

T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No. 1092

Price :

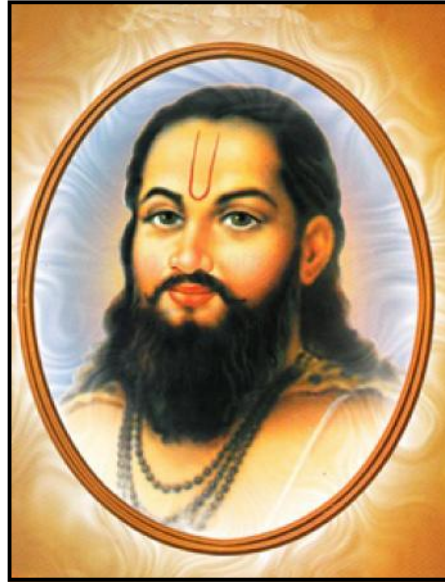
Published by **Sri M.G. Gopal**, I.A.S., Executive Officer,
T.T.Devasthanams, Tirupati and Printed at T.T.D. Press, Tirupati.

Srinivasa Bala Bharati

SAMARThA RAMADAS

English Translation

Dr. Poturi Venkata Subba Rao



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati**

Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 144
(Children Series)

SAMARTHA RAMADAS

Telugu Version

B. Sadasiva Rao

English Translation

Dr. Poturi Venkata Subba Rao



Published by

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati.

2014

Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 144
(*Children Series*)

SAMARTHA RAMADAS

Telugu Version

B. Sadasiva Rao

English Translation

Dr. Poturi Venkata Subba Rao

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Ravva Sri Hari

T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No. 1092

©All Rights Reserved

First Edition : 2014

Copies : 5000

Price :

Published by

M.G. Gopal, I.A.S.

Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,

Tirupati.

D.T.P.:

Office of the Editor-in-Chief

T.T.D, Tirupati.

Printed at :

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Press

Tirupati.

FOREWORD

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASABALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI
Editor-In-Chief
T.T.D.

Welcome To Srinivasa Balabharati Series

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

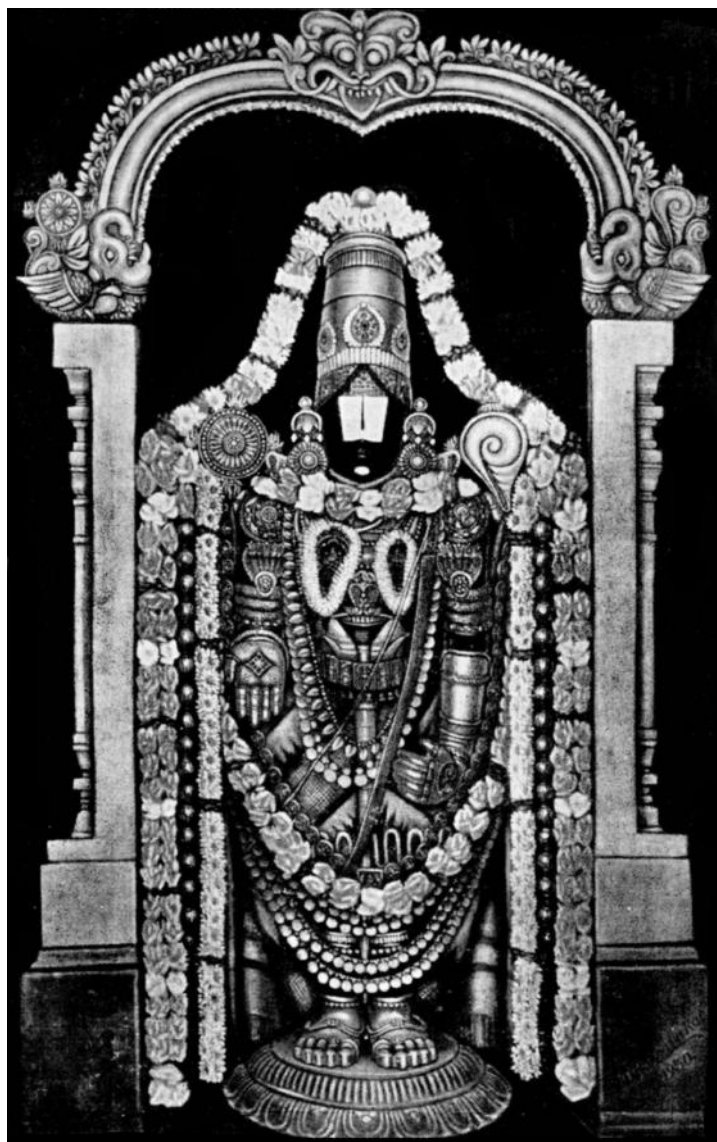
India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian culture and civilization. SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Cheif Editor





SAMARTHA RAMADAS

There is a village named “JAMB” on the bank of the river Godavari in Maharashtra. Suryaji was the ‘Patwari’ of that village. ‘Patwari’ was a village taxation officer in the old administrative system of Mughal government. He lived a happy life with his wife Raanu Bai. Suryaji was a well-read man. He was a renowned scholar of Sanskrit and got recognition for his erudition. He was a great devotee of the “Suryanarayana”, the Sun God. He regularly offered his prayers to ‘Surya Deva’ according to the scriptures.

In those days we were under subjection of the Muslim rule. They had been committing so many atrocities against civilians as they did not know our ‘Dharma’. They perpetrated so many cruel acts of brutality such as slaughtering cows, setting fire to villages and persecuting people for their religious beliefs. These are some of the many cruelties they had inflicted since they were ignorant of our ‘dharma’. They did not know the sanctity of our temples and the sacredness of our pilgrim centres. These were the circumstances under which our people were rather constrained to live a secure life. They were always haunted by memories of violence and molestation.

Birth of Gangadhar :

Suryaji became disgusted with the job and decided to give it up as he thought it to be servility under foreign

rule. He joined the 'Bhakta Samaja' and began spending his time in 'Bhajans and Keertans'. He lived happily with his wife Raanu Bai. They did not get any offspring for a long period of twenty four years. This was the only cause of their sorrow. Finally they got a male child favoured by their 'Ishta Daiva' - Surya Deva. The child was named Gangadhar.

When the cradle ceremony of the 21st day after the birth of the child was celebrated Raanu Bai told her husband of her desire to take the new born child to Eknath for blessings. Eknath was then famous as a 'Bhakta' and 'Jnani'. He is said to have lived one with "Atman". He lived in a small town known as 'PAITHAN' near Jamb. It was believed that the blessings of this great saint would keep off all the evil spirits and ill-luck. Suryaji readily agreed with the proposal of his wife and they went to Eknath. The saint gave the couple a warm welcome. He took the baby into his hands and said: "Mother, you have given birth to a beautiful child". Looking at the face of the child he continued saying "Quite sure. This handsome son of yours will become great in future". Accordingly the child became great as time passed.

The air was resonant with "Ramanama"

Three years elapsed before the advent of the jubilant 'Sri Ramanavami' in the 'Chaitra' (the first

month of the lunar year) of 1530. The festival is celebrated in every nook and cranny of the country. In India people celebrate this festival in such a grand way that every village and every street turns to be an 'Ayodhya', every father a Dasaratha and every mother a Kousalya and every virgin a Sita; as the auspicious day symbolizes both the birth and wedding of Sri Ramachandra. Parents always long for a son like Sri Rama and virgins cherish a husband endowed with all the virtues of which Rama is an embodiment. During those festive days earth and heaven reverberated with the sacred name of Sri Rama. The 'Navami' for Suryaji was the day of days. The surroundings of the temple were replete with the sounds of pipes and drums. Everybody kept their spirits up - busy, agile and cheerful - like the torrent of the river Godavari in spring. It was about to get noon. Sri Rama comes down as a bridegroom to hold the hand of the bride Sita Devi in a few minutes. All the hearts began beating in unison with excitement as the Lord's arrival was curiously awaited. The pundits welcoming Rama with vedic chants of scriptural grant got their voices choked with overwhelming joy. The Bhajans went on to a high pitch as the 'sumuhurtam' was getting near.

Dreams come true :

Some of the people who gathered there became emotional as they brooded over the inequalities,

injustices and brutalities perpetrated by the soldiers of the alien rulers against the natives of Hindu religion.

A few minutes were still left before the 'Sumuhurtha' when a man came running to Rama's temple. He looked at Suryaji and said gasping for breath.

"Your wife is in labour and they call for your presence immediately".

Suryaji hurriedly reached home. His wife Raanu Bai delivered a male baby exactly at the time when Sri Rama Chandra was born in 'Tretayuga'. His joy knew no bounds. For a while he pondered over the past wondering how all his time had been spent devoutly in worship of the Surya Deva who originated the 'IKSHWAKU' clan in the past. Sri Rama has risen from the humble origin of the 'Surya Deva'. As such, he named his second son, Narayana. After the twenty first day ceremony of the child, the parents took him to Eknath as usual.

On looking at the child, the saint Eknatha was overwhelmed with joy and said.

"Suryaji - our lives are now hallowed. The time has now come to materialize our dreams. The child of yours shall be the saviour of our traditional values of Dharma". He took the baby into his arms and gave his benediction. Saints and sages have the power of prediction. Whatever they say will certainly come true.

Suryaji's sudden demise :

Narayana was fearless even from his childhood. His mother would always tell him stories from the Ramayana. Narayana had always been fascinated by the deeds of Hanuman, the greatest 'bhakta' of Sri Rama and so he developed a fondness for him. As such, as a boy he quite often would climb trees, jump down the cliffs of the monds and run over the plains and swim across the river Godavari evenwhen the river was in floods and wander around the burial grounds.

“Don't wander like that my child. They are haunted places” his mother would admonish him. “Devils! I don't care them a pin. Let them come. I'll kill them like 'Hanuma' replies Narayana with a smile on his face. Narayana was admitted in the village school at his third year. He had leant the three R's effortlessly. He could read, write and solve small problems in arithmetics. When the boy arrived at the age of five his father performed him the 'upanayana' (thread marriage ceremony) according to the custom of the Brahmin families. This ritual makes one qualify to practice celibacy and to chant 'Gayatri Mantra'. Suryaji died before the completion of even two years after Narayana's 'upanayana'.

By then Suryaji's elder son was recognized as a learned one both in the scriptures and religious practices. He was considered to be prudent and

intelligent. People of that village looked at him with awe and reverence. He would give “upadesas” to his disciples in times when actually they were in need of such spiritual help. He was equally diligent in worldly affairs and matters related to the maintenance of family. One day when Gangadhara was giving some religious instruction (upadesa) to one of his disciples, his younger brother Narayana entered the room and solicited for some “upadesa”. His brother declined Narayana’s request saying that he was not yet ripened enough to receive any “upadesa”. Narayana was so obstinate that he began to pester his brother until he became annoyed and admonished him not to be over anxious about religious matters.

You have to protect the Dharma:

Narayana was deeply hurt that his brother did not give him any ‘upadesa’ even when so sincerely persuaded. With a troubled mind he straightly went to Hanuman’s temple and fell on the feet of the God. His mother and brother searched for him everywhere and finally found him fallen asleep on the feet of Hanuman with a bliss irradiating his face. By and by, he reported to both his mother and brother after he had been awaked that he dreamt a pleasant dream. He saw a dazzling light before him amidst of which a light blue complexioned Sri Rama of mediocre height stood holding a bow in one hand and arrows in another hand. Addressing Narayana in the dream he said “Narayana!

continue your penance. There is much you are destined to do. You have to protect the Dharma”. Even after detailing the dream to his mother and brother Narayana still felt its blissfulness.

Narayana fully dedicated himself to worshiping Sri Ramachandra without any other occupation. It happened to be the 9th day of ‘Sravana’. There had been a lot of change in the life style of Narayana ever since he dreamt the dream. He had all the time been fully absorbed in a contemplative mood. He became so at the age of 8 quiet that he got himself completely detached from the worldly affairs. Narayana thus became a Ramadasa. His mother felt so sorry at the change that began growing slowly in her son with the passage of time. She could not bear to see her son in such a state of detached attitude towards worldly matters. One day she looked around for the boy. As she did not find him anywhere she suddenly became panic about him. She searched for him everywhere and finally was amazed to find him sitting alone at the corner of a room in the house.

“What are you doing sitting alone here, in the corner of the room?” asked his mother with a lot of anxiety. “I was first wondering at the creation of this universe”, answered Narayana. His mother got confused with the answer of the boy. Narayana had a wonderful memory. He would never forget anything once keenly listened to. By the time he reached twelve

years of age he became wellversed in “Vedanta” and could comprehend so many mysteries and secrets relating to spirituality.

The adage ‘practice what you preach’ was perfectly applicable to Narayana for he told people what actually he had put into practice. Anyone can say anything about ‘the Dharma’ but practicing it is not that easy. Our body is only an instrument for doing good deeds and to attain the goal of life. So Narayana began to practice physical exercises and gymnastics committing himself body and soul to his avowed ideal of ‘Swadharma’.

Proposal for marriage :

His mother got vexed with the ways of Narayana for she could not bear his detached attitude towards worldly affairs. One day she called her elder son and said: “See how your brother has changed since you declined him “upadesa”. Will he come round if we allow him keep his way”. “I am also thinking of the same” said Gangadhara. “It would be better if he gets married”. Good, his mother suggested but in his horoscope. Gangadhar did not finish his sentence when his mother said:

“Who cares for the horoscope? All will go well” though Gangadhara a Jnani, he remained quiet before his mother. A great saint like Sankara bowed his head before his mother.

Marriage keeps one shaded :

Narayana's marriage was fixed with his uncle's daughter. Raanu Bai had a brother named Bhanji. He lived in a nearby village known as "Asan Gav". He agreed to give his only daughter in marriage to Narayana as the two families were closely related. Everything went on well as planned before. The time of the "Muhurta" was fast approaching. The ritual of holding a veil between the bride and bridegroom was about to take place. Narayana henceforth known as Ramadas could not digest all this. He jumped out of the wedding terrace and vanished into darkness. All the hubbub of the wedding celebration died down at once.

Entering the Panchavati :

"Unaware of the final goal of life, you are missing about youthful age. As I know the final goal I'm fixed in devotion to the God" replies Ramadas when he was asked why he had become a 'Bhakta' at a very tender age. Escaped from the wedding Narayana went straight away to the nether bank of Godavari. He walked across and reached the other bank of the river. He walked over a hundred miles for eleven days without food and sleep. At the dawn of the twelfth day he heard a peal of temple bells ring out in the distance like the sound of the 'Pranava'. He could visualize the summit of the temple at a long distance. His body trembled with joy. He had forgotten everything. The temple he

saw was none other than ‘Panchavati’ where Sri Rama had lived over a long period of time since he entered the Dandakaranya. Rama Dasa read both Valmiki and Ekanatha. Both of the poets described ‘Panchavati’ wonderfully well in their works. He found that panchavati would be the right place for his meditation and devotion to Rama. There is a small village named “Takali” near Panchavati. It is the place where the river Nandin merges with the Godavari. Ramadasa selected a solitary place a little far from the temple and began his penance on the 7th day of the waxing moon of the first fortnight in the month of “Magha”. It was two months now since he had left home.

Austere practice :

Ramadasa would get up two hours before the dawn and take ablutions in the sacred river Godavari. After performing hundred and eight ‘Surya Namaskarms’ performed followed by other useful physical exercises, he would stand in the river chanting ‘Gayatri Mantra’ and ‘Ramataraka’ until it gets noon. As such, fish cut the skin of his legs and the scars remains until the end of his life. After “Brahmayajna” he would visit five houses begging food. After offering the food to Sri Rama, he would divide it into three parts - one offered to cows another to fish in water and the remaining part was kept for himself to eat. During midday he would keep himself reading any one of the sacred books such

as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Yogavasishtha. Nasik is very near to Panchavati. Narayana used to visit the temple dedicated to Sri Rama at Nasik. There “Bhajans’ and ‘Pravachans’ were held during evenings. Returning to ‘Takali’ after it gets dark he takes his bath and does yoga before going to bed.

Life dedicated to devotion :

Two years have gone by. A kind of majestic glow began irradiating the face of Ramadasa. “Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama” - the thirteen lettered mantra became a part of his life. He had breathed it even when he was fast asleep. He was so fascinated by Valmiki’s Ramayana that he decided to copy it with his own hand. By the time he was sixteen years of age, he had completed transcribing Bala, Ayodhya, and Aranya Kanda of ‘Srimad Ramayanam’ - Even at a tender age he was all the time immersed in Japa, tapa and chanting of the sacred name of Rama. No wonder, people began to look at him in a strange way. They used to make so many comments about his behavior. “He seems to be so destitute that he lacks everything”. Somebody passes a remark seeing him sit alone at a solitary corner. Others would say - “I am afraid, he had left home without permission from elders”. Another would interpolate saying he might have lost balance of mind. More often than not such comments

would reach his ears. In trying times and situations, Rama Dasa prayed to Rama and took refuge at his lotus feet. Now and then in a frenzy of meditative mood he would burst into vesification and so many songs welled up from his mouth spontaneously.

Debt must be cleared :

Having completed his ablutions in the river, Ramadasa stood in meditation beside the river visualizing the form of Sri Ramachandra in his heart. Filled with inexplicable joy he lost consciousness of the outer world. When he was fully engrossed in such a blissful mood, a woman came and prostrated on his feet. According to traditional convention Ramadasa unconsciously blessed her to be happy and multiply. The woman began to cry aloud because her husband was dead some time ago and his kinsmen were ready to set fire to the dead body. As Ramadasa came into full consciousness, he realized the purport of his blessings and prayed to Srirama lest the blessings he had showered on the woman in the name of Rama should go in vain. Reciting the sacred 'mantra' he went near the corpse, took water from the sacred water jar (kamandalam) and sprinkled on the corpse. There was movement in the body and Lo! the dead man came to life. The woman became so excited that at once she had fallen on his feet and was silent for a while. Tears rolling in her eyes she said "Swamy! how could I



replenish my indebtedness to you. Nothing could be equal to what you have done for me”. “Ramadasa waited until her emotions died down and finally said: “Mother, let your first born male child be given to me”. Those who stood there were struck with wonder. They could not believe in what was happening before their eyes. The young man who came to life again was the ‘patwari’ of that village. The news that the young man was revived to life spread far and wide and people rushed in throngs to see the saint. Rama Dasa never cared for all such things as he did not ever crave for name and fame. He thought “All this wide reputation is nothing but a shackle kept against my spiritual progress. The required ‘Japa’ has to be completed and all the penance that I have undergone must yield fruitful results”. Since then, whoever accosted Ramadasa with awe and reverence received “JAYA JAYA RAGHU VEERA SAMARTHA” as a reply for their obeisance. Having completely dedicated himself to Sri Rama, Ramadasa could complete transcribing the remaining parts “Kishkinda”, “Sundara” and “Yuddha Kandas” of the Srimad Ramayana.

One day, just before the dawn he eulogized Sri Rama in the form of a song as usual and for a moment shut his eyes in contemplation. He saw some shadows at a distance moving towards him. As the shadows came nearer to him, he recognized the woman as one whose husband was revived from death some time

ago. She came along with her husband. Both of them kept their new born male child at the feet of Rama Dasa as they promised earlier. Rama dasa took the baby into his hands and pronounced a benediction over the child and christened him “Uddhava”. This boy is the first disciple of Ramadas. So virtuous are the parents that they felt very happy to keep their child under the guardianship of Ramadasa.

During his stay at “Takali” Ramadasa’s name and fame spread far and near. Nasik is the origin of the river Godavari. People who visited Nasik on various purposes such as pilgrimage, business and learning heard a lot about Ramadas and had become curious to pay a visit to the village where the saint lived. This provided an opportunity for Ramadasa to learn what was happening in and around the country. When he was staying at Takali, North India was under the rule of the Mughals. South India also came under the foreign rule after the fall of Vijaya nagar Empire. All of the rulers being aliens to our country did not understand ‘Sanatana Dharma’ and they became enemies of ‘Swadesi’ society. As they were the rulers, there was a gradual decadence in the traditional way of life concerning the rituals in the temples, sanctity of the sacred places and pilgrimages etc. They started conversions and encouraged people to change their religion by all possible means. Those who resisted proselytizers were either persecuted for their religious

beliefs or destroyed. Since the country was in a dire need of a strong leader who would unite all the native forces people lived like slaves under subjection of the foreign rule.

Narayana, who is now popularly known as Ramadasa used to listen to all such news relating to foreign atrocities and felt sorry at the plight of our people. All the time he prayed to Sri Rama to free the country from the shackles of the foreign rule.

Travels :

By this time, Ramadasa decided to travel round the country so that he can understand the prevailing social and political conditions. With the powerful blessings of Hanuman he became well versed in different languages and his face gleamed with intellect and inner spirit. In Maharashtra he was recognized as a great yogi who had attained self realization. He was keen on dispelling fear from the hearts of the people and instilling in them the spirit of “Swarajya” and “Swadharma”.

Twelve years passed since he had lived in TAKALI. Uddhava was grown up into a young man by then and became a right disciple of Ramadasa. He was confident that Uddhava would look after the affairs at TAKALI and so he could go on a pilgrimage and visit all important places. He thought that it would provide him

an opportunity to study the social conditions prevailing at that time.

He visited different places of importance and pilgrim centres. Wherever he visited he had set up a “Maruti Mandir” with a gymnasium attached to it. Dedicating one’s self to Maruti means filling one’s heart with ‘Rama Bhakti’ and making one’s body sound to accomplish good deeds. He made it his life mission to establish ‘Rama Rajya’ by preaching and practice. He installed monasteries (Maths) in different parts of the country and appointed dedicated devotees as the leaders of the monasteries (Mathadipaties).

Pilgrimages :

At first, he visited ‘KASI’ known as ‘Anandakanana’ and built a Hanuman Temple there. Even today it is known as “Hanuma ghat”. Next he visited ‘Prayaga’ the place where the two rivers - the Ganges, and the Jamuna merge into the Saraswati, the under current. He also visited Madhura where Sri Krishna spent his boyhood days and showed so many miracles even as a boy. Then he set out to Ayodhya, the capital of Sri Rama. He visited also other sacred places like Haridwar, Badari, and Kedarnath. He would join different societies, learn their language, enquire after their welfare. Thus he tried to mingle with people of different regions and endeavored to become one with them.

During one of his visits to the Himalayas, Rama Das felt a kind of mental and spiritual tumult and had become so emotional that he wanted to end his life in the Ganga. He prayed to God for an end to the injustices done to the people by the rulers. His heart melted at the inequalities and injustices perpetrated by Muslim rulers. When he was about to jump into the river he visualized Sri Rama standing before him and instructing that he should continue his work as only he could accomplish it successfully. From that moment onwards Narayana who transformed as Rama Dasa had become to be known as “Samartha”.

In his itinerary to Badarinath and Kedarnath he ascended one of the sacrosanct peaks of the Himalayan ranges known as “Sweta Maruti” peak. It is famous as an abode of Hanuman where it is said that Hanuma still continues his Tapas (Penance) even in the Kaliyuga. There Samartha objectified the God in the form of Hanuman. The God, Anjaneya gave him ‘Deeksha’ (Spiritual discipline) with all the paraphernalia required of the discipline. He gave samartha ‘Japamala’ (rosary) ‘Kashayambaram’ (saffron clothes), ‘Pavukollu’ (Sandal of wood) and Tapodanda (sacred wand). Although nature is resilient, it is the grace of the God that helps us emerge victorious. If you protect the ‘Dharma’ the ‘Dharma’ will protect you. Practice must precede instruction. Awakening people to action by his preachings and precepts, Samartha travelled all

through the country and finally returned to South India. He visited all the important pilgrim centres like 'Rameswaram, Pampa, Madhurai, Kanchi, and Tirupati, Lastly, he visited Pandari enroute to Panchavati. He reached his destination after a long period of twelve years spent on the pilgrimage. By then Uddhava had grown up into a young man and became a great 'Bhakta'. After taking his bath in the Godavari at Panchavati, Samartha went to take a "Darsan" of Sri Rama in the temple. His eyes gleamed with light on looking at Rama in the temple. He explained to Rama of all the experiences he had during the pilgrimage. Then he got an oracle from the God that he should stay on the banks of the river Krishna and make ardent efforts to propagate and instill 'Dharma' in people. Thus he had to leave Nasik quite unwillingly. He liked Nasik because it is the place where the river Godavari originated. He walked along the bank of the river Godavari until he reached its estuary.

There he put on saffron clothes like a "Sanyasi" and held bow and arrows like a 'Kshatriya' and walked by the river Krishna preaching 'Dharma' to one and all wherever he stayed. Some pundits looked at him with suspicion for lacking correspondence between his speeches and appearance. They asked him straightly why he had been carrying weapons which was unbecoming of a "Sanyasi" who should renounce violence. He replied to them that he would always carry

them for use in times of need. Hearing his reply one of them came forward and said challengingly. "I wonder if you could aim at one of the white birds flying in the Sky". Samartha took an arrow, aimed at the bird and shot it dead. Then the learned Brahmins began teasing Samartha for his unkind act which was unworthy of a saint. Ramadasa said "I only acquiesced your command. You asked me to kill the bird and I did it". Another scholar said: "Won't you think before you act. People might say a thousand things. You have to have that discriminative ability". An old pundit came forward and said with a tone of authority, "Your sin can't be so easily atoned. You have to undergo the process of expiatory ceremony to do away with it". Rama Dasa who is now called Samartha agreed to undergo the ritualistic process of expiation for the sin he had committed by killing the bird. After completing the ceremony Samartha put a question to the pundits. He said; "Have I now atoned for the sin and attained purity. All of them agreed in unison. With a smile on his face Samartha asked them. "Since I am now purified could I expect the bird to come to life with your grace". The learned ones looked at each other with derision and they replied "Have you ever heard a dead being come to life again it is it's 'Karma' and it can't be animated, enough that you are purged of your 'Karma'. Samartha took some water from his cruiser (kamandala) and sprinkled on the dead bird with a

prayer to Sri Rama. Lo! there was movement in the bird, in seconds it came to life and flew away to the astonishment of the pundits. All of them filled with wonder at the sight of the bird fell on the feet of Samartha begging for his pardon.

I have not come to beg :

One day Samartha sat by the river Godavari, singing a 'keertana' extolling the virtues of Sri Rama. An old man was among the Bhaktas who gathered there to see Samartha. After the keertana was sung, the old man went near Samartha and said "I wonder if I have seen you somewhere. As far as my memory goes I lived close to you long ago. You belong to the village JAMBU. Wont' you."

"Yes" - Samartha looked at him with a smiling face and replied.

"If I am n't mistaken.. you are Narayana, son of Suryaji: Aren't you;

Ramadasa Samartha nodded his head positively. The old man became fully excited, burst into tears and said with a choking voice "How lucky I'm. The very purpose of my life seems to have been fulfilled. Our little Narayana, who was so playful has now become a Mahatma. He stopped for a moment, looked at Samartha and then continued.

"Child! Your mother has been worrying a lot ever since you went away. Water dried up in her eyes

weeping over your absence. She became totally blind now. Your brother lives at home half alive. You are instilling courage and spirit in so many people and wiping out their tears with your words. What sin have your people at home committed? Please visit JAMBU once”.

Samartha’s eyes moistened as he listened to the terrible plight of his family members at home. Mother is mother to anyone; even to one who renounced the world. He made up his mind to visit his native home after a long gap of twenty three years. He reached JAMBU and took darsan of Maruti at the ‘Mandir’ before his arrival at home. Standing at the threshold of his house he began chanting “Sri Rama Jaya Rama. Jaya Jaya Rama”. His sister-in-law took him for a ‘Sadhu’ who came for begging. As she came out with a bowl of food, Samartha stepped in saying that he did not come to beg. No sooner had he stepped in than she recognized him as Narayana and welcomed him into the house. Everybody felt so happy on seeing Narayana after so long a time that tears rolled in their eyes with overwhelmed joy. He bowed in obeisance at the feet of his mother got up and remained for a while in the tender embrace of his mother. When she bemoaned over the loss of her eye sight, Samartha touched the eyes of his mother with proper incantation of ‘tridasakshari’ - a mantra dedicated to Sri Rama. She not only got her lost sight restored but also attained



a spiritual insight that awakened the inner self. Samartha stayed with his family for a few weeks and read “Kapila Gita” for the benefit of his mother and others to understand the reality.

As he was ordered by Rama, he decided to wander through the villages on either side of the river Krishna. He took his mother’s permission to pursue his long pending objective of awakening the spirit of “Swarajya” and “Swabhimana” among the people on either bank of the river Krishna. Then he visited Mahabaleswaram and built a “Maruti Mandir” there. After he returned from Mahabaleswaram he wandered through many villages by the river Krishna and finally reached a village named “Maahooli”. It is at this village that river Krishna merges with river ‘Veni’ and becomes Krishnaveni. There was an old temple by the side of the river at ‘Maahooli’ with an old banyan tree spreading its branches in all directions.

Be courageous :

Most people of Maharashtra belong to the ancient Kshatriya clan reputed for their valour and courage. They are often called ‘Sardars’. In those days, the popular belief according to the traditional convention had been that the ‘Kshatriyas’ were the protectors of the people and of the ‘Dharma’. At the time, the country was at war and everything was in chaos. The political situation prevailed at that time threw the country into

turmoil and conflict. Because of this uncertainty and unrest the political situation remained highly unstable. There was no unity among the 'Sardars' and each one envied the other waiting for a chance to ruin. Disunity among the 'Sardars' was threatening to destabilize the government. As it was a period of decadence, there had been a gradual deterioration in the standards of public morality. The rulers were also subject to a low morale. Samartha Rama Das decided to rejuvenate the spirit of the people before championing the cause of freedom. He was moving from place to place instilling courage and thereby increasing social morale. He had many disciples all over the country and they carried Samartha's mission forward with their words and deeds. They were preparing the ground to enliven the spirit of the people by uniting them to fight against the alien rule. They aimed at bringing a change in the living conditions of people and to invoke dormant powers in them. For everything the very word they used was "Bhakti" - a total surrender and dedication to the objective they had set before them and the invincible courage to fight the evil.

The disciples of Samartha would go round the village just before dawn singing hymns in chorus extolling the virtues of Sri Rama. They used to initiate people to get up early by repeating the sacred name of Sri Rama.

Samartha rescues Kamalakara Pant :

In one of his journeys through Maharashtra, Samartha stayed a few days at a village called 'Shawhpur'. According to his convention one day Samartha stood for alms in front of a house that belonged to Sati Bai and began repeating "Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama". Listening to the chanting, Sati Bai came out with a bowlful of rice to offer to the sadhu standing at her door. Offering the alms to the ascetic she said: "Sadhu, you should not repeat the name of Rama like that before households like us as it is not auspicious for us".

"It is wrong to say" Hare Rama, Hare Rama wondered the sadhu.

"Definitely" said Satibai and she continued saying. "See, sadhu! Although it belongs to God, that name is uttered only when taking a dead body to the burial ground. So please don't repeat it once again". "Samartha took the alms she had given him silently. He looked at her with a smile and went on his way. The next day as usual he visited the same house and stood there. To his surprise, he saw everyone dismayed and dejected in the house. On inquiring he came to know that Satibai's husband, Kamalakarapant had been taken away to Bijapur on some alleged crime. Satibai was weeping with a broken heart for everybody knew what would happen if someone was taken to Bijapur

under some allegation. Samartha consoled her and assured her that the repetition of 'Ramanama' would definitely bring her husband back home. He immediately sent a message to one of his disciples in Bijapur to set everything right with regard to Kamalakar Pant. Thus Pant was released since he was acquitted of the crime. After his return, Pant came to know what had happened. He went to Samartha and prostrated before him and thus became one of his staunch followers. As Pant was an influential man in and around Shawhpur most of the people of that region accepted Samartha as their "Guru" following Pant.

God is in her :

Gopajipant Desapande was a reputed landlord at Meeraj. One fine morning Samartha stood before Desapande's house chanting "Jai Jai Raguveera - Samartha" in his usual manner. "Please wait a minute, Sadhu!" said a sixteen year old young girl from inside the house. "You have finished the adoration of the cow and worship of Tulasi. Have n't you!" Samartha said looking at the girl as she had just returned from her worship. "Just now....." the young girl did not finish her words when Samartha continued to say "Why all these ritualistic practices".

"How could you say like that sadhu, I love it. I'm really fond of worshipping". "Very good. you can also chant the sacred name of Rama time and again" advised

Samartha. The girl who was listening to Samartha is Vaina Bai. She grasped the piousness vibrating in his voice when Samartha was speaking.

“I wonder whether I can have some milk for ‘pooja’”. asked Samartha. The girl nodded her head and went in to fetch a glass of milk”. How could you distribute milk like this to sadhus’ and mendicants when we are really in want of milk; a fretful voice was heard outside - “ok you can give him a little ...” Vaina came out with a small glass of milk but it was Samartha’s custom not to stay more than three seconds before anybody’s house. The girl was disappointed as the sadhu vanished shortly.

Next day Samartha found the girl sitting in the verandah and reading the Bhagavatam. He felt so happy that he wanted to know how far the girl could understand a classic like “The Bhagavata”. He moved a little forward and inquired. “Are you able to understand the book little mother”. She looked up at him and replied humbly. “I am trying my best.. sadhu!”

“Could it be understood even if tried by one” asked Samartha benignantly. The girl replied with a pleasing voice, “Elders like you say that people are understood with close association and books with effort”. By way of this conversation Samartha could know that the girl was one inspired by God. This conversation was the first initiation of a deep acquaintance between them.

Some months passed by. Samartha in one of his wanderings visited Kolhapur again. Quite unexpectedly he happened to see Vaina Bai in Kolhapur. It was her native home. Every evening Samartha was holding a discourse on the Ramayana and Vaina Bai became his regular audience.

Vaina Bai was a young widow. No wonder, the society would definitely find fault with a young woman approaching a sadhu regularly. Her mother warned her with stern instructions not to go out. All her family members vehemently opposed her regular visits to 'sadhu'. Despite their warnings she continued visiting the sadhu for the religious discourses he held. One day, she revealed everything to her guru, Samartha did not get perturbed. He half closed his eyes and explained to her about the virtues of patience and forbearance. They are the shields for anyone to overcome troubles and tribulations in the World. Her own kith and kin thought it disgraceful on the part of the girl to be so close with a sadhu and so they decided to put an end to her life. They gave Vaina Bai poisoned milk lest she should spoil the family name by being closely associated with Samartha. Vaina Bai drank the milk innocently repeating 'Rama nama'. The poisonous milk turned into ambrosia and did not affect her in the least. Hearing about this episode people in and around the town thronged to see Samartha and Vaina Bai.

One should have the power to withdraw:

There lived an athlete' named Ranganatha in that town reputed to be an expert archer. He was capable of using arrows effectively by spelling a 'mantra'. It turns the 'Sastra' (weapon) into a 'Astra' (missile). Samartha came to know his prowess as an archer. One day he met him and their conversation went on like this. He said to him. "Ranganatha! you have attained the required skill in using a 'sastra', could you have equal ability to withdraw it after it has been aimed?" "I can't understand what you mean Swamiji" replied the archer; looking at his face Samartha began to explain "withdrawing your power means developing virtues like patience, forbearance, compassion, non-violence and peace. I wonder one who can't build up character can't use one's power of arms for establishing the Dharma". No sooner Swamy has completed his precept than Ranganatha fell flat on his feet and became one of his ardent devotees. He also became a great 'Sadhaka'.

Who is that great man?

Samartha's numberless devotees and disciples have spread all over the country. They succeeded in carrying Samartha's message through the country by building Maruti Mandirs, gymnasiums and temples in every nook and corner of the country. They would celebrate all important festivals in the premises of these temples with so many cultural programs to attract the people.

Samartha had many well known devotees and disciples across the country such as Bhima Swamy of Tanjore, Dattatreya of Sevagram, Uddhava Goswamy of Indore, Vasudev of Kanheri, Triyambak of Bhave village, Akka Devi, Divakar Bhatt and Ananth Bhatt of Karnatic carrying his message of 'Swaraj and Swadharma' forward.

The mathas started by Samartha have become centres for propagating righteousness and self service. His disciples never looked for the fruits of their actions. They are dedicated to their work with non attachment. In each of the many such centres activities like 'Harikathas' and 'Bhajans' were promoted to propagate our tradition and culture. They were also contributed for advancement of the Bhakti cult instilling deep awareness among the people of our country. By means of such activities Samartha succeeded in driving home the social, political and economic conditions of our country prevalent at that time. He kept the dry sticks ready and was on the lookout for a suitable person to enkindle them. In the times of insecurity and destability he looked for a right person who could be the future hope of the country.

Finally he found that righteous person in Sivaji who was the son of Shahaji Bhonsle and Jijiya Bai. An ardent disciple of Dadajikonda Dev, Sivaji was born (1627) and brought up in the castle of Sivaneri which was then considered to be a place of miraculous

powers. It is believed that Sivaji had been an incarnation of Siva himself who descended on this land of ours to set things aright and to install traditional Dharma. By then, Sivaji was consolidating the Maratha power and he became the ideal guerilla leader of hardend mountaineers and his cavalry went far and wide sacking the city of Surat. Before that he got the support of the poverty stricken and exploited people of Maratha and won the battle by conquering the 'Torana Durga'. Subsequently he became victorious by subduing 'Simhagada', 'Raja gada', 'Purandara' and 'Chakana' forts one after the other. The slogan of his soldiers "Hara Hara Mahadav" reverberated the vallies of Sahyadri mountain ranges and plains. The devout devotees, disciples and followers of Samartha have ploughed the soil of the hearts of the people and kept the fields ready for sowing. It was Sivaji who sowed the seeds of courage and valour in people's hearts. It was the time when the Mughal empire was rent by strife and revolt. Sivaji built up the Marathas as a strong unified fighting group, gave them a nationalist back ground and made them a formidable power which could break up the Mughal empire. It was at this juncture, Samartha and Sivaji came to know about each other and both of them awaited the right time to meet.

Invitation to Sivaji :

That was the day when Dasara festival was celebrated everywhere as a symbol of victory of virtue

over vice. Samartha decided to organize the festival on a grand scale. He had sent invitations to all the chiefs and celebrities of Maharashtra because all over the widespread domains of the Mughal empire there was a growth of revivalist sentiment which was a mixture of religion and nationalism. Samartha's aim in organizing these festivities was not only to unite these chiefs but also motivate them to proper action. Chapal was the village selected for this summit meeting. Samartha invited Sivaji and he immediately complied with it as an order.

With a turban on the head, a sword gifted by Bhavani dangling on the waist, the triplicate pearly chain adorning the chest, eyes brilliantly shining with intellect and wisdom, twirled moustaches covered on either side with a black beard and a crescent like red 'kumkum' mark on his forehead Sivaji appeared to all and sundry as an embodiment of Siva descended on the earth to expel all that is evil in the universe. People stood in rows on either side of the road and looked at him with awe and reverence. On the opposite side they saw a tall man with a black beard long enough to touch his chest, eyes brightened with spirituality a long religious mark of kum-kum on his forehead with a rosary and the other paraphernalia required of an ascetic. He began striding towards where Sivaji stood. Seeing Samartha coming towards him, Sivaji got off the horse and walked



a little forward and prostrated on the feet of the saint. Their eyes met as they looked at each other and they embraced one another like Bruhaspati and Indra. Slogans like “Jaya Jaya RaghuVeera Samartha”; “Hara Hara Maha Deva”; “Jai Samartha RamaDasa”; “Jai Sivaji Maharaj”. The sound reverberated across the valley while Samartha blessed Sivaji with victory and success. The meeting of Samartha and Shivaji has opened a new epoch in the history of India. The twin streams of ‘Bhakti’ and ‘Vairagya’ like the Ganges and the Saraswati represented by Samartha, merged with that of Yamuna symbolizing ‘karma’ represented by Sivaji. The revolutionary fervor enkindled by Samartha was carried by Sivaji for his ideal of Swarajya movement.

Samartha made Masore, a village in Maharashtra, a centre for carrying the revolutionary activities and to inspire his disciples live up to the ideal of Swarajya. The awakening he started among the Marathas came to be known as “Ramadas Pantha”. His efforts for the unification of the poverty stricken and exploited Maratha clan who were the descendents of the ancient Rastrakutas yielded fruitful results as everybody had now become aware of ‘Swabhimana’ and ‘Swarajya’. Under these circumstances Samartha decided to construct a very big temple dedicated to Sri Rama in that village. One day while returning from a village called

'Karhad' Samartha had to stay at a pilgrim centre known as 'Sivanabhi'. It is considered to be a holy place because of the "Swayam Bhoo Siva Linga" - the self-existent Siva. There was a well beside the temple into which people descend by steps. Samartha while doing his ablutions in the well heard a voice "I'm here awaiting you" - As the voice was heard repeatedly Samartha took a plunge and found to his astonishment the statues of Rama and Mahishasura Mardini there at the bottom of the well. His joy knew no bounds on his discovery of these statues. He decided to set out to the village Masore with these statues where he intended to construct a temple. The villagers of Karhad were informed of Samartha's discovery of the statues. They demanded for retrieval of the statues since the images were hidden by themselves in the well lest the Muslim rulers should desecrate and distort them - Samartha tried to convince them saying that he would install those icons in Masore. They were not convinced with the explanation of Samartha and remained stubborn about their demand for the statues. Samartha tried to persuade them by all possible means to let the icons taken away to Masore. As nothing would persuade them, Samartha finally said. "Alright you can carry them away". So saying he kept them on the ground. Everybody tried to lift them up but in vain. They finally came to understand the miraculous powers of Samartha and allowed him to take them to Masore for installation.

The statues were taken to Masore in a palanquin with a magic procession.

Could have a vision of Sri Rama ... but:

In the year 1579 Sri Ramanavami celebrations were scheduled on the first day of Chaitra of 'Sarvadhari' year according to Telugu calander. The icons brought from Siva-Nabhi were installed as planned earlier. Sivaji came to know about these festivities celebrated on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami. He decided to visit the temple. He thought that the decoration of the temple was wonderful and appreciated the way it had been accomplished. Looking at the two statues of Hanuman - one at the front and another at the back of Sri Rama's statue Sivaji exclaimed - "the great God, Raghuveera needed two dedicated and expert servants as his body guards is this political administration" - During the period of Navami festivities, Samartha secluded himself in a long and profound meditation without giving darsan to anyone. Sivaji had the privilege of having the darsan of Rama but not Rama Dasa.

Strange prasada :

As he was not able to have the Darsan of Samartha when he visited him during the Navami festival Sivaji wanted to visit him once again. So with in the year, he came to Masore with Balaji and Sona Dev. Samartha gave his blessings to Sivaji and his followers - Balaji

and Sona Dev - particularly he gave Sivaji a cover containing prasada with instructions to open it before his mother after he reaches 'Pratap Ghad'. When he went to his mother he offered the cover to her. She opened it, Lo! what is there in it! To his wonder and dismay, Sivaji discovered in it pebbles, excretion of horse, soil and a coconut. Jijiya Bai, explained the significance of this strange prasada to her son. She said "these pebbles convey the idea that you must and should construct forts on the top of the mountains. The excretion of horse signifies that you should have a powerful cavalry, soil indicates that you will become a great king and the coconut stands for the idea that you can be hard and strong externally but sweet internally. This explanation of Jijiya Bai stands as a testimony to her intelligence, diligence and prudence.

Last victory should be ours :

Sivaji's father Shahaji was a courtier of the sultan of Bijapur. When Sivaji captured the fort of Kondana in the kingdom of Bijapur, the sultan of Bijapur became so angry with Sivaji that he had imprisoned Shahaji and sent a message to Sivaji that Shahaji would be released only when Sivaji had left the fort and ceased invasions unconditionally. Samartha advised him to make a temporary treaty with the Sultan to get his father released first and then the guru assured him that the last victory would be his at any cost.



Pandarinath transforms as Raghunath :

Some time after the release of Shahaji, Samartha went to Pandari. He visited the Pandarinath temple. He was so overwhelmed with joy to see Panduranga that he eulogized the deity with 'slokas' dedicated to Rama. He did not find any difference between Ranga and Rama but the purohits objected to reciting the slokas of Raghunath in the presence of Pandarinath. Samartha explained to them that the differences would vanish when the truth is realized. For Samartha Pandari is Ayodhya, the river Chandra Bhaga is Sarayu and Rakhuma Devi is no other than Sita herself. Despite the annoyance of the purohits there, he continued his prayers. As an answer to his prayers Pandarinath has given his darsan to all assembled in the temple as Raghunath. The priests of the temple wondered at this miracle worked by Samartha and prostrated at his feet.

Follow me in begging :

On the second day of the bright waxing moon of the fortnight in the month of Vaisakha in 1577, Samartha stood chanting "Jai, Jai Raghuveera Samartha" in front of the palace of Sivaji in Satara. His voice reached the chamber where Sivaji kept himself busy with some work. He recognized the voice and felt happy at the presence of his guru at the threshold of his palace. He rushed out and prostrated on the feet of his guru in obeisance and solicited him of his desire for 'Bhiksha'

on that day. “You are a king you can give whatever you like as ‘Bhiksha’ replied Samartha. Sivaji strode into the palace without any expression on his face and returned with a piece of paper holding in his hand and kept it in Samartha’s folded cloth for begging. Samartha opened the paper and read it out. “All that I have acquired hitherto in the form of land and wealth shall go to the sacred feet of my guru henceforth”. After reading it he asked Sivaji “what about you?”. Smilingly Sivaji replied “I’m your servant from this moment onwards. I’ll do whatever you bid me to do”. “Then follow me with this begging bowl,” said Samartha going ahead of the king. Sivaji followed him. He stood the test. “I am a sanyasi, what do I need wealth for. Take back your kingdom” said Samartha. “It is not right to take back what is given. It is against the Dharma” replied Sivaji looking at him. Samartha emphatically asserted “you are the real king. Henceforth you will be the protector of the Dharma, you have to bear this burden for the sake of the people, for the sake of the country and also for the sake of ‘Swabhimana’” so saying Samartha had given him a piece of saffron cloth which was to become the flag of Sivaji, symbolizing the Dharma.

Declaration of independence :

By then, Samartha’s mother Ranu Bai passed away. After attending her funeral ceremonies Samartha visited

Shahoji in Karnatic and returned to Satara. By and by, all the 'Mavali' has come under the rule of Sivaji. The Mavalis have become the disciples of Samartha. Sivaji's military force was strengthened with the cooperation of the Mavalis. He began to conquer fort after fort and finally added Raighad to the newly extended frontiers.

The sultan of Bijapur was unable to digest the victories of Sivaji and his final declaration of independence. He decided to extenuate the growing Maratha power by plotting against the life of Sivaji. He instigated other Muslim Chiefs and leaders to be cautious about the impending doom with the rise of the Maratha power consolidating itself under the leadership of Sivaji. By then Sivaji had become a symbol of the resurgent Hindu nationalism, building Maratha as a unified fighting group. Afzal Khan one of the chieftains of Bijapur sultanate resolved that he would capture Sivaji by using his powers in the battle field. Samartha came to know all about this and he sent a message to Sivaji to be on his guard against his enemies hatching up a plot to kill him. He further added that Sivaji should keep everything a secret and the blessings of Bhavani would always go with him. Afzal Khan tried to defeat Sivaji in the battle on the plains. There was nothing destructive he did not do alluring Sivaji for an open fight on the plains. He not only destroyed Hindu temples but also tortured people to

tell him the whereabouts of their leader. Finally, Sivaji, the valiant warrior strategically encountered his enemy and killed him. Later on Sivaji had to face Shayesthakan, who was the commander in chief of the Mughals. In the encounter Sivaji cut the fingers of the commander. Samartha felt very happy with all the victories of Sivaji.

Samartha in Sajjan Ghad :

Sivaji with patriotic fervor began extending the boundaries of his kingdom by leaps and bounds. As such, it became very difficult for him to visit Chappal village frequently since Samartha was residing in that village. So he requested Samartha to change his residence to Sajjan Ghad so as to be convenient for his visits. The new place is an abode of nature's beauty lavished with flora and fauna. Further, the place is renowned for its uniqueness of revealing the secret mystery of seasons as they pass through the year. Sivaji built there a temple dedicated to Sri Rama and Ramavaradayini for Samartha. Samartha kept himself close to nature as he continued his religious practices without any hindrance.

Samartha's non attachment :

It was popularly held that Sivaji was an incarnation of Siva and the protector of the Dharma. When he visited the Agra fort Aurangzeb tactfully imprisoned

him. It was at this crucial juncture that the disciples of Samartha came to his rescue and helped him escape from the prison. Hari Krishna in Madhura, and Rama Krishna in Ayodhya showed their valour and courage in helping Sivaji to escape from the prison and reach Maharashtra safely. Samartha prepared everything ready for the enthronement of Sivaji. He invited pundits from all parts of the country. Gangabhat a renowned scholar was invited from Kasi to take an active part in the celebrations of the coronation ceremony on the 13th day of the waxing moon of bright fortnight of the month Jyeshtha. Sivaji was crowned as the Maharaja of Maharashtra. While a festive atmosphere was prevalent everywhere on the auspicious occasion of Sivaji's enthronement at Raighad, Samartha got himself detached from these celebrations and immersed in deep meditation on Sri Rama for the good of the ruler and the ruled. A wonderful change, an unimaginable transition had been slowly taking place in political affairs since the incorporation of Sivaji as the king of Maharashtra. It gave not only stability and security to the people but also made them fearless. It instilled in them self respect and sowed in them the seeds of independence. It also helped them kept up their morale by following the path of Samartha.

Sultans of Bijapur and Nawabs of Golkonda came under the subjugation of Sivaji and they were paying

regular tributes to Chatrapati. Mughals were also not an exception to this. With peace, security and prosperity restored in the kingdom, people lived a happy life following their respective occupations. Military power was strengthened and ideal governance was assured. During this period of stability and prosperity Samartha engaged himself in writing a book of epic stature known as “Dasa Bodha”. This book exemplifies and extols all the virtuous qualities of Sivaji as a ruler and as an individual. One day, Sivaji visited Samartha casually. The preceptor asked him to break a big black stone lay before him. When the stone was broken a big frog came jumping out of it “who kept the frog there?” questioned Samartha and answered himself. “It is the God who kept the frog inside the stone protected it”. He further explained: “nothing could be done without the help of the God. Conquering the senses is as important as annexing the kingdoms of the enemy”. Sivaji listened to all this in meek submission.

Narayana transformed as Rama Dasa finally became Samartha. His only aim and object in life was to establish the ancient traditional way of life i.e., Sanatana Dharma in this soil of ours. Endowed with a strong will and obdurate pride of belonging to the Hindu religion, Samartha dedicated his life to bring a transformation in the lives of the people. He could accomplish his long cherished desire of establishing

‘Swarajya’ and ‘Swabhimana’ with the help of his disciple king Sivaji whom he made a ‘Rajarshi’ - a royal saint. Though he followed Jnanamarga - the path of knowledge - he did not relinquish karma marga - the path of action. Though a sanyasi as he was he successfully fulfilled his filial obligations by performing funeral ceremonies to his mother and brother. He was considered to be an incarnation of Hanuman by all his disciples and followers. Vaina Bai who authored the book “Sita Swayamvaram” breathed her last at the lotus feet of Samartha. Kalyan who was nothing but a stupid became a wiseman with the blessings of Samartha. He was responsible for the revival of Sanatana Dharma in our country. Sivaji had spent the last two months of his life in the presence of Samartha before he went to Raighad.

In the year 1602 news of the sudden demise of Sivaji Maharaj like a bolt from the blue reached to the village where Samartha stayed. It was really a great shock to Samartha. He eulogized time as something inevitably unconquerable and immersed in meditation on Rama. In the year 1603 he left his mortal body praying “Sri Rama, Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama” at the feet of Rama in Sajjan Ghad.



