


* CHAPTER FIFTEEN *




Shri Ganeshay Namaha ! Oh Kashyapa's son Vamana ! Oh little Narayana ! You have obliged Bali Raja by accepting an offering from him. You took away his kingdom of this earth but gave him that of other world, Patal. You, by this action took Amla from him and in return gave a coconut to that saintly Bali Raja. Moreover due to his extreme devotion, you accepted to remain as guard at his doors. By your blessing only Bali Raja is to become the king of Gods at the end of this epoch. O Ananta, you learnt all the Vedas in a moment. Amongst all your incarnations, this is, Shri Hari, most pious, as you killed nobody and have pleased both friends and foes. That is why you are respected both by Gods and Demons. You have, in this incarnation, given happiness to Gods, protected demons and thus justified your Godliness. O Vamana, I again bow before you. Kindly put you blessing hand on the head of this Dasganu.

Shri Bal Gangadhar Tilak - the Kohinoor of Maharashtra - had keen foresight and excelled in politics. He was brave and worked hard for the independence of our country. Stubborn like Bhishma, looking to the plight of our country, took vow for its liberation from foreign rule, and being true to his cause, was fearless. Orator like Brihaspati, he created panic into the minds of Britishers by his fiery writings. Tilak was such a brave man that he earned the title of 'Lokmanya' by his



deeds and not by anybody's offering it to him. Once he came to Akola by public request to deliver a speech on the occasion of Shiv Jayanti. Many learned people extended their helping hand for this celebration. Among them were, Damle, Kolhatkar, Khaparde and many others who reached Akola specially for this Shiv Jayanti. People of Berar were happy to know that Shri Tilak was invited to preside over this function. In fact the birth anniversary of Shivaji should have been celebrated in Berar much before this, for the reason that the mother of Shivaji - Jijabai - was born and brought up at Sindakhed in Berar. She gave birth to brave Shivaji and united Berar and Maharashtra by dint of her ability. Mother from Berar and father from Maharashtra was as excellent incomparable couple. The celebrations for Shivaji was a great occasion of Maharashtra and its greatness was enhanced many fold by Tilak presiding over it. The preparations for the celebrations started one month in advance and everybody very happily participated in it. President and Vice President of Reception committee were elected and volunteers selected. To make the function more majestic, many people expressed their desire to invite Gajanan Maharaj for the celebrations. They said that Shivaji's service to the nation succeeded due to the blessings of Shri Ramdas Swami. So the political fight of Shri Tilak should have the blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj for its success. Some people did not like the idea and said that the 'Avaliya' of Shegaon may come naked and even beat Lokmanya. But others did not agree and insisted that the sacred feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj must touch that place. They argued that he might behave like a mad man among the mad people but not among the learned people gathering there. One of them said that if Lokmanya was really a great leader, Shri Maharaj would definitely come for the function. So, most of them supported the suggestion to invite Shri Maharaj for the function. Thereupon a group of leaders of the function went to Shegaon to extend Him the invitation. Looking at them Shri Maharaj said to Shri Khaparde, "I will come to attend the birthday celebration of Shri Shivaji and behave well, to the entire satisfaction of the social reformers coming over there. Tilak is the most able national leader working for the liberation of the country and will remain unparallel in future also. I will come to Akola to see Tilak and Anna Patawardhan, who is disciple of Shri Narsinha Saraswati of Alandi."




Shri khaparde was glad that Shri Maharaj accepted the invitation. He said to Kolhatkar that Shri Maharaj, the gem of Berar, could know everything that happened at Akola, and the acceptance of the invitation by Shri Maharaj was a good omen for the function. They bowed to Shri Maharaj and went back to Akola.

Eight days were left for the great celebration of Shivaji Jayanti, and people were very eagerly waiting for the arrival of Tilak to Akola. The function was to take place in the month of Vaisakh of Shaka 1830, and for that a huge pendal was erected. In spite of the fact that the day of the function was Akshya Tritiya, an important religious festival for the people of Vidarbha, lot of people from distant places gathered at Akola to see Shri Tilak. They also knew that Shri Gajanan Maharaj too was to come for the function, and it added to their happiness. Shri Maharaj reached in time as promised, and sat on the dias alongwith Lokmanya Tilak, Anna Patwardhan, Khaparde, Damle, Kolhatkar, Bhave, Venkatrao Desai and other leaders of the function. The meeting was called to order and after introductory speech, Shri Lokmanya Tilak, the lion orator, stood up to speak.

He said, "Today is the most auspicious day, as the great Shivaji who spent his life in the service of the nation, was born on this day. The blessing of Shri Ramdas Swamy helped to spread the fame of Shivaji all over the country, so will be the blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj for this meeting. I wish that today's meeting should be successful like great Shivaji's life and work. Nation today needs such meetings and functions. The sun of independence has set and all around there is darkness of slavery. Any nation without independence is lifeless. It is therefore, necessary to impart such training to the people, which will enhance their love for independence. But can the present rulers give us such Training ?" Hearing these taunting words, directed towards the rulers of the country, Shri Maharaj got up and smilingly said, "No, No, No, Don't say like that. It can invite your arrest by the Government." Saying so, Shri Maharaj started chanting his usual bhajan "Gana Gana Ganat Bote."

The function concluded successfully and people cheered and praised Lokmanya Tilak. But the prophesy of Shri Maharaj came true the

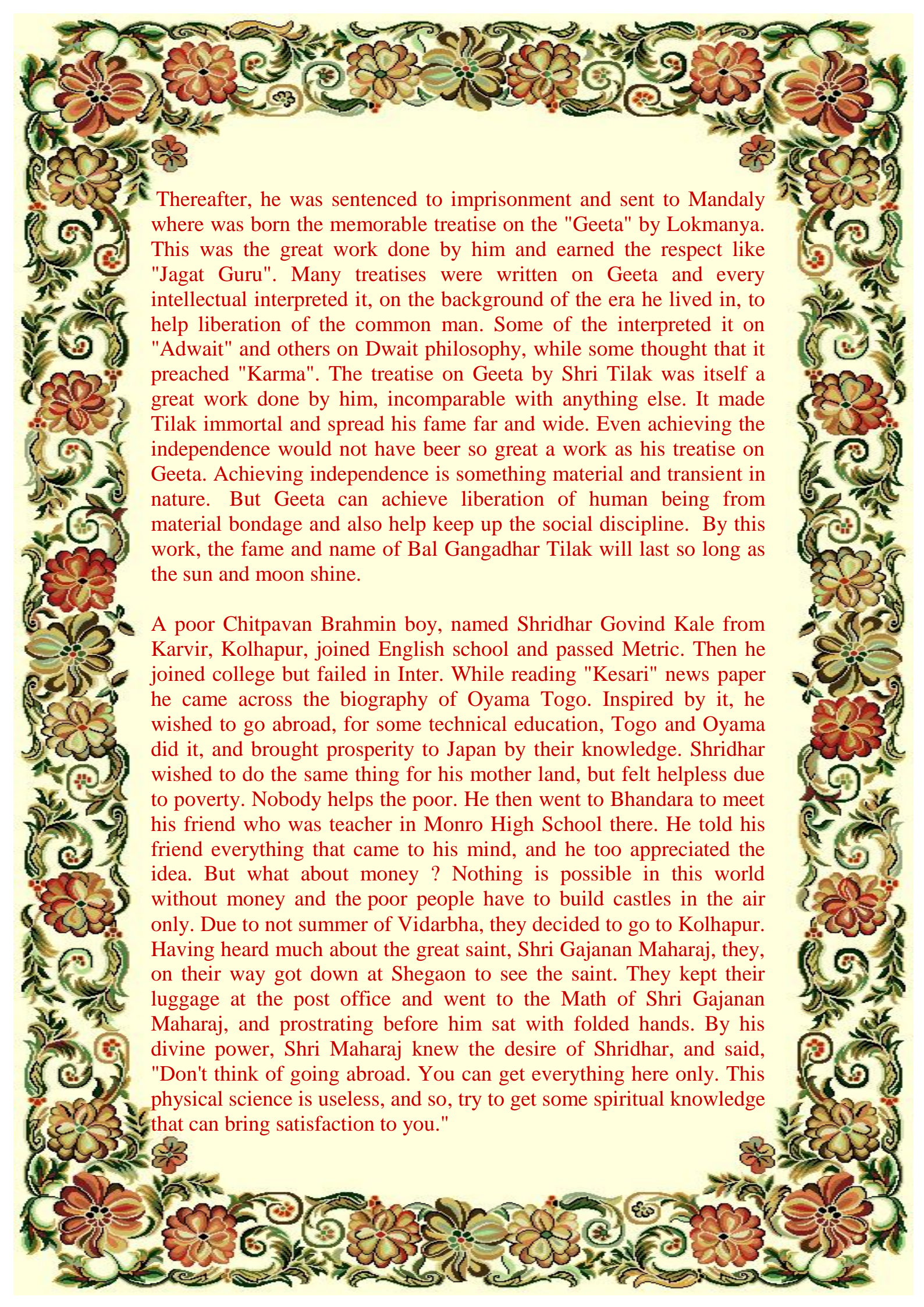


same year. Shri Tilak were arrested under section 124. In the face of the Ruler's strength everybody was helpless. Renowned lawyers rushed to defend Tilak on legal side, while other devotees wanted to try the spiritual way to save him from the punishment.

Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde was a great man, who went to Bombay from Amravati to attend the trial of Lokmanya. On way, at Akola, he said to kolhatkar, "You go to Shegaon and request Shri Gajanan Maharaj to save Tilak from the calamity. In fact I wished to go myself to Shegaon, but I have to attend this trial at Bombay. So go and request Shri Maharaj." Kolhatkar, the devotee of Tilak, immediately went to Shegaon, but when he reached there, saw that Shri Maharaj was sleeping. He did not get up for three days. Kolhatkar, being very sincere man, did not move from there for all those three days. His love, affection and reverence for Tilak was really great. It is said in Marathi that there cannot be a boiling without fire, and grief without affection. On the fourth day Shri Maharaj woke up and said, "Your all efforts will be fruit less. Remember that despite blessing from Shri Ramdas Swamy, Shivaji was arrested by Moguls. There can be no Liberation unless good people Suffer. Remember the history of Kansa, and you will understand what I say. I give you a Bread, take it and let Tilak eat it at the earliest. With the Prasad of this Bread he will do a great work, though going far away. It cannot be avoided."

Hearing all this, Kolhatkar got confused. He bowed before Shri Maharaj, and went away with the Bread given by him. At Bombay, narrated everything at gave the Prasad of Bread to Shri Tilak. Hearing it from Kolhatkar, Tilak said, "Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a great saint and what he said must be true. You will definitely not succeed, as Government will follow the law to defend itself. It is an universal truth that the law is strictly adhered to, when self interest is not involved. Shri Maharaj said that I will do some great work, which I am not able to understand. Saints know all the past, present and future. We are ordinary men, so let us see what happens in future."

As he had not teeth, Tilak powdered the Prasad of Bread and ate it.



Thereafter, he was sentenced to imprisonment and sent to Mandalay where was born the memorable treatise on the "Geeta" by Lokmanya. This was the great work done by him and earned the respect like "Jagat Guru". Many treatises were written on Geeta and every intellectual interpreted it, on the background of the era he lived in, to help liberation of the common man. Some of the interpreted it on "Adwait" and others on Dwait philosophy, while some thought that it preached "Karma". The treatise on Geeta by Shri Tilak was itself a great work done by him, incomparable with anything else. It made Tilak immortal and spread his fame far and wide. Even achieving the independence would not have been so great a work as his treatise on Geeta. Achieving independence is something material and transient in nature. But Geeta can achieve liberation of human being from material bondage and also help keep up the social discipline. By this work, the fame and name of Bal Gangadhar Tilak will last so long as the sun and moon shine.

A poor Chitpavan Brahmin boy, named Shridhar Govind Kale from Karvir, Kolhapur, joined English school and passed Metric. Then he joined college but failed in Inter. While reading "Kesari" news paper he came across the biography of Oyama Togo. Inspired by it, he wished to go abroad, for some technical education, Togo and Oyama did it, and brought prosperity to Japan by their knowledge. Shridhar wished to do the same thing for his mother land, but felt helpless due to poverty. Nobody helps the poor. He then went to Bhandara to meet his friend who was teacher in Monro High School there. He told his friend everything that came to his mind, and he too appreciated the idea. But what about money ? Nothing is possible in this world without money and the poor people have to build castles in the air only. Due to not summer of Vidarbha, they decided to go to Kolhapur. Having heard much about the great saint, Shri Gajanan Maharaj, they, on their way got down at Shegaon to see the saint. They kept their luggage at the post office and went to the Math of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and prostrating before him sat with folded hands. By his divine power, Shri Maharaj knew the desire of Shridhar, and said, "Don't think of going abroad. You can get everything here only. This physical science is useless, and so, try to get some spiritual knowledge that can bring satisfaction to you."

By this advice Shridhar experienced sudden change in his thinking and that reminded him of one saint of Kolhapur who used to talk just like Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Sensing the confusion in his mind, Shri Maharaj further said, "Don't think of leaving Hindustan, as one gets birth here, only after doing lot of good deeds. Yogashastra is superior to any other material science, and one who knows yogashastra will not care for other science. The knowledge of the Self (Adhyatma) is further superior to Yogashastra. Try to learn that and don't go anywhere." Hearing these words, Shridhar felt very happy and thought that the sun of thinking that had set in the west rose again in the east to make him happy. Only saints can bring about such transformation of thoughts, because they know the Truth. Shri Maharaj further said, "You will prosper here only. Now go to Kolhapur with your friend as your wife is waiting for you."

The prophesy proved true and Shridhar prospered well. He passed B. A. and M. A. Examinations and became Principal of the college at Shivpuri in the Kingdom Schindias. Saints are Gods incarnate on this earth and those, who get their blessings, always prosper. The change in Shridhar's thinking was due to the blessings of Shri Maharaj. This crop of Saints can grow only in our holy land. Trees of heaven will not get root elsewhere.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth, composed by Dasganu, always show right path to the devotees.

"Shubham Bhavatu"
"Shri Hari Hararpanamastu"

Here is the End of Chapter Fifteen.



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