dream of a woman known as Pokala Dammakka, an ardent devotee in the 17th century, and told her about the existence of the idols on Bhadragiri hills. The very next day Dammakka went in search of the idols and found them in an ant-hill. She cleansed the idols with Godavari water and worshipped them daily. As instructed by Sri Rama, she waited patiently for the arrival of a fervent devotee of Sri Rama who would construct a temple for the deities. This devotee was none other than Gopanna famous today as Bhakta Ramadas.

Gopanna was born to Linganna Murthy and Kamamba in Nelakondapalli village of Khammat taluka. He was the nephew of Akkanna, the administrative head in the court of Qutub Shah King known as Taneshah of Golconda. Gopanna was appointed as Taslidhar of Palvencha Paragana. He heard about Dammakka and felt curious to meet her. When he went and met her and saw the idols he was dumbfounded by their amazing appearance. He assured that soon a temple for these deities will be built. When the funds collected by the villagers was not enough, he used six lakh rupees collected from the land revenue as a loan for the construction of the temple. Taneshah came to know about this. He not only dismissed Gopanna for

mis-utilisation of funds, but also kept him in jail in the Golconda fort for 12 years where he was subjected to severe torture. To sooth himself from pain he composed and sang a number of songs imploring Sri Rama to relieve him of his miseries. In the present day, these songs are popular as ‘Dasarathi Sathakam’ and ‘Ramadas Keerthanas’.

Later, Taneshah realized his folly when Sri Rama and Lakshamana disguised as Ramoji and Lakshmoji repaid the amount on behalf of Gopanna. He understood the devotional spirit and dedication of Ramadas towards Rama.

Taneshah earmarked the income used for the construction of the temple for the maintenance of the temple every year, a tradition continued later by others. The custom of offering Pearls (Mutiyala Talambralu) every year on the occasion of Kalyana Mahotsavam (marriage ceremony) of Lord Rama and Sita was also started by Taneshah. This is being followed even today by the government of Andhra Pradesh.

Experience the sanctity and the piousness around by visiting the temple during parikrama or on other occasions.

VII. Draksharam – Bhimeshwara

The state of Andhra Pradesh also known as ‘Trilinga Desam’ is famous for the three Shiva lingas located at Srisailam (Mallikarjuna Swami), Kaleshwaram (Mukteshwara Swami) and Draksharama (Bhimeshwara Swami). Draksharama is also called the Pancharama (Amararama, Somarama, Kshirarama, Daksharama and Kumararama) Kshetra which is dedicated to Lord Shiva - Amareshwara Swami on the bank of river Krishna, Someshwara Swami in Gunupudi, Ramalingeshwara Swami in Palakollu, Bhimeshwara Swami in Draksharamam and Kumara Bhimalingeshwara Swami in Samarlakota respectively.

There are many legends associated with this place.

According to a local legend, the Shiva linga in the temple was installed and established by Sun God (Surya). Yet another local belief is that the angels built the temple in one night. The incomplete perimeter wall stands as a testimony for this. The angels could not complete it before sunrise. Since then the wall remained the same despite numerous attempts to complete it.

Draksharam was the field of sacrifice for Daksha whose daughter Satidevi offered herself to fire and attained liberation here. At that time different parts of Devi descended at different places. Devi's naval descended here and took the form of Maanikyamba Devi, the consort of Bhimeshwara Swami. This is a very important place among all Shakti Peetas of Devi.

Many Shaasanas (official and historical edicts) have been written on the stone walls of the temple. The marriage of Andhra Satavaana King Haala with Simhala princess Leelavati was solemnized here with grandeur. First Chalukya Bhima established Draksharama and Bhimeshwara here. Raja Raja Narendra worshipped Bhimeshwara with great devotion. His court poet Nannaya Bhattu wrote Andhra Mahabharatam here. He described Raja Raja Narendra as "Bhimeshwara Krutanitya Prasada Soujanya Gunaabharana" and "Daksha Makhaari Dayalabda Suthiraishwarya". Narayana Bhattu who was an associate and a dear friend of Nannaya Bhattu, supported the poet in writing of Mahabharata in many ways.

There are stone edicts about the "Deepa daanam" by Kuppamamba, the daughter of Narayana Bhattu, deepa daanam' by second Prataparudra and about the donations by Somaladevi the daughter of Vijayaaditya.

The great poet Srinaatha extolled Bhimeshwara in a wonderful manner. Vemulawada Bhima Kavi wrote admirable poetry on Bhimeshwara.

Emperors and kings like Vishnu Kundinas, Pallavas, Eastern Chalukyas, Velanati Cholas, Kaakatiyas, Eastern Gangas, Kondaveedu and Rajamundry Reddys, Chegi kings, Gaja pathis, Vijayanagara kings and many other kings had worshipped Sri Bhimeshwara.

This place has been an important centre for Vaidiks, Bouddhas, Shaivaas, and others. The ancient Bhimeshwara temple has been an important witness to the history of India.

The Shiva linga at Bhimeshwara Swamy temple is said to be a large crystal and probably it is the largest Shiva linga in the world. If the Shiva linga at Triambakeshwar represents Lord Shiva's eternal form, the Shiva linga at Bhimeshwaram represents the unfathomable form of Lord Shiva. Indeed the river Godavari which unites both of them is a holy river flowing with divinity.

VIII. Sir Arthur Cotton - Dhawaleshwaram –Dams on Godavari

The magnificent and sacred river Godavari known for the places of pilgrimages along its bank is the main source of survival and livelihood for the people living on its bank in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Bridges, barrages and dams constructed across the river and its tributaries have played a vital role in the development of the places in and around them whether it is in the field of irrigation, agriculture, cultivation, thermal power or industrial growth.

The Ganga Sagar dam in Nasik district not only provides drinking water to its residents, but also supplies thermal power. The Sriram Sagar project on the border of Adilabad and Nizamabad districts irrigates and facilitates power to the northern Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh. The dam near Paithan was built to address the problem of drought in Marthwada region and also to solve the problem of flood along the bank of the river.

The fertile lands near reservoirs, lakes and the navigational canal have added to the prosperity of the states. The areas along Ganga Sagar are known for vegetables, sugarcane, grapes and sweet lime; Nath Sagar is the source for sugarcane, fruits and orchards; and Sriram Sagar is known for the progress it brought about in the districts of Adilabad and Nizamabad. Andhra Pradesh owes its recognition for agricultural prosperity to the delta region near Dhawaleshwaram, which is popular for its land cultivation, gardens and coconut plantation.

Ganga Sagar, Nath Sagar and Sriram Sagar dams built across Godavari have been designed and constructed by Indian engineers after independence. However, the barrage on the river Godavari in Dhawaleshwaram was first built by a British irrigation engineer, Sir Arthur Cotton. His projects averted famines and stimulated the economy in south India.

Sir Arthur Cotton was born in England in 1803. In 1821 he came to India and joined as a Chief Engineer in Madras. His contribution the construction of dams on the river Cauvery in 1829 and on river Krishna in 1840 will always be remembered. In 1844, he proposed the construction of Vishakapatnam port and a barrage at the neck of Godavari delta. He began its construction in 1847 and completed it in 1852. He went around the Godavari delta area mounting an impressive horse. He toiled and faced many hardships during his work, but nothing deterred his spirit. He conducted intensive surveys and came up with new proposals. It is a fact that Sir Arthur Cotton devoted his entire life to the construction of irrigation and navigational canals during the British Empire in India. Even today, he is honoured in parts of rural Andhra Pradesh for his efforts. Sir Arthur Cotton Museum contains many pictures describing the working of the dam and displays tools used during the construction of dams. Following lines have been written in his honour:

His soul, mind, heart became a single sun
Experience was a tale of blaze and fire
Strange riches sailed to him from the unknown
A victory was won for God in man
And stilled all weeping with its hand of joy
Its power was to reveal divinity.

He brought back hope to the despairing heart
He gave peace to the humble and the great
He shed his grace on the foolish and wise
He is the wisdom incarnate on a glorious Throne
He is beauty, he is the seer, he is nectar
Flowed in healing streams on indigent life.

IX. Sapta Godavari

Gautami Godavari river which originates on Brahmagiri hill finally bonds with the Bay of Bengal. Before it flows into the sea it branches into seven streams. Brahmapurana tells how or what made the vigorously flowing Godavari to divide.

As per the desire of Gautama Maharishi, Gautami Ganga came down to oblige the three worlds as a pious river to relieve all sins. It began to cascade from Brahmagiri in the west towards the sea in the east. The Sea God, Samudra saw the worshipable, supreme and divine Gautami flowing towards him. Wishing to extend a welcome to the Goddess he addresses her - "Oh Mother! Your infinite form is swiftly flowing towards me. In me there are many living and precious beings. Sri Maha Vishnu is reclining and his consort, Sri Lakshmi Devi is seated at his seat. Oh Devi! I will not be able to withstand your powerful flow. Therefore, have mercy on me and kindly divide yourself into seven streams and then flow towards me." While heeding to the prayer of Samudra, she (the Mother) requested him to bring the Saptarishis and their respective wives there. At the behest of

Samudra the Saptarishis come there as desired. Gautami instructed the Saptarishis to divide her into seven streams. With great devotion they did so. This is how the sacred river Gautami Godavari has taken seven forms as Vasishti, Visvamitri, Vamadevi, Gautami, Bharadwaji, Atreyi and Jaamadagni. They divided her from the south to the north direction, performed prayers and worshipped her. In this way Sapta Godavari came into existence.

Today we can see three important streams – Vasistha, Vainateya and Gautami. With the passage of time ‘Vamadevi’ probably came to be called as ‘Vainateya’.

This is what Padmapurana has to say about Sapta Godavari –

**1. *Sapta Godavari snaatva niyato niyataashanaha
Maha punya mavaapnoti devalokanca gachati***

Takes bath in sapta Godavari who
Constantly abides by principles who
Great blessings he shall get
To heavenly abode he shall set.

**2. *Sapta Godavari naama sarva theertheshvareshvaram
Tat shraaddam pradatavyamanantha phalamipsubhihi***

Along the renowned sapta Godavari where
All places of pilgrimages are there
Performs who rightly shraaddha (obsequies) when
He shall get fruits accordingly then.

In Draksharamam near Bhimeshwaram there is the pond of Sapta Godavari. When we were travelling from Yanaam to Narsapur through the stream of Gautami from Savitrinagar, we entered the Vasishta stream near Antarvedi and reached Narsapur. It is on this wonderful journey on the sea we could

see Godavari's four branches, the beautiful places where the rivers merge with the sea and experience the divineness of the Sapta Godavari. Even those who choose to travel by road and cross bridges at Yanaam, Rajol, Antarvedi and Narsapur can have similar joy and experience.

X. Kaleshwaram – Mukteshwaram

Kaleshwaram situated on the south bank of the river Godavari is called the Dakshina Triveni Sangam. It is here the rivers Godavari and Pranahita meet along with the third hidden flow of Saraswati (river Saraswati is actually a concealed river and is believed to flow as Antarvahini). It is said years ago one devotee had performed abhishekam to Kaleshwara-Mukteshwara with more than hundred pots of milk. Instead of overflowing in the precincts of the temple, the milk evolved at the sangam of Godavari and Pranahita. Hence, the name Dakshina Gangotri has also been given to this place.

It is said that Kala (Yama) who often undertook severe penance, was granted the boon by Lord Shiva to be installed just beside him in the shape of a linga and be worshipped. Therefore, the unique and peculiar feature about Kaleshwaram is that two lingas on a single pedestal (panavatam)- one being Kaleshwara (Yama, who symbolizes death) and other Mukteshwara (Shiva, who symbolizes liberation) are found. The Mukteshwara linga has two holes on the top known as the nostrils of the deity. The legend tells that the milk and water poured into these nostrils miraculously flow into the river Godavari. Even today, it is strange, whatever amount of water is poured in these nostrils they never get fully filled up. The devotees worship here first Kaleshwara linga and then Mukteshwara linga for the liberation of their souls. No wonder, in the Brahmapurana the sacredness of Gautami Ganga is placed first when compared to Bhagirathi Ganga.

Kaleshwaram, Srisailam and Draksharam gave Andhra

Pradesh its other name 'Trilinga Desa' from where the word 'Telangana' and 'Telugu' are believed to have been derived. This place also serves as the meeting point of three states – Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

There are many other well-known temples in Kaleshwaram. It is said, the Kasi Vishwanath temple here is like the Pasupatinath temple in Nepal, with four entrances. Sun temples like the ones in Konark and Arisepalli are also to be seen there. Like Jnana Saraswati temple in Basara and Vidya Saraswati temple in Mantrapuri, there is Praudha Saraswati temple in Kaleshwaram. Besides other temples, it is worth visiting temples of Adi Mukteshwara Swamy, Shubhananda Devi (Parvati) and Chandra Sekhara Swamy.

Kaleshwaram forms the nabhi kshetra (Manipura Chakra) of Godavari parikrama when you begin and end your parikrama from Manthani while passing through Sundilla, Godavarikhani, Velala, Pavunur, Chennur, Sirivencha, Kaleshwaram, Damerakunta and Lakshmidugu. Do seek the blessings of Kaleshwar – Mukteshwar during parikrama or when convenient.

XI. Dharmapuri – Mantrapuri – Chennur

Dharmapuri and Mantrapuri in Krimnagar district and Chennur in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh have attained importance for not only being places of pilgrimage on the bank of the river Godavari, but also for having large settlement of Vedic Brahmins in A.P. No wonder these places have a good number of vedic and religious institutions.

The sacred river Godavari flows in south direction at Dharmapuri. Therefore, here Godavari is termed as Dakshina Vahini (south flowing). At Manthani the river begins to change from east to north direction. A little away it takes a turn and near Damarakunta joined by the river Maandavya (Manair) it

flows into Chennur as Uttara Vahini (north flowing).

Dharmapuri, Mantrapuri and Chennur are very ancient centers of learning and even today houses many scholars well versed in vedas and shastras. With equal focus being given to skills related to the modern world and by balancing ancient wisdom and modern education these places have succeed in producing efficient and eminent scholars.

Dharmapuri gained religious importance owing to the existence of the shrine dedicated to Narasimha Swamy. Lord Shiva as Dakshinamurthy, Vinayaka and Saptha Mathrukas carved on a single slab of stone, Mahishasuramardhani (the sixty pillared temple), Mahalakshmi temple, Ugra Narshima Swamy temple, Venkateshwara Swamy temple, and over five hundred year old Sri Sita Rama Swamy temple are the other temples of importance which have heighted the sanctity of Dharmapuri.

The three Narasimha satakams (a collection of 100 stanzas) written by Dharmapuri's great poet Seshappa are the most prominent. Among these, the following lines

***“Bhushanavikasa sri Dharmapurinivasa!
Dushtasamhara! Narashima! Duritaduura!”***

which are the tiara of one of the satakams are very popular throughout Andhra Pradesh.

Manthani is referred to as Mantrapuri (the town of hymns) with reverence by local scholars. It is popularly believed to house a thousand Brahmin families (Sahasra Brahmana Gadapa). In Manthani the five prime lingas are Bhisheshwara, Gautameshwara, Omkareshwara, Sileshwara and Siddeshwara. The temples of Gautameshwara on the bank of the Godavari river, Vidya Saraswati and that of Sri Rama are very divine. Three hundred years ago, Muddu Balambhat, a man of letters and a great author of literary compositions, wrote “Manthana

Ramayanam” and “Shiva Puranam” in Yaksha Gana style. These folk songs are still sung by the people of Manthani, Achhalapuram and Gunjapadugu. Many great teachers and vedic pundits have been born in Manthani. Since my childhood, Pullanna Somayajulu and later Narahari Somayajulu have become famous. Manthani people are proficient not only in Veda Shastras, but are equally skilful in Paka Shastra.

Chennur is also known for its Vedic scholars. The temple of Bhavani Agastheshwara Swamy is very beautiful. Sri Vaanamamalai Varadacharyulu popularly known as Abhinava Potanna wrote the famous poem “Potanna Charita”.

Lakshmimadugu near Manthani is surrounded by the magnificent river Godavari. It is here near Rudra Padas, Gajendra Moksham, linga dwaya of Kaleshwar-Mukteshwar, idols of three mothers are extremely beautiful. You can visit this place from Kanapuram.

XII. Gangakhed - Janabai

Janabai was a Marathi religious poet who was adorned with the status of a saint by the people of Maharashtra. She was born in 1280(A.D.) in Parbhani (Maharashtra) to a couple with first names ‘Rand’ and ‘Karand’ who belonged to the lowest caste. After her mother died, her father took her to Pandharpur. Here, Janabai worked as a maidservant in the house of Damasheti and Gonai couple. In 1350, her soul departed to the heavenly abode.

Pandharpur has high religious significance especially among Marathi-speaking Hindus. Janabai's employers, Damasheti and his wife, Gonai, were very religious. They had a son Namdev who was a prominent Marathi devotional poet. Janabai attended on him and looked after him for many years, though she was slightly older than him.

It was due to the influence of the religious environment around her and her innate inclination, Janabai became an ardent devotee of Lord Pandu Ranga Vittal. She was also gifted with poetic talent. Though she never had any formal schooling, she composed many high-quality yet simple religious verses of the abhang (keertanas) form. It is said that she composed about 340 abhangas in Marathi.

On par with the great saints of Maharashtra like Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram Janabai has a revered place in the minds of Marathi-speaking Hindus. In accord with a tradition in India of assigning the epithet sant (saint) to persons regarded as thoroughly saintly, all of the above religious figures including Janabai are commonly attributed that epithet in Maharashtra. Thus, Janabai is routinely referred to as Sant Janabai .

You can visit Sant Janabai's Sansthan, Pandu Ranga temple and Sant Janabai Memorial during Godavari parikrama. You must also see and enjoy Balaji temple, Ganga Godavari Murti, and the holy Godavari river at Gangakhed.

XIII. Nevasa – Jnaneshwari

Nevasa is the place where the rivers Godavari and Pravara meet. It is in Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra. This place is popularly said to be where the crest jewel of Marathi literature “Jnaneshwari” was composed. This book containing wonderful commentary on the Gita was written from 1287 to 1290 A. D., by Sant Jnaneshwar while leaning to a black pillar in the Kari Veereshwara temple on the bank of Pravara river. The auspicious period and the blessings of his gurus –Sant Nivruttinath, Sant Sopandev and Muktabai (who were his siblings), enabled Sant Jnaneshwar to accomplish this task at the age of thirteen. Sachidananda Pava wrote while Sant Jnaneshwar recited the verses. When the word spread about this,

many great men were said to have thronged the place to witness it. Even today that black pillar exists in the Kari Veereshwara temple.

Vittalpant, father of Jnaneshwar, was born in Apegaon, a village 10 km away from Paithan. He was pious and dispassionate ever since childhood. He often went on pilgrimages. Soon after his thread ceremony he went to Alandi near Pune. There he married Rukmabai, daughter of Sridharpanth. Disgusted with worldly life he returned along with his wife to Apegaon where his parents lived. After the death of his parents he went back to Alandi.

Vittalpant went to Varanasi and took Sanyasa from Sripad Yati (Ramananda Swami) by telling a lie that he had no dependents. Incidentally Sripadyati, the Guru of Vittalpant, happened to come to Alandi on his way to Rameshwaram. Rukmabai approached him and prostrated before him. Sripad Yati blessed her. Rukambai wept bitterly. When Sripad Yati enquired the cause of her sorrow, she explained everything to him. He rebuked his disciple Vittalpant and instructed him to immediately go back to family life. Then, Nivruttinath, Jnaneshwar, Sopandev and Muktabai were born.

Since Vittalpant had returned to the life of a householder after sanyasa, which was considered as a heinous sin, the contemporary society had boycotted him. Hence, the children could not be administered the sacraments (thread ceremony) normal to the Hindu Brahmins.

Once while doing parikrama of a mountain, they came across a tiger in the forest. Everybody ran helter-skelter. Nivrutti ran inside a cave in the Anjani mountain. There he met the ninth hathayogi Gahaninath of the hatha yoga tradition (Sampradaya). The yogi recognized the glow on Nivrutti's face, who was a young boy then, and told him the mantra "Ramakrishna Hari"

and welcomed him to understand the mysteries of their spiritual wisdom.

Nivrutti became Nivruttinath a renowned man of spiritual wisdom. He became the guru of his brothers and sister. It was as per the instruction of his brother, now his guru, Sant Jnaneshwar, he wrote "Jnaneshwari", a detailed commentary in Marathi on the Bhagavad Gita. Actually it was a series of his discourses on the Gita delivered in the temple in Nevasa. Born in 1275 A.D., Jnaneshwar left his body in a state of deep samadhi in 1296 A.D. at the young age of 21, at Alandi. Nivruttinath attained Samadhi at Triambak, which is the source of the sacred river Godavari.

XIV. Shani Shingnapur

India is known as a land of temples. Though temples for various Gods and Goddesses are a common sight in every city, town or village, temples which are most significant are few and Shani Shingnapur, temple of Shani, the Hindu God of planet Saturn is one of them. Shani Shingnapur or Shani Shingnapur or Sonai is a village near Nevasa in Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra. Situated quite near to Shirdi, it is often frequented by pilgrims and devotees who visit Shirdi.

Shingnapur is famous not only for its remarkable Shani temple, but also for the fact that no house in the village has doors. There are only door frames. Despite this, no theft or any other unfair incident is reported in the village. Even the most valuable things are not kept under lock and key. Villagers believe that the temple is a "jagrut devasthan" ("a live temple") meaning that the God here is very powerful. It is 'He' who keeps vigilance. Hence, none can escape or outwit Him.

The shrine comprises of a five and a half feet high black rock which symbolizes the God Shani. It is installed on an open-air platform. A legend says, this black stone came drifting in the gushing waters when river Phanasa was inundated 450 years ago. It got stuck under a berry tree. When the villagers tried to remove it blood oozed out from it. The perplexed villagers camped there that night. Shani Dev appeared in the dream of a devotee, told him about his presence and instructed to consecrate a temple for him there. The village and its people then would be blessed and happy. It is strongly believed that anyone who does abhishekam of the deity with oil will be free from any kind of ill effects or complexities of life for seven and a half years period of shani (sade saathee).

Maharshi Vyas had written the following mantra on Shani Dev –
***“Om neelanjana samaabhasam ravi putram yamaagrajam
Chaayaa maartanda sambhutam namani shanaischram”***

(Shani Dev is the son of Surya (the Sun God) and Chaya Devi (Goddess of Shadow), elder brother of Yama Darmaraj. Both are symbol of virtues. Salutations to you God Shani!)

Shani Shingnapur can be approached either from Nevasa or Shirdi during Godavari parikrama or any other fine day as per your choice.

CHAPTER - 18

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND INFORMATION

The information about people who could be helpful in many ways like booking accommodation, listing places of interest are given below. However, during yatra there may be certain apprehensions, gaps and uncertainties which you have to manage then and there itself. There is nothing to worry or panic about. Since this yatra is a culmination of goodwill and divine power appropriate solutions will come on time. What one needs to put in is a little effort. Open hands, open mind and open heart will open the doors. “Seek and you shall find”, “Search and you shall get”, “Ask and you shall receive”, “Share and you will enjoy”.

The information given below may not suffice your needs as a whole, yet may be good supplements to begin with.

I. TRIAMBAKESHWAR

1) Sri Ashutosh Pramod Mahajan

225 - Mahajan Wadi
Gangadwar Road,
Post. TRIAMBAKESHWAR
Dist. Nashik - 422 212
Maharashtra
Tel: 02594 - 233321
Mobile: 09423480021

Sri Ashutosh Mahajan can make all arrangements at Triambakeshwar including staying and performing puja as per your budget. He can also provide information about other important places of interest without crossing Godavari.

2) You can also contact :

Shiv Prasad Jyotirlinga Devasthan Trust
TRIAMBAKESHWAR - 422 212
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra
Tel: 02594-234251

II. PANCHAVATI

1) **Birla Matrumandal Guest House**

Near Malegaon Stand
PANCHAVATI - 422 003
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra
Tel: 0253-2513538

This is an economical Marwari trust Yatri nivas. There are other Dharmashalas and guest houses.

2) One can also write to :

Ganga Godavari Pancha Koti Purohit Sangh
PANCHAVATI - 422 003
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra

III. PAITHAN

1) One can contact for details of stay etc. -

Sant Eknath Samadhi Mandir
PAITHAN, Dist. Aurangabad,
Maharashtra

2) For guidance contact :

Sri Prabhakar Yashwant Kulkarni (Py)
Vinayak Apartments, Ground Floor,
Near Raja Shivaji Margadarshan Kendra
Tidke Colony, Nashik - 422 003
Maharashtra
Phone : 0253-25792942, Mobile: 09960005888

Shri Kulkarni is the regional coordinator for Akhila Bharatiya Brahman Sangh

IV. BASAR

- 1) Shri Sharad Pathak
Chairman
Gnaana Saraswati Devasthanam
BASAR, Mudhol Mandal
Adilabad District. (A.P.)
Ph: 08752-243501 (R), 08752-243595 (O)

Shri Gnaana Saraswati Devasthan has all facilities.

V. CHENNUR

- 1) **Shivalaya Abhivruddhi Committee**
Shri Agasteshwara Temple
P.O. CHENNUR - 504 201
Dist: Adilabad (A.P.)
- 2) One can also cotact :
Sri Vedam (Gattu) Narahari Shastri
Near Shivalayam
CHENNUR - 504 201
Dist. Adilabad (A.P.)
Ph: 08738-241290
Mobile: 09849009309

VI. GADCHIROLI

Gadchiroli is in Maharashtra. The information about Gadchiroli can be provided by Sri B. Suresh Chandra a senior Civil Engineer who worked there earlier. He can provide necessary guidance.

Sri B. Suresh Chandra

Plot No. 16

Gajanan Prasad Apartment

Renge Nagar, Talmale Estate

Trimurthi Nagar,

NAGPUR - 4400222

Mobile: 09423631309, Tel: 0712-2221011

VII. BHADRACHALAM

Bhadrachalam is a temple town and many guest houses are available. There is a noble learned Acharya who can be contacted for information.

1) **Sri Sita Ramanujacharylu garu**

House No. 6-1-75

Raja Veedhi (Main Road)

Opp. Vani Book Stall,

BHADRACHALAM - 507 111

Dist: Khammam (A.P.)

Tel: 08743-234854, Mobile: 092901 94660

VIII. RAJAMUNDRY

At Rajamundry there are many ashrams, satrams, vedapathshalas and guest houses. For information and guidance one may contact :

1) **Sri Emani Sheshadri Sharma garu**

H.No. 6-20-4, T.Nagar,

RAJAMUNDRY - 1

East Godavari (A.P.)

Mobile: 09441281426, Tel: 0883-2422315

2) **Dr. Prabhala Subrahmanya Sharma garu**

H.No. 59-8-6, Near Indra Heights Apartments,

P & T Colony, Behind Raja Talkies,

RAJAMUNDRY - 533 105 (A.P.)

Tel: 0883-2463946, Mobile: 098484 19609

IX. YANAAM

At Yanaam launch arrangement has to be made. one may contact -

1) P. Srinivas (Sreenu)

Boat Operator

Giriyam Peta, Yanaam (Pondyachery)

Near East Godavari Dist. of A.P.

Mobile: 09849710879

2) Normally the boats start from Savitrinagar (chepala revu) at about 6-00 a.m.. For the arrangements and guidance at Yanaam please contact :

3) Shri Dantuluri Ravivarma garu

Chairman Veereshwara Swami Temple

P.O. Murumalla, Polavaram Mandal,

Dist. East Godavari

Mobile: 098490 65799, Ph: 08856-278136

X. KOVVUR

At Kovvur one may get guidance from

1) Sri Nori Bhogishwara Sharma

12-12-3, Gandikota Veedhi,

KOVVUR - 534 350

West Godavari Dist. (A.P.)

Tel: 0883-3232131, Mobile: 09247836834

For Devidarshanam at Timmarajapalem near Kovvur contact.

2) Dr. D.R. Subbaraya Sastry garu

Chairman and Founder Trustee

Sri Kotasatheamma Devasthanam

Thimmaraja Palem - 534 301

Nidadavole Mandalam

West Godavari District. A.P.

Tel: 08813-221012, Mobile: 098484 05552

XI. BURGAMPAD

While at Bhadrachalam at Stage (VII) please enquire about Burgampad. However for guidance and information please contact.

- 1) **Shri Indarapu Sambanna garu**
Hon. President
Dharmapuri Brahmana Sangam
Near Godavari,
DHARMAPURI, Dist. Karimnagar. (A.P.)
Mobile: 09440042883
- 2) **Sri Sita Ramanujacharylu garu**
House No. 6-1-75
Raja Veedhi (Main Road)
Opp. Vani Book Stall,
BHADRACHALAM - 507 111
Dist: Khammam (A.P.)
Tel: 08743-234854, Mobile: 092901 94660

XII. KALESHWARAM

Kaleshwaram is a place of holy sangam of Godavari and Pranahita. For arrangements please contact.

- 1) **Shri Kaleshwara Mukteshwaraswami Devasthanam**
KALESHWARAM
Mahadevapuram Mandal
Dist. Karimnagar. (A.P.)
- 2) **Ramagundam Laxminarayana Sharma garu**
KALESHWARAM
Mahadevapuram Mandal
Dist. Karimnagar. (A.P.)
Ph: 08720-2010104,
Mobile: 094412 11676

XIII. MANTHANI

For any guidance and co-operation please contact.

- 1) **Sri S. Laxman Rao**
President
Sri Sitarama Seva Sadan
Godavari Road,
P.O. MANTHANI - 505 184
Dist. Karimnagar (A.P.)
Tel: 08729-258439,
Mobile: 094907 33069
- 2) **Sri Gattu Chandrashekhar**
Sri Rama Temple
Near Godavari,
Manthani - 505 184
Dist. Karimnagar (A.P.)
Tel: 08729-259322,
Mobile: 09948654630

XIV. DHARMAPURI

At Dharmapuri Pl. contact :

- 1) **Sri Sanganabtlia Dinesh**
Chairman
Sri Laxmi Narsimha Swami Vaari Devasthanam
DHARMAPURI - 505 425
Dist. Karimnagar (A.P.)
Tel: 09440555070 (M)
- 2) **Sri Indarapu Sambannagaru**
Hon. President
Dharmapuri Brahmana Sangham
P.O. Dharmapuri - 505 425
Dist. Karimnagar (A.P.)
Tel: 08724-273046,
Mobile: 09440042883

3) **Shri A. Mahadev**

Sri Gurudatta Vatsalya Nilayam
V.H.P. Girls Orphanage
Near Sridatta Temple,
Sri Ramasagar Project
Balconda Mandalam
Dist. Nizamabad (A.P.) - 503 219
Ph: 08463-246219, Cell: 098491 19227

For information, guidance and for stay at Sri Ram Sagar and to see the wonderful Children Centre contact Sri Avadhanula Mahadev and Smt. Avadhanula Lata Mahadev, Datta Vatsalya Nilayam.

XV. GANGAKHED

At Gangakhed there is a beautiful Balaji Temple. For arrangements pl. contact.

1) **Shri Gajanan Vijay Kumar Pathak**

Nageshwar Mandir
GANGAKHED - 431 514
Dist. Parbhani, Maharashtra
Mobile: 09422564544

2) **Yagneshwar Silukur Maharaj Vedapathashala**

Maharsi Ved Vidyalaya
GANGAKHED - 431 514
Dist. Parbhani, Maharashtra

XVI. SHIRDI

At Shirdi arrangements pl. contact

Subhash Palsare (Ram)

Sainath Phool Bhandar
Shop No. 1, Phool Market Chowk,
South Gate No. 4,
SHIRDI - 423 019

Dist. Ahmednagar
Mobile: 099707 48181

XVII. NASIK

- 1) **Bai Kabibai Dharmashala**
1642, Balaji Koth, Sarat Bazar
Near Bhandri Bazar
Nashik - 422 001
Maharashtra
Ph: 0253-2509472
Manager : **Ramchandra Shah**
Cenefker : **Suman bahen**

2) For guidance at Nasik and all places in Maharashtra pl. contact:

Shri Prabhakar Yashwant Kulkarni (Popular Name: PY)
Vinayak Apartments, Ground Floor,
Near Raja Shivaji Margadarshan Kendra
Tidke Colony,
Nashik - 422 003
Maharashtra
Ph: 0253-25792942,
Mobile: 09960005888

Sri Kulkarni is the regional co-ordinator for Akhila Bharatiya Brahmana Sangh. For Information and guidance in Maharashtra pl. contact. Shri Prabhakar Kulkarni. For information in A.P. pl., contact Sri Indarapu Sambanna and Sri S. Laxman Rao.

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Sujana - Narayana

