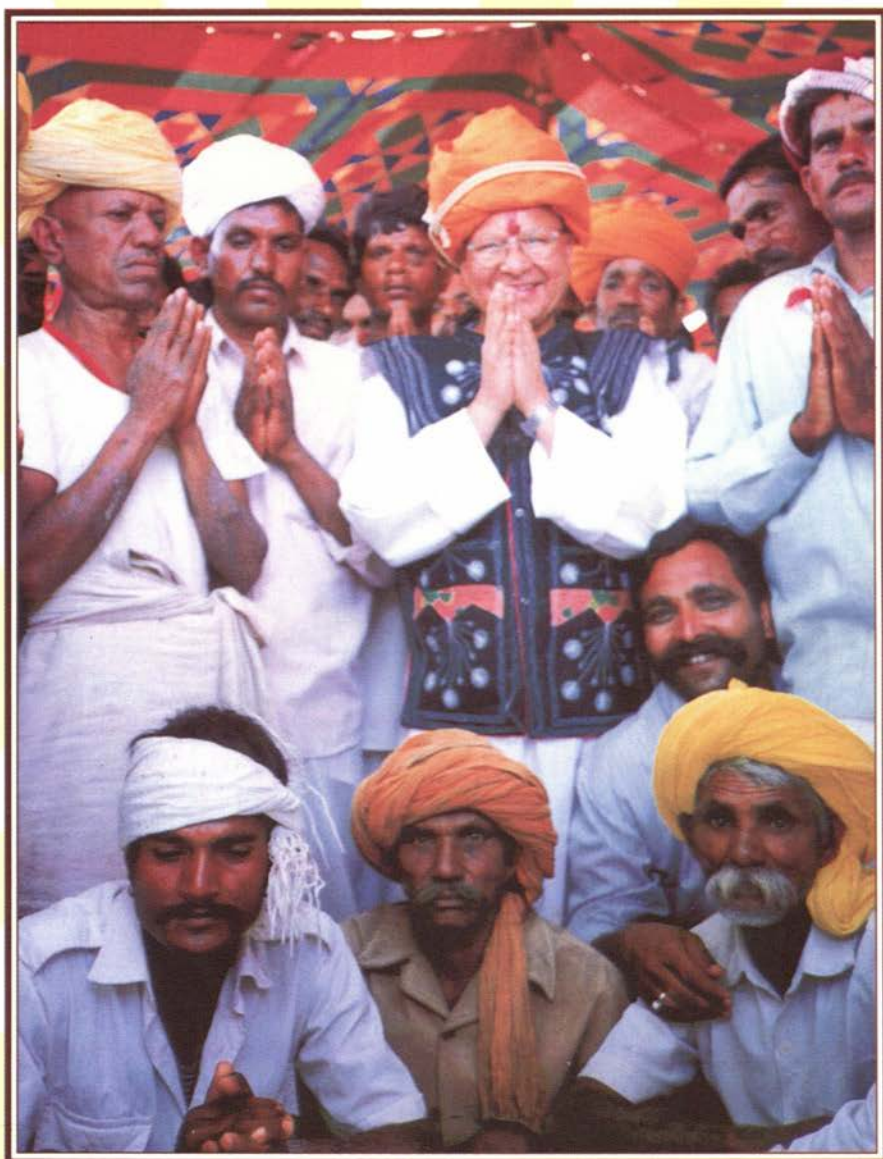


REFORMATION THROUGH RAM NAAM

Gautam Chatterjee



About the Book

'Negative instinct' of mankind is as old as our civilization. In order to tackle this human aberration many socio-psychological techniques were evolved. In order to ensure co-existence and harmonious living the concept of Law and Order came into vogue. Punishment for crime was enforced to have a deterrent effect on the society. In the last millennium these 'criminal' activities were diagnosed as 'disease' of the society. To cure the ailing society many tools were evolved enveloping socio-psycho-economic norms. However, desired results could not be achieved.

On the other hand, traditional people or Tribals were termed as 'criminal' and were shunted out to seclusion by the upper section of the society. So-called reformatory efforts from 'above' could not undo their instincts and negative impulsiveness. Thus socio-anthropologically speaking, we have created a core class and named them 'criminal' who posed a perennial danger to the so-called society of ours.

However, some philanthropists intervened and employed the 'spiritual tool' of **Ram Naam** to usher in reformation amongst those who live a life of negativism and neglect.

Tribal Bhils of Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh and many more convicts serving sentences in Indore Central Jail became the subject of reformation through **Ram Naam**—the sound or *nada* philosophy propounded by Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj. This spiritual experimentation is yielding phenomenal result and curing many an ill of the society which were otherwise remained a subject of great societal neglect.

The book delves deep into the subject of spiritual reformation through field study undertaken in the Jhabua District and Indore Central Jail. It takes the hind view of the socio-economic situation. It also gauges the psychological changes as narrated by scores of people who are experiencing reformation.

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The book elaborates the internal journey of sacred sound—*Ram Naam* and looks at sociologically how that is influencing the lifestyle of people who once remained a threat to the society. This work also highlights how *Ram Naam* is effacing the layers of superstition and effecting de-addiction among the Bhils.

The book looks at the case studies from the perspective of anthropology and analyses the depth of spiritual reformation dethroning the societal concept that Bhils have 'criminal minds', who are for ages subjected to the abject poverty and social denunciation. The book also concludes through various case studies that 'hard core murder convicts' can be reformed thoroughly and even there are cases where convicts who cultivated *Ram Naam* could escape gallows in a very mystic manner.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Gautam Chatterjee (b. 1958) is an established writer who has written persuasively on different aspects of India enveloping Social History, Culture, Religion and Indology. A frequent contributor to prestigious magazines and newspapers of repute for over two decades, he has written 10 books.

Academically he has worked in the field of reformation of juvenile convicts. His Ph.D. thesis was on Child Criminals and the Raj—Reformation in British Jail. *Reformation Through Ram Naam* is an academic extension of his research through the 'spiritual tool' of reformation i.e. *Ram Naam*, which is working out a revolution silently and steadily in the Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh and also in Indore Central Jail where scores of convicts are undergoing life-imprisonment.

**Reformation Through
*RAM NAAM***

Case Studies of
Tribal Bhils of Jhabua
and
Convicts of Indore Central Jail

First published in India 2001 (English and Hindi Edition)
(c) Dr Gautam Chatterjee

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Tribal Bhils of Jhabua
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Cover Photo:

“Namashkar” is the new weapon of Jhabua Bhils! Innocent Bhils are with Dr Viswamitraji Maharajji

Photographs courtesy: Shri Ram Sharanam
and Dr Gautam Chatterjee's collections

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From the Desk of Dr Viswamitraji Maharaj
Sri Ram Sharanam, Head Quarter, New Delhi

Prologue

My Experiments With **RAM NAAM**

Man is said to be a social animal. Even the Biologists agree that after evolution from lower to higher and to the highest—the man is still possessed by animal instincts! कभी वह सांप की भान्ति फुंकार मारता है, कभी शेर की तरह दहाड़ता है, रंक होते हुए भी राजकीय ठाठ दिखाता है, बकरे की भान्ति प्रायः मैं-मैं बोलता है, अभी भी वह प्रतिशोध व बदले की भावना से मुक्त नहीं। कुत्ते की भान्ति मैं- मेरापन अर्थात् अहं की भावना अधिक बढ़ी है, घटी नहीं। शारीरिक, मानसिक एवं शाब्दिक हिंसा पशुओं की अपेक्षा अधिक घातक रूप धारण किए हुए है। सृष्टि के सिरमौर मानव में कई ऐसे दुर्गुण भी हैं जो पशुओं में नहीं पाए जाते, जैसे शराब पीना, धूम्रपान करना, दम्भ, विकारों-व्यसनों की दासता, झूठ बोलना, गाली निकालना इत्यादि। In a way, the man has become worse than before. My little experience with *Ram Naam*, its power and effect makes me declare with force and confidence that it is a panacea for all such ills. The moment, people were initiated into 'Ram Mantra', many took the vow, not to consume alcohol, not to eat meat, not to go for adultery and not to gamble. In no case, they were asked to do so. This change came of its own from within. In many homes, even serving of alcohol has also been stopped. Their love for *Ram Naam* makes them chant it most of the time even while at work. They claim that *Ram Naam* is a man-making machine! They are in the process of becoming good, and perfect human beings.

It is true, chill can be controlled by a heating instrument like a room heater or a blower, outside heat can be reduced by an air conditioner but the distress of mind cannot be corrected by any instrument developed by science. Its burning can be cooled or calmed only by chanting of *Ram Naam* i.e. by devotion to the Lord. In my experience, *Ram Naam* can change our behaviour and character. Our nature gets transformed into that of loving and giving to others. It becomes Divine. *Mantra* can turn impossible into possible. May God bless all the devotees of Lord's name with continuous repetition of this nectarine Name —*Ram Ram* and consequent eternal peace. May we become good and do good. **All glory to *Ram Naam*.**

Dr Viswamitra

9.12.2000

Manali

Chapter 1

Empowered Name or *Naam Shakti*

The Concept of Name

Have you ever fathomed the importance of your name? Perhaps yes, perhaps No! In every religion of the world there is a sociological theme in currency, i.e., Christening or *Naam Karan*. Every individual is first given a 'name' based on parental imagination coupled with expectation from the child having socio-religious sanction of any given society. The newly born baby gets the first gift from the society — a name! The etymological meaning of names has primarily two dynamics. First to link it with sacredness of individual belief system like the name of Gods, or Prophets, Saints and even celestial figures like John, Muhammad, Ram, Krishna, Buddha and the like. Secondly, the name may signify some aesthetic meaning like the beauty of nature and *Guna* or qualities of some lofty personalities. The name serves as the primary channel for socio-spiritual navigation of the individual. In sociological perspective if somebody is christened with god's name and called by that name several times by several persons then it becomes in actual sense a chanting of the God's name in spiritual perspective. I named my son Barun and when I call him by this name it becomes a means of socio-communication and at the same time it makes me chant the name of the celestial god *Varun*.

Unconsciously again when my child grows up and contemplates on the significance of his own name he would fathom the qualities inherent in the name itself and try to equate his own nature with that of the celestial name inwardly. Suppose with the grace of God he gets the slightest spark of the celestial name, he would never tread the negative path of materialism. Rather this celestial name would serve as a speedbreaker against his nurturing of any negative thought and action as a human being. Now, in Hindu system of thought and philosophy religious chanting and performance of social duties are inseparable and for this very reason Hinduism remains a way of life unlike any other religion preached and practised. Around the name there is a sense of sacredness but which later on often leads to aberrations as we forget the inner meaning of our own name. But the inherent piousness and power of the name remain hidden within and it remains only a matter of search and research. In this chapter we are going to touch upon the sacredness and power of the name itself which would help expand our horizon of consciousness regarding the 'Power of Name' when fathomed in correspondence with the 'given negativism' of the society and understand the concept of 'Reformation' spreading steadily amongst the Bhils of Jhabua and Convicts of Indore Central Jail.

Name and Sound: A Quest

Utterance of the Self is the first realization of man since the dawn of our civilization. Perceptions of natural sound around him and the sound articulation within him at the experiencing and expressive level and again at the introspective dynamics created an awe within.

To know beyond what is known remained a never ending quest of the man ! The ancient man denoted every

'utterance' with a name and a symbolic meaning to relate the self with the other self. As he faced the world he continued to denote his each and every experience with a name be it of nature or the natural self. However, he first discovered the name of the 'self'! Yet, he wondered who created the cosmos and who is the creator of this 'created world'. After several cosmic delving man discovered a Sound within and thus the journey of quest began which remained inward! The quester experienced many phenomena of sacredness and nurtured the acoustic dimensions within and without. The most ancient theory relating to Natural Gods and their various actions remained within the wider context of fathoming the Sound. The concept of Cosmic Conundrum was also related with the Sound in most of the ancient civilizations. In Indian tradition the primal Sound of creation was denoted with various names and many *mantras* or hymns like *Bhur* and *Aum* were coined to define the first created Sound.

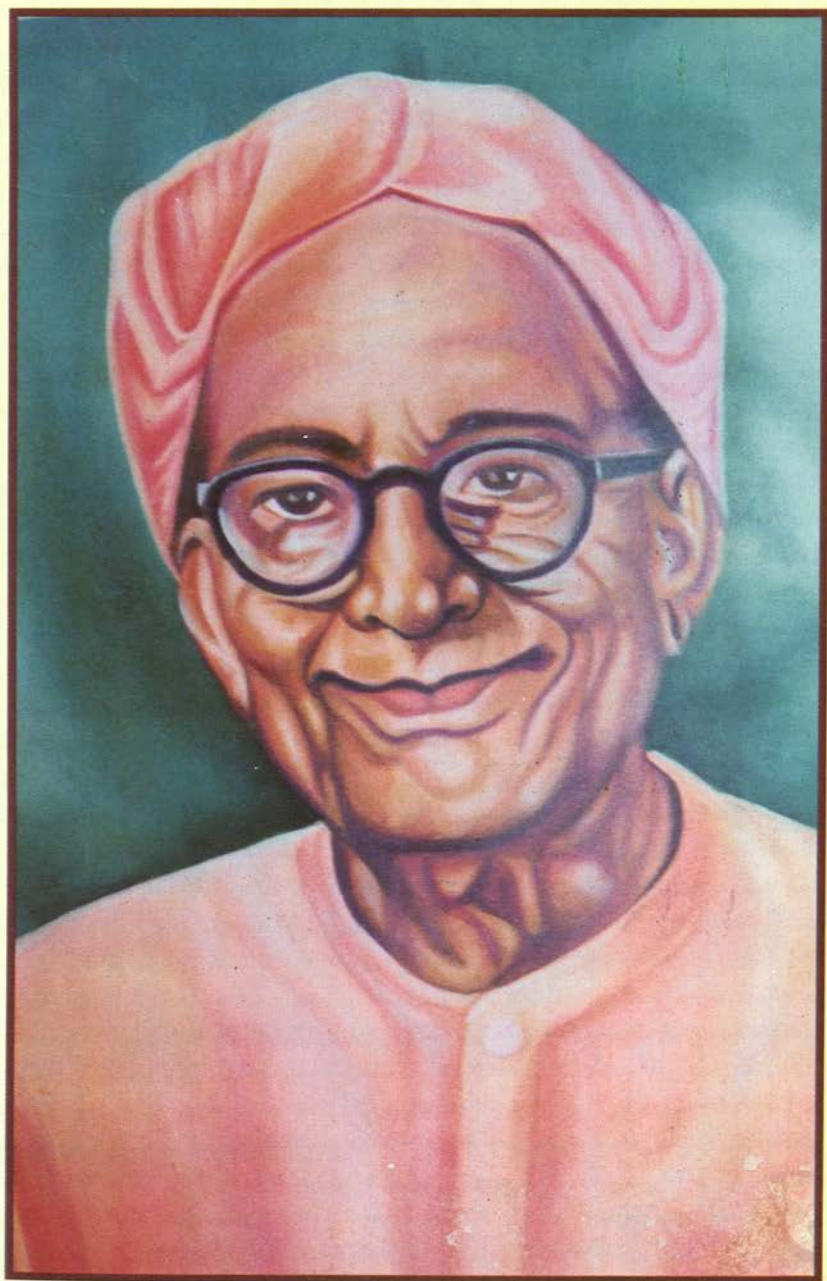
From the textual tradition of Vedic *Mantra* or Sacred Sound we find that *Mantra* revolves within the ether of the body and then comes out in the form of Sound with varying frequencies. This Sacred Sound is omnipotent in the guise of *nama* and *rupa* (name and form). It is said the universe is created within the Sound and that Sound too leads the man to his spiritual destiny. With the continuous chanting of *Mantra* a psychological atmosphere is created which helps purifying the mind and body of the devout.

The earliest reference on the interpretative value of *Mantra* is found in *Brahmanas—Nimnya Vacamsi* which means 'the word rising from the depths' (*Rig Veda* IV 3.16). Analyzing the essence of *Mantra* Srimat Anirvan wrote in the *Cultural Heritage of India*: 'The connection of the Vedic *mantras* with rituals is very deep. The chief aim of the

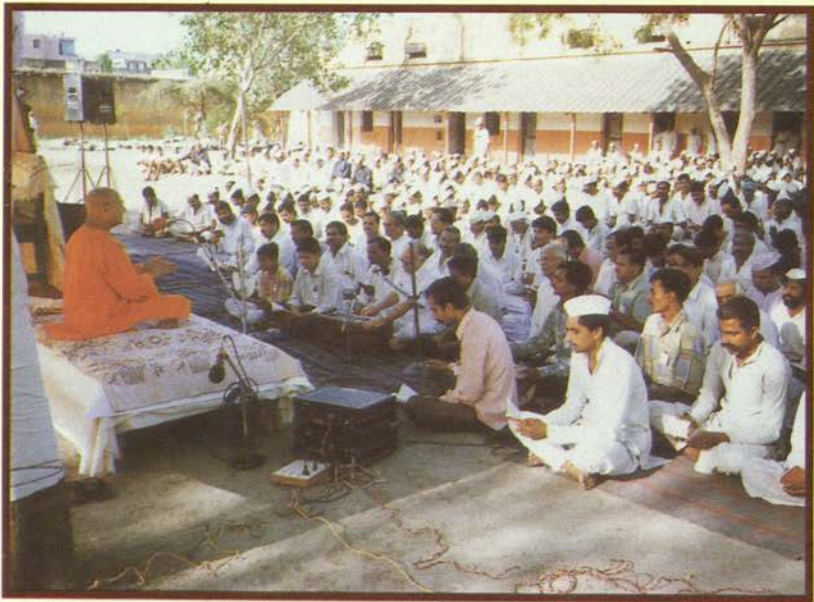
Brahmanas is to give a clear and connected account of the already perfectly familiar with the atmosphere in which these ritual arose....'

Mantra on the score of sound and audibility has a significant definition of its own. According to the Hindu *Dharma* there are three inaudible stages before the sound is actually heard. Does it sound enigmatic? In order to understand the traverse of inaudible sound we should study the observations made by Atal Behari Ghose in the book *Cultural Heritage of India* where he wrote: 'Something ought to be said here about the four stages of speech, in three of which sound is inaudible, it is only at the fourth stage that men give utterance to it. The first of these stages is *Para* located in the *muladhara*, the lowest of the six centres in the spinal column, commonly called *cakras*. This is but a mere stress towards articulation. As this stress takes definite shape, it becomes *Pasyanti* which means 'seeing'. The next stage is reached when it arrives at the *Anahatacakra* opposite the heart; it then becomes *madhyama*, which means 'Middling'. These are three names given in the *Tantra* to the three silent stages of vocal sound, and last stage is *Vaikhari*.... The first is the vibrational stage, the next is that when the sound is about to form, and the third is that when it is forming.' Thus we see the creation of sound within the micro-cosmos i.e. human body is analogous to the macro-cosmic creation which also starts with initial vibration at the *sunya* or zero level.

Again in modern times, the scientific theory called 'Big Bang' of the cosmic kind and creation of the universe thereafter is perhaps a philosophic extension of which ancient Hindu sages proclaimed several millennia ago. It is clear ancient philosophers and protagonists of the

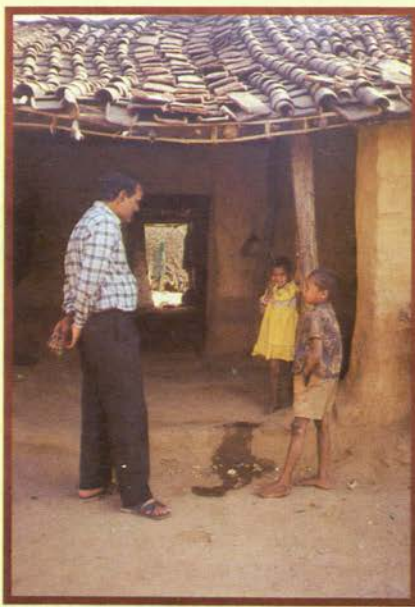


Oil-on-Canvas by a Life Convict turned *Ram Naam Sadhak* of Indore Central Jail, 1999.
Portrait of Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj (1861-1960)-the propounder of *Raam Naam* Philosophy.
इन्दौर केन्द्रीय कारावास के बंदी द्वारा 1999 में एक तैल चित्र, जोकि राम नाम साधक ने बनाया।
राम नाम दर्शन के संस्थापक पूजनीय स्वामी सत्यानन्द जी महाराज (1861-1960) का चित्र (प्रतिकृति)।



Presently convicts of Indore Central Jail are students of *Naam* Spiritualism.
Satsang in progress.

इन्दौर केन्द्रीय जेल के बंदीयों के साथ - सतसंग का दृश्य।



Mr Anand Shaktawat, a *Sadhak* of long standing, interacting with poor Bhil children. The 'space' of the hutment remains the only possession of destitute Bhils of Jhabua.

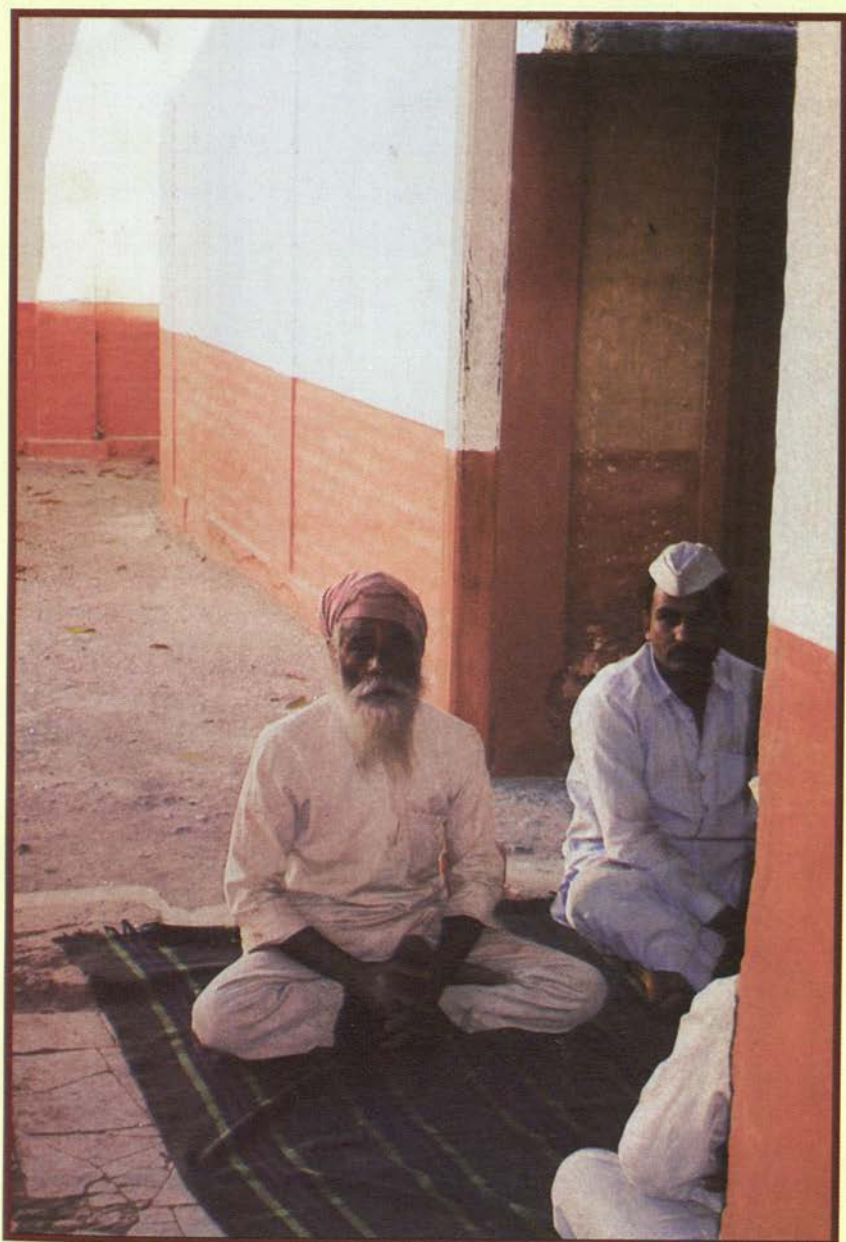
श्री आनन्द, एक दीर्घावधि साधक गरीब भील बच्चों के साथ बातचीत करते हुए। झाबुआ के निस्सहाय भीलों के पास केवल एक झोंपड़ी के स्थान का स्वामित्व है।



Amidst Drought—the village pond of Jhabua remains the only sacred hope!
सूखे के बीच में—झाबुआ गांव का तालाब जोकि उनकी एक पावन (धार्मिक) आशा है।



Sadhak Convicts of Indore Central Jail with Dr. Viswamitraji
इन्दौर जेल के कैदी साधकां के साथ - डा० विश्वामित्र जी महाराज।



Convict Sadhak meditating at Indore Central Jail. The old Convict nowadays reads the 18th Chapter of Gita and aspires for moksha as he confessed to the author. इन्दौर केन्द्रीय कारावास के अपराधी साधक ध्यान साधना में लीन। पुराने अपराधी ने लेखक को बताया कि वह आजकल गीता का पाठ करते हैं और मोक्ष की कामना करते हैं।

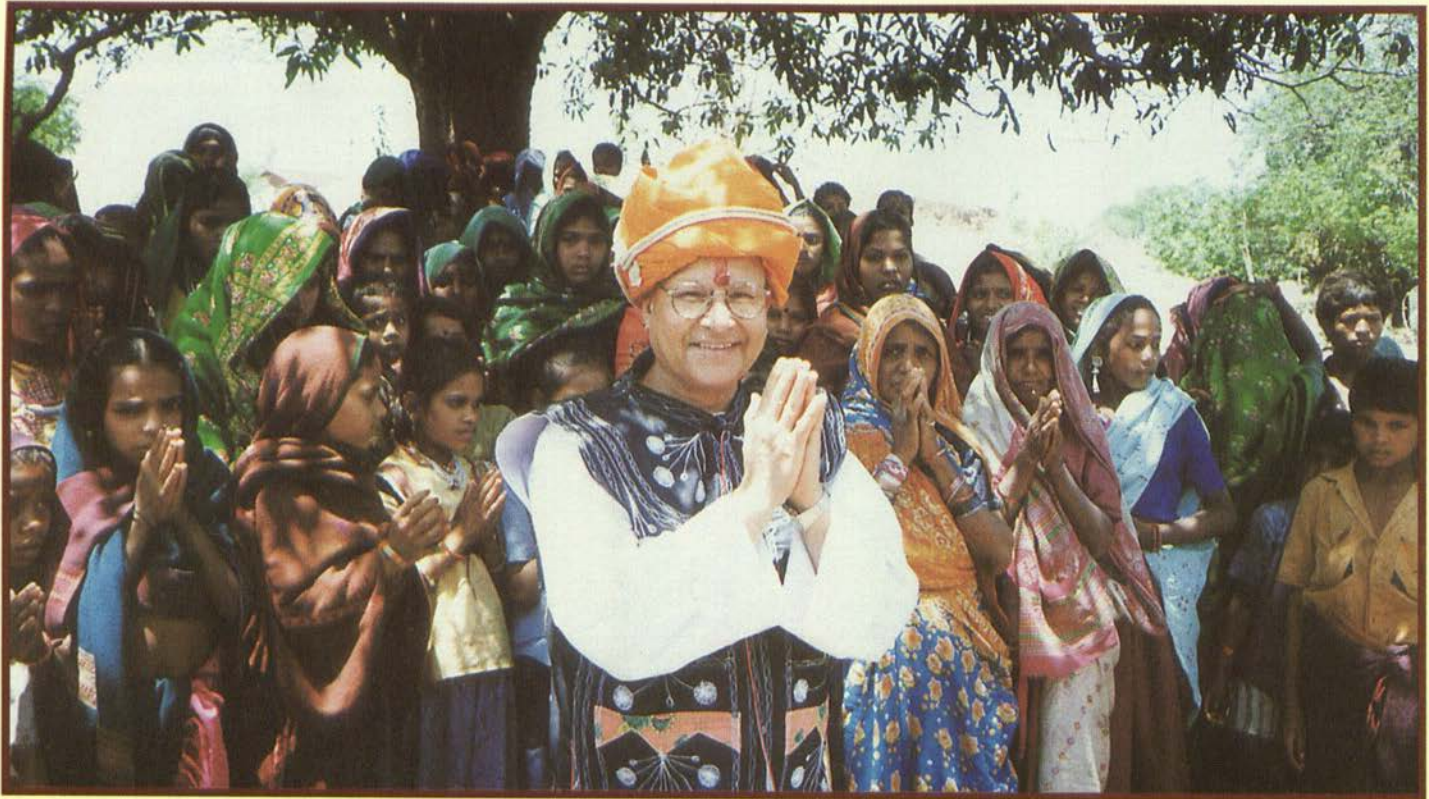


Bhramar Lal (Centre) Reformed and Released from Indore Central Jail flanked by other Ram Naam Sadhaks. Inmates of the Jail say that when this convict Sadhak used to meditate in the jail barracks tears would roll down his eyes involuntarily wetting his Kurta.



Guess who was the accused murderer but underwent imprisonment at Indore Central Jail? A happy family reunion!

आप कल्पना कीजिए कि वह कौन हत्यारा अपराधी था जो इन्दौर केन्द्रीय कारावास में बंदी रहा? एक खुशहाल परिवार का पुनर्मिलन!



Dr Viswamitraji with pious Bhil women of Jhabua. A new spiritual movement has empowered Bhil women to defy *Badwas*—the magico-religio-men who once exploited them.
पूजनीय डा. विश्वामित्र झाबुआ की धर्मपरायण महिलाओं के साथ, एक नया धार्मिक आन्दोलन जिसके द्वारा भील महिलाओं ने बड़वा की अवज्ञा की जोकि कभी अपने जादू-टोने के बल पर उनका शोषण करते थे।



Dr Viswamitraji took away deadly weapons of Jhabua Bhils with a loving smile and gave them *Ram Naam* instead which patterned a new lifestyle of people of this region as silent reformation is in progress.

पूजनीय डा. विश्वामित्र की एक मधुर मुस्कान ने झाबुआ भील के घातक शस्त्रों (हथियारों) को दूर कर दिया और उन्हें राम नाम दिया जिसने इस क्षेत्र के लोगों के जीवन को बदल दिया साथ ही एक मूक सुधार विकसित हो रहा है।

modern science delved deep into the acoustic theory of creation alike. However, let us come back to the concept of Sound and Name and view it from the universal perspective of understanding the 'naming the named' and study this world heritage from a holistic perspective.

Name: A Spiritual Heritage

The earliest reference of name was discussed by H.Wagenvoort in his book *Roman Dynamism* where he writes "*Nomen* (Name) and *Numen* (Holy) and *nomen et numen* stood for Godhood". Thus the root of modern 'Name has a sacred context when *Nomen* was mentioned in ancient Rome.'

Similarly, the power of holy name is referred to in *Old Testament* as having revealing and curing effect. Quoting *Encyclopedia Britannica* William J. Jackson said: "The Baal Shem Tor a wonder-worker who effected cures with the sacred name of God, sometime with divine name". In Christianity the concept of Name especially of Jesus Christ looms large as 'Hallowed by thy name' is pronounced loudly. Moreover, in Christianity, there are references of the tradition of Chanting of the name of Jesus 1000 times a day as observed by R.M.French in his book *The way of a Pilgrimage*.

Another wellknown scholar William J.Jackson in his book *The Power of Sacred Name* cited the Islamic tradition of *Zhekar* (recitation) of Allah as followed in Sufism. The author quoted *Quoran*: "...in God's name be its course and mooring. My lord is forgiving merciful."

Similarly in the Indian tradition the majesty of *Mantra* and the significance of Name are found in the *Rig Veda*. Thus we should first delve into the textual tradition of *Rig Veda*, which through its subtle symbolism and metaphor

provides a pointer towards greater understanding of the Sacred Sound elaborated in the context of Name:

“Brahhaspati! When they set in motion the first beginning of speech, giving names, this is most pure and perfectly guarded secret revealed through love” (Rig Veda 10.17.1) Scholar Wendy Doniger O’ Flasherty while annotating the above statement wrote: “Epithet, that literally means ‘lord of sacred speech’ is particularly appropriate as Brahhaspati is the patron of speaker and inspired poets”.

Thus we understand that the sacred utterance and the concept of naming had a pure beginning set in motion by the *Sapta Rishi* (Seven Seers) who initiated the process of revealing the secret. But the question comes up: ‘Who is this Brahhaspati?’ Again in another hymn we find the answer: ‘Our father, who created and knows all form, all worlds, he is the one whom all other creature come to ask the question’. The context of father creator is none else but the personality who created the Sun and it is he who named all.

The Mystic Speech

The sacred speech or utterance was not only fashioned by the ‘Father Eye’ but also traced the path of speech into the deep inside of sages (*Rig Veda* 10.71.3). Likewise the Sacred Sound is an expression originating from the unuttered state positioned at the navel which is centre of the wheel (*Rig Veda* I 164.13 and I 164.48). The navel at the physical level and as the cosmic centre at the macro-level of creation remains the centre of comprehension.

In another *sloka* (*Rig Veda* 10.72.2) we find an expression that the Lord of Speech who like a smith fanned

'them' together. Explaining what 'them' means Wendy Doniger recorded that 'them' must refer to the two worlds, heaven and earth rather than to the Gods; the lord of sacred speech is here regarded as responsible for manual rather than spiritual creation.

In *Rig Veda* the Sound at the metaphoric level remains 'Cow' which stands for the Dawn and also means the goddess of speech—'Vac'. In some verses the Dawn is referred to as the personification of woman. Likewise, in *Rig Veda* the creative principle is designated as woman at various levels of creation be it ushering in of Dawn or the Goddess of Speech. However, it may be kept in mind that 'Cow' without a specific name should generally be referred to as the Sound or the Dawn or the utterance of God.

'Vac Devi' or the Goddess of Sacred Speech found a prominent place at many levels of expression — hymns, syllables, ritual laws and the sacrifice itself. In the context of ritual speech we find ample elaboration in the writing of David Kinseley who observed: "...in the *Rig Veda* that sound, especially ritual speech, is the powerful creative and mainstay of Cosmic ritual order."

In the Vedic and post-Vedic literature we find manifestation of the concept of 'speech' highlighting the context. The Goddess of Sound or Vac reveals herself through the utterance of various attributes and yet she remains mystic in her exponents while retaining personification of truthfulness.

The Goddess of Sound makes her presence felt while enabling one to observe, hear and utter the noblest experience of the world. Author Kinseley disciplined the perception of this utterance when he wrote about the role

of Goddess of Sound: "She is the prompter and the vehicle of expression for visionary perception, and as such she is intimately associated with Risis ... express or capture the truth of their vision. In an important scene she is an essential part of the religion-poetic visionary experience of the Risis and of the sacrificial rituals that appropriate those vision."

It is interesting to note that *Rig Veda* symbolises the Speech as the Goddess who is the personification of sweetness and embodiment of articulate expression bestowing vital power (*Rig Veda* 3.55.15). She is also symbolically referred to as Cow who is the mother-sustainer and remains the cosmic principal of utterance.

Thus we see the *Nama Shakti* or Empowered Name is acclaimed worldwide and in the Vedic tradition its many hidden nuances are spelt out. This becomes our entry point to understand the Power of Name which would help us to fathom the concept of reformation of 'criminal mindsets of people', which is nothing very mystic rather a spiritual formula to efface the given negatives of the mind. Now we will turn to understand the importance of Name in the context of *Ram Naam* which is our subject of study in this endeavour.

Ram Naam: The Acoustic Tradition

Rig Veda proclaims: "O Praisers, knowing them, express every one of his names. O Vishnu, we desire the goodwill of you who are great" (2.2.26). Such is the importance of Name. In the Vedic tradition Name remains the symbol of a particular God's nature or *guna* and that nature is eulogised in many ancient hymns. In the Pauranic era in *Vishnu Sahasranama* one thousand names eulogise a particular trait or quality of Lord Vishnu.

Gods and Goddesses are believed to be the embodiment of some specific quality or power. They are prayed through chanting of *mantras* eulogising their qualities. In turn the devotees are blessed and their prayer heard through the medium of phonetic pulses created by the magic of *mantra*.

By worshipping the sacred deities like Ram, Shiva and Krishna the devouts continue to maintain their celestial connection.

According to V. Raghavan it is recorded in *Kalisantaranopanishad* that at the end of *Dvapara Yuga* or era Narada asked Brahma how could he cross over the *Kali Yuga*. Brahma prophesied: "You can shake off *Kali* by reciting the name of the Lord Narayana, the prime being". When Narada insisted on knowing the specific name to be recited Brahma replied: "*Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare/ Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare*".

Similarly, Lord Krishna observed in *Gita*: 'Among sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of repeating *mantra*'. Adi Sankaracharya contemplated on similar lines and advocated that *Japa Yagna* or Sound Sacrifice is the best method to attain salvation and for this one does not need to spend money and perform ritual of violent killings. Only chanting of Name would work wonder.

Moreover, *Vishnu Puran* proclaims that "Meditation in *Krita (Satya) Yuga*, Sacrifices in *Treta Yuga*, Worship in *Dvapara Yuga* and Chanting of Name in the *Kali Yuga* remain the mode for attaining salvation". As ordained in the Pauranic tradition we find that spirituality inherent in the Name would work wonder in the present era—*Kali Yuga* or the era in currency.

Again in the Pauranic era with the creation of *Ramayana* by Valmiki and later its narrative manifestations in several dialects and languages augmented a new dynamics of Name philosophy. In the following millennia several philosophical concepts neatly knitted and created a new fabric of *Ram Naam*.

The tradition of *Ram Naam* was furthered in the North India by Swami Satyanand Saraswati who got *diksha* in a celestial manner from Param Guru Sri Ram. This heavenly happening ushered in a dawn of neo-consciousness of *Ram Naam* as formless omnipotent which finally culminated into the formation of a new School of Thought — Sri Ram Sharanam. In this School of Thought Sankara's *Nama Yagna* is furthered with *Japa* philosophy and functions on the principle of sound (*nada*) and silence. This concept of *Ram Naam* is the spiritual prescription meant both for the *Grihis* or householders and *Sanyasis* as well. The philosophy of experiencing *Ram Naam* is based on the belief that it purifies, cures and effaces aberrations of human beings.

This is the brief background of *Ram Naam* theoculture in continuum which will help one understand the *Ram Naam* Reformation which we are going to discuss in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

Bhils of Jhabua

Introduction

The etymological meaning of the Dravidian word 'Bhil' stands for a 'bow' which is the traditional weapon of India's largest tribe called Bhil. The population of Bhils is estimated to be above 4 million according to the 1971 census. However, the first reference of Bhil seems to be found around 1400 years Before Present (B.P.). According to R.V. Russel who recorded the origin of Bhils wrote in 1916: "It has been suggested that the Bhils are the pygmies referred by Ktesias(400 B.C.) and Phyllite of Ptolemy(150 A.D.) . The Bhils are recognized as the oldest inhabitants of Southern Rajputana and are usually Kolis, who inhabit the adjoining tracts. The origin of Kolis is that they are western branch of the Koi or Munda tribe who have spread from Chota Nagpur through Mandla and Jubbulpore, Central India, and Rajputana to Gujarat and sea. If this is correct the Kolis would be a Kolarian Tribe."

The Histro-Anthropological context remains a debatable issue. However, in the *Aitareya Brahman* we find the reference of Palinda who are perhaps Bhils. The direct reference of Bhil is found in the classical era in the context of Anihilvada War of mythological days. While delving into the subject concerning the origin of the Bhils and their eternal link with *Ram Naam* I came across an

interesting reference made by the celebrated writer Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. She pointed out that Valmiki, the author of the great epic *Ramayana* was a Bhil bandit named Walia. He got the blessings of saints and goddess Saraswati which subsequently transformed the bandit into a saint. The bandit turned saint Bhil Valmiki wrote the masterpiece epic—*Ramayana*. It is interesting to note that Valmiki cultured *Ram Naam* for his own transformation and as he recited *Mara Mara* (name of an ancient tree) in actuality it sounded like *Rama Rama*.

Again, in *Ramayana*, we find the reference of Sabri who happened to be the daughter of Bhil Raja and served the Rishis in very silent manner. Even Sri Ram during his fourteen years exile in the forest visited Sabri's house which he referred as Ashram and ate the *Ber* from her. In another epic *Mahabharata* we find the reference of Eklavya, also a Bhil, the famous archer who mastered the art of archery himself keeping in front of him the icon of Dronacharya—the Guru who rejected Eklavya's formal admission to his *Gurukul* (School). Again Eklavya gave supreme *Guru-Dakshina* (Gift to the Teacher) when he cut his thumb and presented it to his Guru Dronacharya. Thus we find through these references that the Bhils dominated the mythological scenario of ancient India being in the forefront of character transformation, piousness, innocence and the capacity of making supreme sacrifice.

In order to understand the Pauranic reference to the Bhils let us examine the summing up by a historian Dr Bachhan Kumar who traced the mythological sources and wrote: "The origins of the Bhils from the thigh of Vena, son of Angra, a descendant of Manu Swayambhua, Vena was childless and the sage, therefore he rubbed his thigh and produced a man like a charred log, with flat face, and extremely short. He was told to sit down (Nishada). He

did so and since then they are known as Nishada, from whom spread Nishadas dwelling on the Vindhya mountain, distinguished by their wicked deeds.”

After several millennia Bhils are ironically still stigmatized with their ‘wicked deeds’ as Jhabua figures top in the criminal record of Asia. Yet, the Bhils of Jhabua are also known for their valour as these were the people who helped the famous Rajput hero Rana Pratap while in hiding and fighting from the woods. The guerrilla fights still remain in vogue among the Bhils though now utilized for criminal activities, as a Judicial Officer commented.

Pre-Historical and Historical Background

The earliest archaeological evidence of human habitation in the region of Narmada, rivers Mahi and Sabarmati dates back to 1,00,000 years. Apart from this we do not have any coherent historical traces of human habitation especially of pre-historical period in the Vindhya region. Quoting J.W. Watson historian Dr Bachhan Kumar recorded that there were some evidences of earliest ancestors of Bhils which were found in the Neolithic era, where some weapons and tools of New Stone Age were found. But all these do not create a clear picture of cultural continuum.

It is supposed that in the early historic period nearly 1400 B.C. Lord Krishna founded a kingdom in Gujarat after defeating the local inhabitants who were believed to be Bhils. Tracing the history of Bhils D.N.Chaturvedi observed that in *Hansha Puran* Bhils were referred as semi-civilized aboriginal. According to Dr Kumar it is reflected in the local lore “that Bhils used to take away royal ladies of Yadavs and it also happened to be a Bhil arrow which accidentally killed Lord Krishna”.

Furthermore, references of Bhils are found in 626 A.D. Naditya, who founded Nagoda, mentioned about the cooperation extended by the Bhils. It is gathered that the Bhils commanded self-respect and maintained their image amongst the Rajputs for quite a long time. During the period 1433 A.D. to 1468 A.D. the Bhils were unscrupulously exploited and merciless atrocities were perpetrated on them like flogging, hanging and even beheading.

It can be concluded that from the 14th to 16th century unending exploitation of the Bhils in the hands of Rajputs caused their socio-cultural degradation and social disparities led to their doom in historical perspective. Pooh-poohing the Bhils and eulogising the Rajputs remain some of the story-line of Rajputana History.

However, the Bhils came in the historical limelight during the 16th and 17th century after the Rajputs were ruthlessly routed. Bhils came to the forefront when Maharana Udai Singh with his royal entourage migrated to Rajpipala and took shelter with the Bhils.

In the famous battle of Haldighati when Mughal forces came to attack in 1579 it was the Bhil footmen who positioned themselves on the hills armed with short swords and traditional bows and arrows and fought to die as heroes. When for the next 10 years Maharana Pratap resorted to guerrilla warfare it was again the Bhils who played a very prominent and decisive role in helping Rana Pratap to regain his lost territory. Subsequently the Bhils were rewarded in the form of allotment of land, *jagir* (official allocation of some territory of the kingdom with the right to collect tax) and conferring of titles.

But the destiny of the Bhils was to be doomed again during the 18th and 19th century ushering in a dark age

for them. The Bhils started sporting their traditional weapon and wandered in the hills claiming levy for all the goods transited through the hills. They also resorted to negative means in their act of extortions in the valleys.

During these centuries the Bhils were looked down upon and lamenting their fate Dr Kumar writes: "The services of the Bhils seem to have been forgotten. Hateful dispersing alongwith serious effort to keep them in perpetual privation became the way of the 'other' in the society. Rajputs began to regard the Bhils as inferiors, monkey like people akin to wild beast and vermin than men. The rulers occasionally put them to forced labor, abducted their women for inhuman molestation or using them as keeps or concubines and imparted them rough justice in which the victims might be whipped or have their eyes gouged out or be decapitated."

Thus we find down the millennium the Bhils were subjected to 'historical wrong' and despite their valour and honesty they had to pay heavily. In order to escape the social injustice and degradation unjustly imposed on them they remained migrant wandering in the wilderness. Faced with these circumstances the Bhils developed a negative behaviour or 'vengeance spirit' which is termed as 'criminal instinct' as they operate till date in Kali Ghati committing social crime masquerading under the cover of darkness of the night.

In the post-independent era the Bhils of Jhabua actually never got exposure to the modern development and could not take advantage of the Government sponsored 'Welfare Revolution' on the score of literacy and health. In real sense they remained isolated and neglected and got them branded as 'Criminal'. Having been denied of their own land, they reel under debts and

abject poverty. Today, though there is no social oppression but surely they suffer from social isolation. The progressive chart of Five-Year Plans remain restricted to the bureaucratic files and much is left to be done to streamline the lives of Bhils and undo the historical wrongs inflicted on those poor souls down the ages.

Jhabua Bhils: An Economic Overview

According to the census conducted in 1981 83.1 percent of the Bhil population depend on cultivation. Formerly the Bhils used to do shift or *Jhum* cultivation. However, with the change of forest laws they had to abandon this system.

Land holdings of the Bhils in Jhabua are insignificant and due to the infertility of land it has become extremely difficult to eke out their livings. According to one survey 99.28% of landlords have 0.5 - 1 acre non-cultivable land holdings. Moreover 95.23% households have 0.5 - 1 acre of grazing lands.

Today, if one visits Jhabua nothing but the barren stony land catches one's eyes. Mass of mounds with the absence of green and few clusters of *Kuchha* huts are found scattered in the valley bearing testimony to the abject poverty around. Thus the Bhils cultivate their land for a short period of the year and choose to earn their livelihood doing the work of labour in the distant fertile land. Continuous exploitation of the forests had turned the land of the Bhils into denuded woods with conspicuous absence of green and again the landslides have further deteriorated the ground situation.

Over the years after being subjected to criminal neglect in economic terms the Bhils resort to 'credit lines' and most of them find themselves caught in the trap of huge

debt with no way out. This dismal situation gets further aggravated when poverty stricken Bhils resort to pomp and show during marriages and festive occasions. Thus their debt get multiplied and whatever they earn doing labourer's job goes towards buying their daily bread and paying interests to the moneylenders.

It is to be noted that male folks of the Bhils usually take refuge in drinking and enjoying dance and song every night. Yet, I personally have encountered many people who begin their day consuming local liquor and remain nonchalant about their duties and responsibilities towards their family. Thus drinks remain their 'escape route' and they often commit crime as a way out of their poverty stricken life.

S.L. Doshi in his book *Bhils Between Societal Self-Awareness and Cultural System* wrote that due to historical nongovernance Bhils remained unlawful and resorted to thieving and plundering. This 'criminal' designation actually motivated them to their present destiny and Doshi writes that "if a Bhil has enough to eat today he will not work for tomorrow". Thus the Bhils as a whole work only to meet the needs of today and never bother about tomorrow. The attitude 'what do I care' often motivates the Bhils to commit criminal act without being concerned about the future consequences.

In order to have a glimpse of the economic condition of the Bhils Dr B.Kumar quoted from the *Bulletin of the Tribal Research Development Institute 1969 (Vol. VII No. 1 and 2)* which is reproduced hereunder for getting an insight of the economic situation prevailing at that time.

Table 1

Average Annual Source of Income(1969 & 1991)

<i>Items</i>	(1969)	(1991)
	<i>Rs. per annum</i>	<i>Rs. per annum</i>
1. Agriculture	541.81	1265.21
2. Forest	94.80	428.53
3. Livestock	1.80	938.00
4. Milk	95.41	763.27
Total	733.82	3395.01

Table 2

Average Annual Source of Expenditure

<i>Items</i>	(1969)	(1991)
	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>
1. Food	948.48	1807.13
2. Betel, Tobacco & intoxication	119.84	1253.27
3. Fuel and Light	73.64	273.64
4. Clothing	67.67	878.41
5. Others	9.52	1133.11
Total	1219.15	5345.56

The Tables 1 and 2 above are based on a calculation made in 1969 and 1991 Gazteer 1991 (Page 20 List 1). Moreover, the debt level is so high which if calculated and taken into account then the total expenditure will be double than the figure projected.

And debt remains a vicious cycle from where escape is just not possible and which can be equated with the urban phenomenon of 'plastic currency' that binds a person tighter and tighter with the passage of time.

In order to have a glimpse of the ground realities I roamed through the land of the Bhils and found that apart from few utensils and a pair of livestock the Bhils possess nothing.

However, in one particular village I noticed that every third hamlet was having a motorcycle parked outside whereas their dwelling place remain the same in pathetic condition. I wondered whether these were illgotten when somebody whispered that 'this village is notorious for crime'. Whatever may be the economic conditions of the Jhabua Bhils one thing is common amongst the villagers that the wall hangings of their hamlets invariably remain the 'Arrow and Bow'.

Bhils of Jhabua: A Socio-Cultural Overview

Most scholars conclude that in ancient times Bhils once ruled the Malwa region but later on they were driven to the hills of Vindhya and Aravali. Since then the Bhils remained isolated though for some centuries they were locked in friendship with the Rajputs. Nevertheless, the hilly terrain made the Bhils valiant fighters. The honesty and valour of the Bhils stood the test of time but those who took their help at the time of distress led them to subjugation and their subsequent degradation.

In the atmosphere of hatred and isolation the Bhil children grow up and they in course of time opt for the options of their forefathers and ventilate their vengeance. This often get the colour of crime and so they are branded

by the society as Criminals though this blanket statement is nothing but a misnomer.

The society of the Bhils remain mostly of patriarchal type and polygamy is an accepted norm in the society. Bhils of Jhabua have adopted the dialects spoken in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Similarly, their food habits and customs bear the stamp of neighbourhood influence.

It is interesting to note that there are no lower castes among the Bhils, rather their castes are divided into sects and Jhabua alone has 122 sects. Amongst the Bhils the *Panchayat* remains the votary of power and their chiefs are called Tadvi and Patel. Badwa or the magico-religious man plays a leading role in the society. The village *Panchayat* acts as the pivotal force in the lives of Jhabua Bhils who judges the crime and delivers the punishment.

The presiding deity of the Bhils is Mahadeva though like Shaivaites Shivalinga is not worshipped. The mother goddess also remain a powerful cult in accompaniment with Tantric influence. The superstitious belief system dominate the minds of the Bhils of Jhabua.

Education remains a distant factor even among the modern Bhils of Jhabua. But if one moves towards the border of Gujarat one can find some resemblance of literacy dawning upon some villages inhabited by the Bhils.

Tracing the various sects of the Jhabua Bhils and their tribal trait Dr Kumar recorded: "The main tribes of the district are the Bhils, the Bhilalas and Patelia etc. Of these the Patelias are considered to be more advanced both socially as well as economically. The Bhilalas comes next followed by the Baselas. The Bhils are the economically most backward. They rank the lowest

in the social hierarchy. The Bhilalas are the off-shoot of the Bhils. They emerged as a result of intermarriages between the Rajputs and the Bhils." These studies elaborate the different socio-economic segments of the Bhils of Jhabua.

The Bhils relish drinks and love musical dance. Mythological characters and superstitious images form part of their cultural practices. They celebrate traditional festivals linked with harvesting and those are *Singhasan Mata ka Mela*, *Bhagoria Mela*, *Nawai* etc. which will be dealt with later.

In short, the Bhils of Jhabua retain their traditional and cultural heritage and at the same time assimilate the contiguous cultural amalgamation which at times dominate over their entrenched belief system.

Family as a unit in social life among the Bhils is not very squarely framed as infidelity and neglect in the family remain a source of constant concern in their life. The dress pattern followed and the rituals practised by the Bhils remain an ever changing phenomenon.

The poverty among the Bhils remain the driving factor which get them entrapped in the criminal web. Again, the habit of drinking and abundance of local liquor remain one of the negative factors which at times destroy the family unit and goad them to get into criminal acts resulting in imprisonment for long years.

Understanding the Mindset of Jhabua Bhils

We have already learnt that the Bhils of Jhabua reel under severe poverty. One elderly person of Jhabua city who has observed the lives of poor Bhils from close quarter narrated to me: "I have seen destitute Bhil family even do

not have a piece of cloth to be used as bedsheet on the ground. The woman of the household unknits her five meter long petticoat whereupon her children sleep and even she takes off her *Chunni* to be used as their cover at night." Perhaps we do not need any more example to understand what poverty means!

Anand Shaktawat, who is a Senior Bank Officer and resident of Jhabua for long, recalled that some 40 years ago Bhils were not so criminal as we now often term them. "It is their basic enhanced requirement which have made them criminal", observed Mr Shaktawat. In the earlier days forest was green and land was fertile which provided them enough provision for their sustenance. But now forests have become barren and agricultural lands infertile and their livestock even do not have enough to graze. Faced with this situation the Bhils move out of their native place to do manual labour for about 6 to 7 months in a year. Their sojourn in the distant places expose them to the new lifestyle which whip up their craving to have more. Since it is beyond their means to lead such a life they get gradually entrapped in the criminal net.

Mr Shaktawat further explained that superstition and prevalence of black magic or *Jadu Tona* dominate the daily life of the Bhils. The magico-religio men resort to all sorts of negative act by enacting miraculous event which make them prone to primitiveness and it is they who shut the doors of modern development. Furthermore, superstition also lead to crime which will be discussed elsewhere.

We have already discussed that the main tribes are Bhils, Bhilalas and Patelias. Of them the Patelias are most respected as if they were Brahmins! They are a reformed lot as indicated in their social customs and food

habits. Payment of a paltry sum of Rs. 1.25 as dowry during the marriage ceremony of Patelias is a customary practice. However, the Bhils are commonly divided into two groups: *Bhagat* who leads a pious life and *Nagat* who takes money and enjoy drinks and meat. The latter one is commonly known as Bhils. The Bhilalas are generally mixedbreed who emerged as a result of intermarriage with the Rajputs. They have sharp face and behave like Rajputs. They also nurture vengeance as their personality trait and take revenge even after a lapse of 30 years, observed a local resident of Jhabua.

Amongst the Jhabua Bhils the birth of a baby girl is an occasion to celebrate as she would bring money at the time of her marriage. It is the social custom among them that the boy is supposed to give dowry to the father of the bride. It is also interesting to note that Bhil boys get married at the age of 14 to 16 but the prospective bride's age should be around 22! Thus the Bhils value the girls more as they are treated as a part of the workforce.

It is understood that in the Bhil society multi-marriage or polygamy is in vogue. And every bride brings a maid with her. Thus several marriages mean several maids who work as labour in the family. Thus the Bhils give importance to the additions of more adult workforce in their family and the marriage as an institution furthers this process.

In the traditional Bhil society consumption of local liquor or *Tari* remains a dominant factor which begets unsocial activities often ending with crime.

Thus we get an insight into the mindset of the Bhils that would facilitate augmenting the area of reformation which will be taken up later on.

Developmental Activities: A Gift from Above

The society which is enveloped in superstition and lacks development from within invites the intervention from 'above' in the form of 'gift' from philanthropic organisations, missionaries and finally a helping hand from Welfare Government. The same was the case wh the Bhil society.

Christian missionaries had taken the lead in providing the Bhils some sort of sustenance. In return of their benevolence many Bhils were converted. It may be clearly spelt out that all missionaries work with a touch of benevolence and the result of this philanthropic gesture is anybody's guess! For the last half a decade Government had focused its attention towards the society of Jhabua Bhils to ameliorate their pitiable condition. Today, Government is facilitating its loan and sustenance facilities. For Marriage, Health Care of Pregnant women Government is offering financial assistance which includes upbringing of child in a proper manner. Government have now provided hostels as a shelter for those who need to be protected. However, all these activities can be termed as a 'gift from above'. Necessity to efface conspicuous superstition and treatment of psychological and physical ailments are yet to be addressed. At religio-politico level one is yet to create an inroad to the mind of Bhils and implement or even augment development from within.

Moreover, various socio-religious organizations are working in isolation to ameliorate the condition of the Bhils though much is left to be done. However, the concept of reaching out to the core of the behavioural trait of the Bhils is not being addressed though there is no dearth of benevolent deeds.

Psychology of Crime: An Overview

It was a summer afternoon in a small village in Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh. One *Adivasi* Bhil youth came back home after doing day-long labour and demanded food immediately from his *Bhabi* (sister-in-law). *Bhabi* replied that she would serve him food after just five minutes. "Why the delay of five minutes?" The big question haunted and troubled the mind of the youth. In no time in a fit of inhuman rage he took up a *darati* (axe like sharp weapon) and chopped off the hands, the legs and finally the neck of his sister-in-law. After committing this heinous murder, the youth did not flee away but went straight to the Police Station of Alirajpur to confess his crime.

Sub Inspector, incharge of Alirajpur Police Station which tops the crime record of Asia, was taken aback. Police investigation revealed that the youth killed his *Bhabi* out of sheer anger and hunger as the delay in serving food was too much for him. The Police Officer lamented that in this region *Adivasi* Bhils do commit crime on the provocation of no logical reason. He narrated another incident where a youth chopped off his friend's head just because his friend deprived him of a *biri* (indigenous cigarette). Interestingly, the youth after killing his friend took the murder-weapon in one hand and the chopped head of his friend on the other and went straight to the Police Station to report and confess his crime.

While interacting with several strata of people it was found that the Bhils in general are neck deep in debt and live below poverty line. They drink heavily and kill people on flimsy issues and being an illiterate lot they never know the implications and complications of their crime. Yet they are so simple innocent folk that they do not abscond or evade the Police after committing the crime. There is an

interesting story that in connection with certain murder case some twenty people were to be arrested but unfortunately the Police Station of the area never had that long a rope to tie up all of them and present them before the Magistrate. Finding no other alternative the Constable asked them to present themselves before the Court next very day. All of them complied with the order and duly presented themselves before the Court next day.

An unheard of and unbelievable incident in the modern urban society! It should raise many eyebrows of the city dwellers who commit the crime stealthily and go in hidings, unlike the Jhabua Bhils who have the guts and morality to surrender themselves to the authorities after committing the crime. We have already discussed that in the Jhabua region poverty and crime remain a complementary factor. However, sociologically speaking when crime is committed to ventilate their vengeance then the gravity of the situational aspect gains importance. Let us analyze some of those factors.

The inhabitants of the Jhabua region remain mostly illiterate, backward and primitive. This primitivism mainly keep them in the dark rendering them barred to the knowledge of modernism be it the legal system or judiciary. Thus they often get them landed in the criminal act without being conscious of the consequence.

Due to the non-availability of fertile land the people of Jhabua opt to work as labour in the distant land. Basic facilities provided by the Primary Health Care Centre could not reach out to all the residents in the remote areas. Thus for all their problems be it physical or mental the primitive illiterate Bhils seek for the services of *Badwas*—the magico-religio men who dupe the gullible by performing tricks. The hypocritic business of the *Badwas* flourish there

because of the primitive belief system. Even now during the delivery of a child a *Badwa* is called upon rather than a trained nurse. In the remote region the Doctors are a far cry. In the given situation the Bhils reel under severe economic deprivation and survive without proper medication and they ever remain heavy drinker.

Modus Operandi

The male members of the Bhil in the Jhabua region enjoy drinking bouts in groups at the fall of every night. After getting drunk they chalk-out the plan to attack and plunder the passerby.

They generally hide themselves beyond the hillocks on the roadside before pouncing on an unwary roaduser. They use some sort of light and sound signals before pouncing on their prey.

The Bhils often use Bamboo, Bow, Arrow and *Gofan* as their weapon while committing crime. One ex DSP Sunderlal Mahajan of Jhabua said that *Gofan* was the most powerful weapon which consisted of a string of cord and whose end had a knitted bag where they would keep the small pebbles. These were first swung in the air and on the target the pebbles were released effecting not only cent per cent accuracy but even moving faster than the bullets. One Police Officer of Jhabua commented that nobody would be able to guess wherefrom the pebbles came and how it hit. Again, those pieces of stone would not even pass the test of evidence in the court of law. It was also gathered that the Bhils usually hide small pebbles inside their turban to be used for *Gofan*.

One Judicial Magistrate informed me that the Bhils often say: *Tumre Din Ka Raja, Hamre Raat Ka Raja* (You

rule during the day, we rule during the night). This is not only an expression of their aberration but also their audacity to defy the authorities.

During our conversation a Judge confided to me: "They would not loot anybody without roughing up the person as they feel that if they don't beat up the victim they are not doing justice to their act of crime. They often say crime remains their tradition and it is a matter of pride for them."

Generally, the Bhils loot buses and vehicles and escape with the valuables under the cover of darkness during the night. Police authorities over the years being unable to stem these criminal activities of the Bhils merely managed to provide escorts to the convoy of vehicles who would pass through *Kali* or *Machli Ghati*.

The Bhil Family and Juvenile Delinquents

Amongst the Bhils polygamy is an accepted practice and there is no social sanction against a male marrying many a time.

The concept of family planning is a distant dream and till recent past the Bhils believed that sterilization is a process which entails removal of procreative organ. Moreover, they consider that the children are the gift of the God as they are the potential workforce of the future. Again due to non-availability of medical facilities mortality rate is quite high among the children. On an average each Bhil family has seven to eight children.

Each family unit of the Bhil remains a neglected and poverty stricken lot. The concept of drinking and early exposure of sexual life and criminality around them make their children grow faster mentally.

When a Bhil male drinks and beats his wife or indulges in criminal activities it is considered absolutely normal in their society. Children and females have accepted these 'criminal traits' as their heritage handed down to them and do not show an aversion to it. When a father is convicted by the court and sentenced the family remain neglected. Some females in the family sometime run away with other males. It results in growing children getting into the criminal cobweb. A Magistrate who once served the Jhabua Court informed me that he was surprised to see hundreds of children being produced before the court. Again he confessed that there was a rapid increase of juvenile crime among the Bhil children which was perhaps the direct result emanating from their family and social setup. No reformation process in seclusion can bring forth any lasting effect on the juvenile offenders. With the passage of time they will again take to crime as a matter of course which they have inherited and further aggravated by the apathetic approach of the authorities.

Policing and Judiciary

The attitude of the Police to the poor crime-prone Bhils is apathetic. They consider the Bhils as born criminals and treat them as such. Even innocent Bhils not involved in crime get convicted with the manipulation of so-called witnesses.

Being illiterate and backward the Bhils do not have political backing and access to media. It seems nobody understands them, rather nobody is interested in understanding them. The Bhils are born to suffer or they are destined to suffer because they are born Bhils.

The Courts are overloaded with pending cases. Lack of facilities and congenial environment impede smooth

functioning of the Judiciary. Many Courts do not have even Judges' library and almost no supporting staff.

A Court which is supposed to handle some 500 cases is required to handle around 20 to 25 thousand cases. Again the Judiciary suffers from paucity of Secretarial staff and stationery items. These factors have a direct bearing on the proper functioning of the Judiciary. Policing and Judicial aspects are interlinked with the judgmental process. Though punishment remains a deterrent factor for further commission of crime in the society, yet the reformation of the criminal once convicted remain a distant dream.

Chapter 3

Spirit of Reformation and Sacred Name

Concept of *Ram Naam* and Reformation

Ram Naam remains the sacred name of the Hindus and chanted in India since antiquity. However, the concept of 'Ram' remained restricted to the sphere of icon within the temple and its ritualistic worship overshadowed the concept of *Ram Naam*. Once Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj was meditating on the concept of *Nirakar* (formless) or *Adwaitavad* (non-dualism) on the *Guru Purnima* Day at Dalhousie. He witnessed some heavenly happening. He was asked to take the name of *Ram* through celestial Commandment. In order to understand better the meaning of the Commandment Swamiji appealed to the celestial voice to appear before him in His true form. Then appeared a cosmic light typifying RAM in the shape of Devnagari script.

With this celestial experience Swamiji Satyanandji was initiated in the acoustic worship of *Ram Naam* which unified the two primary process of worship, i.e. *Upasana* (Worship) and *Karma* (Action) finally culminating in *Brahma Gyan* or supreme knowledge. Henceforth, Swamiji propounded *Ram Naam* school of thought which was finally institutionalized with the founding of Sri Ram Sharanam with its Headquarters at New Delhi.

However, its branches spreading into several places are manned by the *Sadhaks* through their individual efforts within the country and abroad. Now there are some eight lakh followers of *Ram Naam* philosophy.

The essence of this philosophy propounds worshipping of the formless one who is the Supreme Soul. The method is based on *Japa* philosophy. One can either chant loudly or silently the sacred name *Ram Naam* which permeates the soul within silently.

This Sacred Name when pronounced within in a particular manner charged with high emotion, it brings about an acoustic harmony within the body sphere. Through this process the spiritual journey starts within. *Ram Naam* at one level helps neutralize aberration of mind and checkmates the negative contemplation. At another level the Sacred Name helps clean the self keeping at bay the given negatives of mind. Chanting of *Ram Naam* helps the process of character building and augments a feeling of spiritual ecstasy within. Finally, this state of mind blessed with the spiritual bliss effaces the *papa* or negative *karma* of the individual. It further helps control one's senses and compel the basic instincts of the mind to take a back seat.

Again to profess and practise the *Ram Naam* philosophy one need not be an ascetic or run away from one's own social duties. Rather this philosophy encourages one to live a life amalgamating the spiritual values with one's social action.

The process of inner healing by balancing one's earthly desire and restraining the urge to possess more and more remain some of the rudiments of this school of thought.

It has been seen that the philosophy of *Ram Naam Japa* also possesses curing potential like a medicine and it is nothing but 'remembrance' or *Simran* of the Sacred Name. Again, it projects the vision and widens the perspective of honest living and lifestyle.

In this book we would be discovering the nuances of *Ram Naam* amongst the isolated primitive Bhils who often take up crime to eke out a living. It has been seen since Dr Viswamitraji went to Jhabua and elaborated the concept of *Ram Naam* among the Bhils, the followers of this philosophy started realizing its essence. The purification method at one level installed self-confidence amongst those who are branded criminals be in Jail or outside. Alongside innocent Bhils are not only doing away with their negative food habits but also reforming their age-old social structure based on superstition and blind belief system. Let us explore the various aspects of the philosophy of *Ram Naam* and understand how it is working as a vital spiritual tool to heal the wounds and give solace to the people who are either termed 'primitive and criminal' or stigmatized as branded criminals serving sentences in the dark cells of Indore Central Jail.

***Ram Naam* and Emancipation of Bhil Women**

When a girl child is born in a Bhil family, then it is time for celebration. Because she would grow up and bring dowry in her marriage. Yes, in the society of the Bhils in Jhabua region bridegroom pays the dowry to his father-in-law. And it is interesting to note that a girl or a woman remains a symbol of possession. Whosoever possesses a woman he would be required to pay a sum of money, as decided by *Panchayat* (Village Council), to the person a woman originally belongs to. For example, suppose a Bhil boy has paid Rs. 10,000 to the father-in-law for marrying his

daughter. Again, if the same girl runs away with another man then that very man has to pay money as compensation as decided mutually or through *Panchayat*. I encountered a life convict who came back home after serving 8 years in Jail and found that his wife was not staying in his house as she got married to another person. Then this ex-convict finally searched her out and he was eventually paid the compensation money by her new husband.

In another case one Rahu's sister was physically exploited by her neighbour. Infuriated he went along with his friends to attack the culprit, but finally the case was amicably settled after the culprit agreed to pay a sum of money as compensation for the rape.

However, it is gathered that generally the Bhil male would not tolerate physical exploitation or even teasing of their wives as such an incident may even lead to murder. Thus we find the concept of possession of women as personal property is prevalent in the Bhil society.

In order to understand the concept of women and marriage in the Bhil society we should delve in the *Bhagoria mela*. The word *Bhagoria* means 'run away' and in the *Vasant ritu* this *mela* (carnival) takes place in a marketplace. In this fair for the youth, young males search for their would be bride and forcibly try to run away with their chosen brides. In this *mela* unmarried boys and girls come well dressed to choose their would be marriage-mates.

Dr Bachhan Kumar observed: "In the *haat*, if a boy is enamoured of a girl, he follows her and applies *gulal* (red powder) on her face. If the girl returns the compliment, then it signifies that she too likes him and is willing to be his wife. However, if it happens otherwise then the boy follows her further and repeats the feat several times."

Dr Kumar further clarified: '...the boy casts his eyes on a girl and applies *gulal* on her face but she does not return the compliment. He does not lose hope, follows her and goes on applying *gulal*, but with no results. He then tries to forcibly take her away with the help of his friends. But the girl is not alone. There may (be) other suitors or there may (be) her relations. And then starts the fight for the mate. Bloody quarrels ensue and murders may take place'.

This is viewed as a chivalrous act amongst the Bhils. Females are forced into elopement and once settled, the bride's father gets handsome money as dowry.

While doing field study in Umria Salam I was lucky to interview an aged lady Bodhi Bai, who had lost her son recently but remain an ardent *sadhak* of *Ram Naam*. She gave me an insight into the world of Bhils. She said that torture of females was a daily routine in most households of Bhils prior to their *Ram Naam Diksha*. Physical unwanted capitulation and living in the world of rituals remained a daily routine in the lives of Bhil women. Let's try to understand the subject with more details gathered by me during the series of interviews while doing field work.

Within the dynamics of traditional tribal culture of women they remained a strong corner pillar of their own ritualistic cultural corridor. Their belief system revolves around 'world of evil and empowered demonic Gods called *Devi*'. Literacy has not dawned on them at all, though some sort of awareness has made an inroad to their psyche. Women do all the daily chores and hard work of the household and take care of animal husbandry of their home. Poverty remains the stark fact of their lives and deprivation is very deep in their lifestyle.

Generally speaking the Bhil women believe that everything happens in the context of *Devi Shakti*—evils or ghosts. Since their birth Bhil women nurture superstition and they grow up in an environment of 'dark age' concept. Moreover, influence of the outer world be it literacy or primary health care could not penetrate their home, which is barred with the tinted glass of primitivism.

Moreover, for ages qualified Doctors could not penetrate their remote villages and so they banked upon the witch priest or Badwa who remained the only source of succour solving all their physical, mental and environmental problems. It is also learnt that Bhil women give up themselves to the Badwas to appease the *Devi Shakti*.

In this given situation Bhil women who got the *Ram Naam Diksha* are becoming conscious of many things. First of all chanting of *Ram Naam* which works internally make them stronger personality. The acoustic journey at one level give them spiritual strength and at the other level the Sacred Name is causing internal cleansing. The immediate fallout of *Ram Naam* is their growing disbelief in their age-old institution of Badwa, who exploit them casting a spell of negativism.

They are equivocal in their statements that through the *Japa* philosophy they have found peace within and they utter in unison—*hame shanti milee hai* (we have found peace). Thus the Sacred Name *Ram Naam* at psychological level is harmonizing their personality and making them coherent people open to development and modernism.

It may be noted that Bhil families mostly suffer from poverty and its resultant atmospheric infliction of their drunk

males. Beating of their wives remain a regular practice amongst the Bhil males when drunk and they blame their wives for bad omen and its ill impact on the family.

Now the Bhil males with *Ram Naam Diksha* have undergone sea change in their personal behaviour and have left their drinking habit every night. There is no more beating of wives and love and care for their children evolving in their heart.

Thus when the males take care of their family, quarrels and hurling of abuses take the backseat. Peace have dawned on their poverty stricken huts. With this overall change in the personal behaviour of the males their females no longer indulge in infidelity and do not resort to stage managed elopement with another male. During my frantic search I did not come across a single woman with *Ram Naam Diksha* who had run away with another man. Thus we see remarkable social changes, though unbelievable, are being brought about with the Sacred Name *Ram Naam*. The piousness of their belief on *Ram Naam* has uplifted the females from the depth of imposed superstitious life. They are eking out a living honestly as their males no more try to get entrenched in nefarious activities.

Thus we see the concept of reformation among the Bhils is with the Sacred Name, *Ram Naam* which is working within as a phenomenon of internal energy enabling them to face the world of odds. With peace prevailing in the household the whole family prefers to opt for modern development.

Now, health care nurses are preferred to the Badwas during the delivery of a child. The high walls of superstition have been smashed with the Sacred Name *Ram Naam*. Again, the children of the Bhils who got initiation are no

longer becoming orphan as their fathers are no more convicted for committing crime and mothers are no longer eloping with other men—an ageold practice which has the social sanction amongst the Bhils. Moreover, their children are now being sent to schools though educational infrastructure remain in a shabby state.

Thus we see the Sacred Name as *Japa* philosophy is silently empowering the Bhils with positive energy which motivates them to navigate towards neo-horizon of development over the ruins of their ageold superstitious society—a symbol of negative identity of the Bhils. Consciousness about the duties and rights, importance of availing education and health care facilities are some of the barometers of Bhil woman's emancipation indicating the impact of the Sacred Name *Ram Naam* on the Bhils of Jhabua.

The empowerment of Bhil woman has a direct relation with negating the culture of ritualistic superstition. To understand the nuances of their customary belief system we need to understand the Badwas, the custodian of negativism for ages, as they never allowed the neo-light reach to the lives of the Bhils.

Badwas- The Satans among the Simple Bhils

Badwas are traditional magicians and their trade is to play trick on the gullible Bhils. They play with some grains, liquor etc. and gesticulate their state of trance with their head roving. While diagnosing the socio-psycho-physical problems they drink liquor and murmur words akin to *mantra* which cast a spell on the onlookers. Then finally, Badwa comes out with a solution necessitating the sacrifice of a goat or chicken and the need of liquor. Badwas also create a fear psychosis among the poor

people to extract anything from them—even the physical capitulation of the females. They generally carry on their trade from their residence-cum-shop which is known as *Badwa ka Dukaan*. Depressed Bhil clients flock at their shop in search of solution of their various problems. It is the Badwas who shut the window of neo-information reaching the people and breed superstition at the deepest level in the society of Bhils.

Especially the Bhil women visit the Badwas and seek their help. The women remain fatalist and never change their belief system. Even delivery of the child is done by the Badwas. However, during the menstruation cycle of women no exorcism is allowed in the family.

Who are these Badwas? Are they traditional medicos? No. Are they magicians? Perhaps No. In reality it is a profession chosen by some people to eke out an enjoyable living as they get free food and drinks without much effort in the poverty stricken backward villages.

It was learnt that at times, these *Badwas* work as a tool for social vengeance as well. If a *Badwa* singles out a weak woman with no male member to protect her, he tries to induce her, and makes an amorous advance. In case she spurns him the *Badwa* projects her as an evil and declares her a *Dakini*. Then the whole tribe hunt her out and kill her. Even now this heinous crime is committed though their numbers are few. To combat this evil practice even stage artists organise popular theatre to expose the theme of *Dakini* and try to erase the superstition within their society.

Since 1997 Badwas are being challenged by the ordinary Bhils who got *Ram Naam Diksha*. The acoustic power of *Ram Naam* has effaced their superstitious belief

and they pooh-pooh the Badwas. *Ram Naam* has enlightened the Bhils and they are now ready to accept neo-knowledge and modern education. Within a short period of three years, traditional business of many Badwas have been ruined. Strangely few Badwas have now adopted the sacred *Japa* philosophy. They openly confess that neither they have any traditional knowledge nor they can cure anybody. If anybody is cured it is due to the luck of the individual.

One ex-Badwa confided to me: "I must confess that over the years I had been in this business of Badwa and after me my elder brother took up this profession and now he has also left this business. We used to fool the women folk and in return we could eat and enjoy flesh apart from drinks, which otherwise we could not afford."

From different interactive discussion with the people of the Bhil community it is learnt that the Badwas, the Satan of superstition, actually damaged the simple society of the Bhils. In order to entrench their position as divine deliverer in the Bhil society they did oppose missionaries to bring about reformation in the society. They did not like *Ram Naam Japa* philosophy to spread among the Bhils as it also addresses the reformation of Bhils. However, *Ram Naam Japa* concept penetrated the mind of the Bhils and in course of time the Badwas were exposed. Every individual got reformed internally and started accepting the neo-knowledge coming from outside their society.

If one is asked to gauge the impact of *Ram Naam* philosophy on the Bhil society, it can be safely said that it has affected the Badwas worst rendering them destitute as reformed Bhils are turning them away.

Food and Liquor viz-a-viz *Ram Naam*

A Bhil generally eats non-vegetarian food and takes plenty of local liquor. However, due to poverty they can hardly afford to eat grain though *Makka*, *Jowar* and *Samli Bhudli* are some of their common food. There is a distinct influence of Gujarat as seen in their preparation of food.

Being non-vegetarian they consume fish and flesh of goat, pig, sheep, hare, nilgiri etc. A police officer informed me that they often steal buffalo and after slaughtering the animal apply certain oil and chemicals on the flesh before hiding it beneath the ground. After a lapse of 6 months they dig out the buried flesh and consume with relish.

Daru or liquor is a must for the Bhils. Be it a birth ceremony or an occasion of death nobody can avoid drinking *Daru*. Generally, they drink alongwith their females and children. Moreover, it seems that the poor Bhils survive only with drinks as we find them drinking from the dawn to dusk. In fact, this habit helps them to forget about their poverty and responsibility of their family. It is customary for the Bhils to drink liquor every night in a group of seven or eight people. While drinking they fight among themselves and some fights become fatal. It is also important to note that before chalking out the plan of committing the crime they must drink. In the state of intoxication they pounce on their prey to plunder. One convict, who got *Diksha* in *Ram Naam*, recalled the damaging effects of *Daru* and thus lamented: "...after taking *Daru* for five minutes we used to develop fight or plan to commit crime and this often resulted in arrest and legal entanglement of minimum five years which might result in conviction and imprisonment".

It is interesting to note that during the *Ram Naam Diksha* they were never told to give up their bad habits.

They were only asked to culture regularly the Sacred Name within. Through the practice of *Ram Naam Japa* philosophy someday some internal voice asked them to desist from their drinking habit or give up other negativism of their character. Thus introspection through *Ram Naam* philosophy brought about a magical phenomenon. I could find hundreds of Bhils who have left the habit of drinking and no longer indulge in nefarious activities after they were initiated in the *Ram Naam* philosophy.

This in turn has brought about peace and bliss in their hearth and home. While roaming through the villages of the Bhils I learnt that it is a tradition among the Bhils to arrange funeral feast after the cremation of the dead body is over. On one occasion somebody wished that they should offer prayers to the departed soul by singing *Amritvani*—the sacred book of *Ram Naam* philosophy created by Swami Satyanandji. When this *kirtan* was over some people objected to serving of drinks and meat. A quarrel ensued over the issue. Finally, the items of drink and meat were discarded from their menu. Since then, on these occasions the initiated Bhils only serve *Sharbat* (water mixed with sugar) instead of liquor and non-vegetarian food is never served.

One Bhil named Radu Damor used to drink 3 to 4 bottles of *Daru* a day, and fight with others without rhyme and reason. Killing animals was part of his daily routine. He was ferocious in his manners and neglected his family of 8 children and wife. One year ago he got his *Diksha* in *Ram Naam* philosophy. Today, he repents for his past deeds. *Ram Naam* chanting has not only helped him to discard his drinking habit but also helped him to become a good father and husband. He has saved again around 365 animals from being killed as this was once his daily

pastime! He even stopped eating non-vegetarian food and other members of his family had not objected to it. Again, at the social level he never visits his relations who take to drinks and flesh and engage in nefarious activities.

Now he has socially boycotted others who were once his yester years' friends and accomplices. It was a memorable occasion for me to have lunch with the family of Radu Damor and I could feel the presence of divine peace and bliss in that tiny hutment which city dwellers cannot dream of.

During the course of my trekking in the remote villages I heard many people narrating similar incidents of people discarding *Daru* and non-veg food and boycotting socially those who consume them.

Even within the family relations a silent movement of social boycott has gained ground where even a bridegroom would not take food in his in-laws house if they take the food which is forbidden for him. One Bhil boy told me that once his father-in-law told him: 'Son, you have stopped consuming liquor and meat and brought peace and happiness in the family. My daughter is also happy. Now I want to get *Ram Naam Diksha* to reform my family and experience peace within.'

Thus remains the impact of the simple acoustic phenomenon *Ram Naam* on the society of the Bhils, and much required deaddiction is taking place through *Ram Naam* philosophy in the Jhabua region.

Conference of Confession

As a tool of field study an interactive conference of Bhils was organized in *Ram Durbar* where *Sri Adhistanji*, the

icon of formless is placed depicting divine cosmos. *Ram Naamis* do *kirtan* or meditation here. This place remains a sacred platform where many confessions by the Bhils took place. I am convinced that they have understood the importance of this Sacred Name *Ram Naam* as confessions were made faithfully. Excerpts of the audio-documentation of the confessional statements are placed below to enhance our understanding of the subject.

CASE STUDY- 1

Shyam (Name changed) of Village Umria

"My profession is agriculture, and even two-three years ago I led a negative life. I used to drink every evening along with friends and picked up fight. In groups we used to go for stealing and looting. This process went on for long. Drinking and fighting remained my basic occupation. Even I did bootlegging as I used to sell *Kacchi* and *Pucci Daru*.

Once a person called Mr. Naik came to me and tried to motivate me to leave this negative life and insisted on chanting *Ram Naam*. A *Mala* was given to me and I was asked to take the name of the Lord which would change my present life and the life in my next birth as well.

When I desired to become a *Bhagat* (pious man) my mother-in-law and wife opposed the idea. They told me that I need not to become a *Bhagat* because people say some Swamiji came to Jhabua and prescribed some do's and don'ts and forbade consumption of non-vegetarian food. I picked up a quarrel with my family on this issue and went to take *Diksha* from *Guruji* (Dr Viswamitraji).

After this I found a change in myself and left drinking, which remains my family heritage. I saw as a child my father used to drink, so I took to drinking. Then after *Ram Naam*

Japa I felt that this drink was a poison. After drinking all negative things cropped up and finally I gave up non-vegetarian food and drinks along with my family and no longer indulge in criminal activities.

Today even if somebody abuses me I forgive him considering him my elder. My friends who used to get engaged in criminal activities are now *Ram Naam Dikshit* and they also discarded negativism even drinks.”

Author's Observation:

The village of Shyam is situated on the roadside leading towards Gujarat and notorious for criminal activities. Villagers live a life of abject poverty, so perhaps is the reason of crime. Today, when I visited his village I found Arrows and Bows were the wall hangings of his hamlet.

But positive picture of the home was that on the floor a plastic sheet was spread out and on the one side *Sri Adhistanji* and a photograph of Swami Satyanandji were placed. This place is used by the villagers for doing *japa* and prayer.

Every evening at 7.30 some ten to fifteen people come and do *japa* of *Ram Naam*. Interestingly, earlier this was the venue and time when menfolk used to enjoy community drinks before planning a criminal act every night.

It was also observed that barring very few houses the whole village had adopted the sacred way of life which was once stigmatized for criminal activities.

CASE STUDY - 2

Shruti Bhai (Name changed) of Railaya Gaon

"I am a farmer and *kheti bari* (agriculture) is my family profession. I developed the idea why negative life was bad. I studied upto 5th Class in a *Paathshala* (Primary School). I took to drink when I was 10 years old and today I am 43. Few years ago I came in contact with Ram Sharanam and *Atman Gyan* (spiritual wisdom) dawned within. Thus before taking *Diksha* I prepared myself within and left non-vegetarian food and liquor. Because I felt that before *Ram Naam* is installed in me nothing bad should enter my body. Then after taking *Diksha* I got *sukh shanti* (happiness and peace) through chanting *Ram Naam*."

Author's Observation:

This middle-aged Bhil is literate and so he could distinguish between right and wrong. However, drinks in the life of the Bhils remained a dominating factor. So he took to drinks perhaps when he left his study at the age of 10/12 which equated with his study upto standard five. Apparently, he expressed that he never indulged in crime but being a habitual drinker he must have encountered some unhappy episodes. Finally, he confessed that he got peace after leaving liquor and non-veg food. This is also an indication that due to drinks there were some aberration or fallout he had been experiencing during his 30 years of drinking habit. Now, being literate his internal consciousness developed in due course. It proves that the Bhils remain innocent and pious and their criminal instinct is the direct fallout of their habit and societal position.

CASE STUDY - 3

Mangla of Jhabua City

"Since my childhood I used to drink and puff *biri*. So I developed all kinds of negative habit. Nevertheless, I became a teacher but yet I used to drink since morning and remained aggressive towards the students.

In 1972, I got married and my worst days started as my wife was very sick. During the period 1972 to 1996 I took her to various hospitals but all in vain, and even I tried to kill her to escape the anomalies of fate. I contemplated to commit suicide and drinking remained my basic habit.

It so happened that I came in contact with Sri Ram Sharanam and decided to go for *Sadhana Satsang* with my wife. When I went with my wife to Guruji (Dr Viswamitraji) she did not offer *pranam*. Yet, Guruji gave her *Diksha*. She actually was possessed by *Bala* (devil influence), so she behaved like this. I do not know whether you believe it or not that after *Diksha* my life changed. My wife got recovered, though uneducated she regularly comes to Sri Ram Sharanam for *Amritvani Paath*.

I left drinking but for six months I was like a mad man without drinks. The urge was so strong that in dream I used to go to some person's house who might be having liquor and after taking a glass I would come back home to sleep—remember all these happened in my dreams only for a long time. This process continued and with *Guru Kripa* and Sri Ram's blessing I could control my addiction. Alongside *Ajapa Japa* (involuntary utterance) prevailed within which helped me to feel that I would not die without drinks. This way I could control my aberration. Now, *Ajapa Japa* goes on within me even while I am travelling and it has given me deepest peace and happiness. I do not even smoke a *biri* what to talk of having drinks, eating flesh."

Author's Observation:

This case study indicates that Mangla is a teacher but could not do justice to his profession as he was liquor addict. Moreover, the cause of wife's ailment made him more drink addict to get an escape route. With *Ram Naam* the family finally got the bliss and their daily routine changed and ailments gone.

Moreover, in his effort of self-imposed deaddiction *Ram Naam*—the acoustic power—helped him to stem his drinking habit in many ways. Now the glow of his face and this faithful narration substantiate the theory of *Ram Naam* philosophy.

CASE STUDY - 4***Daru Bhai (Name changed), Sarpanch of some Jhabua village***

"I was a heavy drunkard and picking up fights was very normal for me. I had large followers in the village and as a leader I used to get people beaten up and it was the mode adopted by me to discipline the people. Two years ago I got *Ram Naam Diksha* and since then feeling of *Karuna (Compassion)* evolved within me and I developed a tendency of tackling disputes amicably. I discarded drinking and gradually all others stopped drinking and thus the cause of infighting got wiped out. I persuaded the people in my village and finally I brought two tractor-load people to get *Ram Naam Diksha*. It was my change of behaviour and attitude that enabled me to become *Sarpanch* as people voted in favour of me. Now even as *Sarpanch* I settle cases through peaceful means and deal with people with care and compassion."

Author's Observation:

Daru Bhai seems to be a leader having lot of followers. Before taking *Ram Naam Diksha* he was a ruffian and got involved in fight after getting drunk. But the evolution of compassion within after his initiation to *Ram Naam* philosophy had actually boosted up his position positively amongst his followers. He got elected as *Sarpanch* due to his reformation within and he was successful in settling fights and quarrel amongst the Bhils amicably. He also helped others to get initiated so that everybody could culture the sacred name and get peace as well.

Mr Anand Shaktawat a resident of Jhabua city also accompanied me. He observed that Advocates say that nowadays there are very few cases of crime in the court and Police must be suppressing them before making out the formal court cases. Mr Anand now confessed that after coming here and getting first hand report from the people it is now clear that actually the people themselves at the village level are controlling their aberration even before reaching out to the Police. Thus at sociological level *Ram Naam* has ushered in a reformatory revolution within the society of the Bhils of Jhabua where the policing machinery has been taken aback because of reduction in cases. This also shows that Panchayat can play an effective role to reform the society within.

CASE STUDY - 5

Nana Bhai Ramji Bhai Khagela

"I was a teacher and now I am retired. Being a teacher I was never involved in criminal or negative activities of life. People used to respect me as a man of justice and in cases of dispute they would come to me for advice. But I had a negative habit of drinking liquor. Throughout my life I could not get rid of this habit. It was my student Raju Bhai who motivated me to come to Sri Ram Sharanam and get *Diksha*. Now I do not drink at all and realizing the impact of *Ram Naam* I made my *aakha kutumb* (all members of family and relation) *Ram Naam Dikshit*.

Raju Bhai (the student of the above-mentioned teacher who motivated his teacher to come to Sri Ram Sharanam) was also present in this conference. He narrated an incident: "It so happened that one of the sons of his teacher was also a liquor addict and left drinking but he thought of doing business in Liquor. All the relations tried to refrain him but he never listened and went about to start the business. Three days were over and he did not come back.

Then the *Sadhaks* prayed in the *Ram Durbar* to save the boy from his negative life. After a lapse of three days some people from some other village came and dropped him. He was dead drunk. However, in the evening when he was about to take his food he involuntarily chanted a prayer to the supreme soul thanking him for providing him the meal. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief that the boy would now remain a *Sadhak*.

However, the boy fell ill and *Badwa* was called for medication. *Badwa* ordered that *Sri Adhistanji* and the photo of Swamiji Satyanandji be removed first and after

that he would start the treatment. The boy immediately replied: 'Whether you treat me or not I would never remove *Sri Adhistanji* or the photo of Swamiji Maharaj'. Thereafter, within fifteen days the boy not only recovered but underwent a mental change. Now he does not drink nor he does business in liquor." Such was the impact of *Ram Naam* asserted by Raju Bhai.

Author's Observation:

Nana Bhai who belongs to the traditional Bhil family got opportunity of education and lived a life of teacher. He commanded respect, yet he could not discard drinks. *Ram Naam* helped him and his family to get rid of the alcoholic problems. The acoustic journey of *Ram Naam* once started within will not permit anybody to culture negativism as has been seen with his son's experience. The role of *Badwas* getting diminished in the Bhil society is also an another landmark. One can conclude that the structure of superstition built by the *Badwas* over the ages has got cracked and will crumble in days to come.

CASE STUDY 6

Varkha Bhai of Katwa Gaon (Gujarat)

"I am a farmer and literate. I used to drink and pick up fights which is quite a common feature here. But I never took to crime. Financially and socially I faced some problems. However, after *Diksha* I underwent changes within. I left the habit of drinking before taking *Diksha* because one should be pious. After cultivating *Ram Naam* I discovered the bliss and peace which eluded me for long. And there are lot of changes in me today."

Author's Observation:

Again and again the concept of drinking habit linked up with the picking up of quarrels is coming to the fore in this Jhabua and nearby region. The socio-economic problems remain the cause of it. Yet after getting initiation everybody is experiencing changes within and bliss is reigning in their mind. It is also found that criminal instincts are less among those who are literate. Again, treatment through *Ram Naam* philosophy is working wonder at the broad societal level.

CASE STUDY - 7***Haranand (Name changed) of Jhabua City***

"I am educated and work in a Govt. organization. In my earlier days I used to drink and take to fights. Criminal activities were part of my life. Police used to search for me and I was known as *dada* or leader. I was possessed by anger and used to beat up indiscriminately be it aged, children or women without considering their age and status. I cannot tell you what sort of act I committed but I must confess that after *Ram Naam* chanting I could control the vice of anger and I became a disciplined person. Even today when I think of beating up or killing somebody some unseen power stops me."

Author's Observation:

This educated person is Rajput and took *Diksha* some decades ago. He was involved in various types of negative acts which he did not divulge for the sake of decency. Yet according to his confession *Ram Naam* had worked wonder as he could control his anger. Today he lives a

respectable and pious life with his family. Such is the impact of sacred name which can empattern any life towards positivism.

CASE STUDY - 8

Bahadur (A Village Headman) of Jhabua

"I must confess what I was doing earlier was just what the Bhils do i.e. consuming liquor and picking up quarrel with others. When I could not find any reason to fight with others I used to lob a stone upward and head that stone. Getting injured myself in the process I used to pass the blame on others and then began to fight. I was involved in all sorts of negative act and took everything even flesh.

I was very poor and my wife was sick, so unhappy I was. I got her treated by Doctors and *Badwas*. Finally, due to financial problem I took up the job of *Badwa* and continued the practice of *jadu tona* for two years. I must confess I had no knowledge of magic and possessed no power to cure, yet I continued with my job because the belief system is very strong amongst the Bhils. After I left the profession my elder brother took it up and he also has now left the job of cheating or performing magic.

Once I was feeling very sad and just at that time somebody came to me. At that time I was reading *Hanuman Challisa*. That person told me about *Ram Durbar* and *Ram Naam*. As he desired I went to *Ram Durbar* where *Amritvani* was being read. I studied upto class III and hence I could hardly understand its detailed meaning.

After sometime I started understanding the concept. After *Diksha* Maharajji (Dr Viswamitra) gave me a *mala* and said my pain and worries would go away. When I

reached home my ailing wife Aami inquired about the *mala* and took it from me and she started reciting *Ram Ram japa* very fast and within 5 minutes she could count 1000 times. Then she had fallen down and become unconscious. After an hour she regained consciousness. Thenafter, slowly she got cured and all her ailments had withered away. Such was the impact of *Ram Naam*. Since then being the *Sarpanch* I preached this sacred name and as a result 70 to 80 people in my village got *diksha*.

Now, I do not drink nor fight with the people. My problems have become few and I find out solutions with ease and peace. Now most of my villagers do not drink and instead *Shaker Kay Sherbet* (Sweet Drinks) is served during all ceremonies and functions.”

Author's Observation:

Bahadur, the *Sarpanch*, represents a traditional personality found among the Bhils. He narrated and never faltered to accuse himself. He was *Badwa* himself so he knew the dubious role of his class and he continued his profession. Being a man of the soil himself he could understand his fellowmen well. After getting respite from his mental agonies he initiated others to *Ram Naam* philosophy and now he commands tremendous respect amongst the Bhils and *Sadhaks* as well. He also experiences various kind of trance in his acoustic journey of *Ram Naam* and his experiences would consume much of space in this book. To sum up he remained a pious soul and for him *Ram Naam* served as a source of medication and meditation for spiritual elevation.

CASE STUDY 9

Rajesh Panchal of Khagela Gujarat

"I used to drink and am not much educated. I used to get involved in all abnormal activities after consuming liquor.

Once it was an occasion of *Hanuman Jayanti*. Somebody told me to come along to listen to the discourse on *Ramayana*. I told him that I was drunk. He replied it did not matter as long you nurture piousness within. I saw *Sri Adhistanji* where *Ram* is scripted and found photographs of Swamiji Maharaj and Premji Maharaj. I told myself they must be some saintly persons. I also took part in singing *Amritvani* along with others.

Thenafter Maharajji (Dr Viswamitraji) was to come there and conduct *Sadhana Satsang* and I offered my name for the *Sadhana Satsang*. But when I learnt that one would not be able to come out of the *Satsang* at night as per the rule of Swamiji Maharaj I decided not to participate as on that night I had to attend a marriage and to celebrate the occasion I had already purchased some liquor. Again on the third day I went to my Mama's (Maternal Uncle) house. I learnt that there would be *Satsang* in some Bhil village.

I was travelling in a bus alongwith my wife. All of a sudden I got down from the bus at a place where *Satsang* was to take place in some Bhil village. There I listened to the discourse and took *Diksha*. My wife was annoyed as I took *Diksha* alone. In no time I left the habit of drinking and eating flesh. At last I attended *Sadhana Satsang* at Haridwar."

Author's Observation:

This man, who was once a hard drinker realized the true meaning of life through *Ram Naam* and gave up all the negative things of life. On realizing the impact of this sacred name he spread the gospel of the *Ram Naam* in the border region of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Now all his known relations are cultivating *Ram Naam* philosophy. A loud message comes out clear that once a person who was branded bad for his negative activities in the society had now become a messiah of the Bhils in the crime-prone villages. He kept on narrating his own and others' experiences to the villagers in order to bring about a holistic good in the society. His efforts and dedication in demolishing the edifice of superstition is yielding tangible results which were visible to us while travelling through several villages of the Bhils.

CASE STUDY - 10

Mohiya of Khagela Gaon

"I do not find words to express what I want to say. I behaved like Rajesh (Case Study 9), drinking and doing *Gundagiri* in the village. My family was *Bhagat* (devout) but I became bad due to my association with bad friends. After *Ram Naam Diksha* I found the purification within and now I am working as a *Janapada* (political worker). It so happened that I fought with Rajesh who asked me to go to Jhansi to participate in *Sadhana Satsang* as it clashed with my political meeting.

People gathered on hearing our shouting at each other. Then we told them its a personal *larai* (fight). Finally,

I went to Jhansi, now I am enjoying life and there is no dearth of anything in my life. I continue to cultivate the *Ram Naam* philosophy."

Author's Observation:

It is another case of reformation in the Jhabua region bordering Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The person remains a friend of Rajesh (Case Study 9) and today he bears no ill-will towards anybody. It is interesting to note that in earlier occasions they used to fight after drinking and get engaged in negativism. But today they fight and quarrel to decide which one is important: *Sadhana Satsang* or political meeting. This should be the barometer to understand how *Ram Naam* is influencing their thought and action.

CASE STUDY - 11

Ram Bir (Non-Bhil), Resident of Jhabua

"I work in GAIL as a Driver and when for the first time I came to this city I was staying at a small hotel. I searched for a place to spend my leisure time. At last I came to Sri Ram Sharanam to kill my time for once. But later on I realized the impact of this incident. I managed to control two negative qualities of my character through chanting of *Ram Naam*. Originally I used to chant *Om Namaha Shivaya* and I had doubt in my mind which one was correct. Then I dreamt one night that somebody wearing a white robe came to me and explained that be it *Ram* or *Shiva* it was all the same, so I opted for *Ram Naam*. Recently on 23rd Feb 2000 I met with an accident. I was driving a Maruti Gypsy with a load of 7 quintal of iron. The vehicle slipped into a gorge 30 ft below. I started uttering *Ram Naam* and

miraculously I came out unscathed. Whereas the Gypsy got dwindled nobody would believe that the Driver had survived. This was my memorable exposure to *Ram Naam*."

Author's Observation:

It may be noted that in the Jhabua city a number of people also reside who are non-Bhils. And aberration is not restricted to the Bhils and so also the reformation. This case of Ram Bir elaborates this aspect. Originally hailing from Bagpat and as a Driver by profession he had to take the risk of transporting heavy metal. He faithfully believes that when his vehicle fell in the gorge he could escape unscathed only with the grace of the sacred name. He could control two negative qualities of his character through *Ram Naam*. With deep *Sraddha* (trust or confidence) for the sacred name one can get rid of one's aberration and escape the fatalities as well. He narrated another incident of 'miracle' concerning his brother who was saved by some unknown power when he was attacked by Bhils in *Machliya Ghat*. His brother was known for his bad behaviour and after *Ram Naam Diksha* he could escape those aberrations as well. As today both brothers have shelved their negativism and lead an honest life.

CASE STUDY - 12

Bacchulal of Devjhiri

"I was a very bad alcoholic and I used to start drinking since early morning and consume around 10/12 bottles a day. I used to fight with the people and sometimes I got

beaten by them. Being drunk I would vomit on the road and even fell asleep after falling on the drain. My family was disturbed and I had bad relation with my wife.

Once one Mr Naik came and convinced me the necessity to change my lifestyle. Finally, with some inhibition I came to Sri Ram Sharanam. But once *Guruji* (Dr Viswamitraji) came and gave me *Diksha* my life changed overnight. I discarded drinking and gave up my flesh-eating habit as well. As a direct result of this dramatic change now I take care of my family and there is no infighting with my wife. There is absolute peace in my life and I continue to chant *Ram Naam*."

Author's Observation:

It is generally observed that the habit of drinking leads to disturbances in the family of the Bhils. On the one hand they are very poor and the habit of drinking by the males lead to further degeneration. *Ram Naam* not only is strengthening people's will power but also creating cordial relation within the micro society i.e. family. Bacchulal said: 'Now instead of *Daru* (Country Liquor) I bring *Ghee* and all of us share it'. He also informed me that another person in his village used to drink and beat up his two wives- he even broke their legs. Such a violent person after his counselling got *Ram Naam Diksha* and now life has changed for that person.

SUMMING UP

In order to have a first-hand knowledge of the Bhils of Jhabua I undertook journey into the Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh situated in the extreme west of the State bordering Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. There are

about 1750 villages in 2 sub-divisions, 8 tehsils and 12 blocks of Jhabua.

The terrain of Jhabua is generally hilly and the soil is light not suited for cultivation. The vegetation over the hilly terrain has been indiscriminately cut in the past causing complete denudation of woods resulting in serious soil erosion.

The given deterioration of the soil condition had dislodged the Bhils of their *Jhum* cultivation which was in vogue even some fifty years ago. Most of the Bhils are now under heavy debt and unable to sustain themselves. Through several interviews with them I realized that liquor remains the main causative factor for all the ills of the superstitious Bhils. The sociological disturbances that follow from this evil practices are slowly and steadily being stemmed by *Ram Naam Japa*.

In order to have an insight and first-hand experience of the crime infected roads of the region we travelled from Jhabua to Para via Khardu—a total 18 km stretch. One local named Vivek informed us that in the stretch of the road from Jhabua to Para previously nobody dared to come out after sunset as organized crime was the order of the day. Bhils regularly drink at night and assemble to indulge in organized crime. Of late, many Bhils residing in the twelve Km stretch from Jhabua to Khardu go for *Ram Naam Japa* and it is analyzed that in this area the 'criminal behavioural traits' of the Bhils have vanished. People now feel safe to travel along this 12 km stretch from Jhabua city to Khardu. More so, people of this area have started reforming themselves by not taking to drinks any more which provokes criminal behaviour.

Again through interacting with various people living in the roadside villages another contrast was found. From

Khardu to Para the message of *Ram Naam* has not yet spread and the Bhils of this area have not got *Diksha*. In this stretch crimes are committed and even villagers dare not go out after the sunset to travel from Khardu to Para—a 6 km stretch. Thus we find that on the behavioural plane the people with *Ram Naam Diksha* are involuntarily being subjected to reformation when on the other hand those who are not initiated in this school of thought still dwell in the criminal world. This subtly signifies the glory of *Ram Naam* which helps reform the people within.

On further investigation one Jogiya, a Bhil, revealed: "People after *Diksha* realized that *Daru* (Liquor) is a poison and kills the self. And as they have left the habit of drinking they do not attack others and commit crime. All these have changed our lifestyle, we have started saving and taking care of our family as well. In the Khardu village for a long time there was no incidence of theft in any hamlet".

Another Bhil confessed: "I used to steal goats, cows etc. and I used to be scared where to hide and keep them. Today I do not steal, so others need not fear and I myself am spared of the fear".

In another village a Bhil informed us: "We used to hide our possessions like silver bangles, valuables etc. beneath the earth in the deep woods. Today we need not hide them as there is no threat of theft".

Another Bhil Amar Singh of Umria Salam recalled that his father was a dacoit. He killed two persons and was jailed where he finally died. His mother brought him up and he became a Graduate from Para. But he became a drunkard and under the pressure of his friends he took to their traditional crime. Fortunately after getting *Ram Naam Diksha* a new realization dawned on him which not only helped him to lead a normal life but also influenced his

friends who once forced him into his criminal acts. Amar Singh further said: "*Daru* (liquor), *Joru* (wife) and *Jamin* (land) are the main causes of rivalry among the people and they get themselves entrapped in revenge from generation to generation. After getting *Naam Diksha* this trend seems to have stalled and the people now try to settle things amicably".

Having interacted with many people at the grassroot level it was gathered that women are no longer tortured as their husbands initiated in the sacred name philosophy no longer take to drinks. So post-liquor fights have become a thing of the past in the lives of many Bhils. Women no longer go to *Badwas* or give themselves up as offerings because they now believe Sri Ram is residing within. Bhil families who have been initiated into the *Naam* philosophy have started discovering what peace or *shanti* means.

While visiting a number of villages like Kala Peepal, Khagela, Jhabua, Umria Salam, Khardu etc., the changes came to my view are to be seen and experienced. Once these villages were dens of criminals and every evening there used to be a drink and crime session. Those backward poverty stricken huts now house *Sri Adhistanji* and *Japa* has become a regular feature every evening around 7.30 p.m. Curiously this was approximately the same time which was earlier used for drinking and planning for a crime. It is interesting to note that in Sri Ram Sharanam School nobody is forced to become a vegetarian or ascetic, rather everybody is advised to culture the acoustic *Ram Naam* and feel the changes within oneself.

We have already discussed many startling confessions made by the Bhils which give us an insight

into their past. Now most of their hamlets have turned into *Ram Durbar*. *Japa* and *Simran* have taken away their foul languages and transformed their behavioural pattern. The feeling of compassion and love is dawning on the Bhils. In Jhabua in the tiny hamlets of Bhil tribes many Valmiks are in making, and *Ram Naam* the time-tested celestial sound is working its wonder silently in the midst of denuded wood away from the hustle bustle of the mad metropolis.

Chapter 4

Sacred Name Reforming Convicts

Introduction

In this world everybody is a sinner and every sinner is a criminal. But jail and imprisonment are for those who are caught and suffering remains the penance. Spiritually speaking, everyone is undergoing imprisonment within the body and the cyclic Birth and Rebirth remains the embodiment of prison. This is the summing up of Dr Viswamitraji's Discourse in Indore Central Jail during his visit in 1997, which melted the hearts of hardcore criminals and murderers. Discourse and initiation which revolutionized the prison reformation is a simple sacred word—*Ram Naam*.

We have already discussed how criminal mindsets of Jhabua Bhils are gradually getting reformed through the sacred acoustic energy *Ram Naam*. We have also discussed how this self-cultivated *Ram Naam* is helping people in deaddiction and stemming aberration which are helping the Bhils to reconstruct their broken family system. It may be noted that an accused is sent to the Indore Central Jail to undergo trial and conviction. Thus when *Ram Naam* is undoing the given negatives of the people in the Jhabua region then how can a convict from this region escape reformation even while undergoing imprisonment. Thus the concept of acoustic worship of *Ram Naam* in

Indore Jail was an extension of this reformatory logic. However, we will discuss the theme later and at present let us fathom the concept of Jail and psychology of the inmates.

The Jail: A Concept and Philosophy

Have you ever been to an Indian Jail? If not, you're really lucky! Jails are the real hell of this world! Think of a Jail where murder convicts live in an overcrowded environment. Poisonous insects, inhospitable surroundings of high walls, envious and revengeful atmosphere, violent personalities, frustrated beings within the 'convicted personalities' are some of the tragic highlights of any given Indian Jail.

'Life term convicts' feel lonely within those prison walls and nurture an inhibition of 'hatred' and imposed 'social boycott'. Thus they are a depressed lot who look for some means of suicide and nurture a deep aversion towards the whole society be their micro-family or macro-society which has left no stone unturned to 'stigmatize' them as hardcore criminals which has the Judicial endorsement. The pathos and pain, the fear of self and constant erosion of personality are some of the negative effects caused by the Judicial administration in its attempt to impose a 'deterrent' effect on the society.

Since the dawn of our civilization *Karagar* or Jail remained an intricate system of administrative mechanism on the score of 'crime and punishment'. It remained a mode for self-regression. No matter whatever the philosophy was behind this system but it surely resulted in 'stigmatization' and social boycott of all those who got convicted. Nevertheless, before we understand the philosophy of Crime and Punishment we should perceive first the historical perspective.

Historical Antecedents of Crime and Punishment

Since the beginning of civilization crime has remained a primary concern for any society. Even in the distant past, when *homo sapiens* started forming groups among themselves, infighting was a feature of daily life. Indeed, this was the unconscious beginning of continuous conflict between haves and have-nots that threatened society from within. In order to counter this threat society soon developed certain norms of punishment which should be viewed as 'complete social function' as Michael Foucault referred in his book *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. In fact, punishment was nothing but a political tactics by the ruler to serve the dual purpose of appeasing public opinion and stemming the malbehaviour of the 'ruled'.

In the past general belief was that crime could be controlled by inflicting severe punishment. Anand A Yang in his book *Crime and Criminality in British India* observed: "The object of punishment was vengeance, expiation...satisfaction of the public conscience and the prevention of the new crime". With the passage of time, however, it was realized that offenders can be reformed by offering humane treatment to them and also ameliorating their conditions rather than inflicting retributive penalty. Thereafter, the society contemplated on the reformation of the offenders. In this context it can be cited that in the ancient world, perhaps for the first time Plato could make a distinction between 'offenders who were capable of reformation and those who were not'. Furthermore, Plato was of the opinion that offenders deserved compassion as did the sick and that they should be treated with care.

In the Indian context, in the post-Vedic period we find several references in the *Puranas* regarding crime and punishment. P.V. Kane had observed that *Smriti* writers were in favour of prescribing lenient punishment against the first offenders. In the ancient texts like *Gurutapaga*, *Yajnavalkya*, *Brahd-Yama Smriti* and *Danda Mittey Danda Bheda Vyavastha* there are references to the concept of *Prayaschitta* or atonement for the crime.

Referring to Brhaspati's work Dr Sunil Kanta Bhattacharya has observed that 2000 years ago 'the caste and social status' of the offender, his knowledge and education, his pecuniary and other circumstances and all that went to make his individuality were duly considered while awarding punishment!

In fact, mainly four kinds of punishment were awarded in ancient India. The first was *Vagdanda* which meant punishment with words or warning with admonition. The second one *Dhigdanda* was strong censure like 'Shame on thee, thou miscreant'. The third one was *Dhanadanda* or fine i.e. fixed or fluctuating amount. And finally, the fourth one was *Vadhadanda* i.e. corporal punishment, which could be *Pidana* (torture) and *Angacheda* (mutilation).

For centuries, these mode of punishments remained in vogue. During the Muslim rule there were no separate laws which could address crimes committed by the juveniles or adults. However, with the ushering in of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, the society in colonial British India underwent rapid changes giving birth to manifold socio-economic problems in its wake. The Industrial Revolution transformed the Indian society and brought it under the capitalist system and this 'new society' was based on a new socio-economic order. Eventually, this new transition caused disequilibrium in the age-old society rendering certain classes destitute.

Thomas More in his *Utopia* dealt with the causes of increase in theft in England and he indicated that the economic crisis was one of the probable causes. Martin Luther, in a letter to Christian Nobility in 1525 wrote: "Among Christians nobody should go begging". Such was the initial concern for the destitutes and delinquents who were the immediate victims of the Industrial Revolution. Based on these thoughts the Clergy worked out a programme of providing food and shelters to the poor, bringing discipline among the destitutes and helping them in other ways.

Thus we see in 1525 Martin Luther had raised his voice in concern for the destitutes. Alarmed and shocked the Clergy took up the onerous task of reforming and rehabilitating them. Two-hundred-and-sixty-two years later in India, the cause of destitutes was championed by the two stalwarts, Krishna Chandra Ghoshal and Jai Narain Ghoshal. In 1787 they requested Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General of India, to establish a 'home' in the vicinity of Calcutta for the protection of destitutes of Calcutta who happened to be beggars, weaklings, widows and orphans.

Crime in British India

Probing crime and criminality from the historical perspective begins with negating the very principle of 'Given' of criminology like criminal law and punishment. Rather, we should concentrate on the basic question as to wherefrom the notions of crime and criminality arise. Thus social historian try to unearth the undersides of 'historical crime' and explore the class relations between the society's rulers and the ruled. A scholarly turn to the study of a 'life of crime' was given by social historian Michael Perot who observed: "(t) here are no 'facts of

crime' as such, only a judgmental process that institutes crime by designating as criminal both certain acts and their perpetrators".

Thus from the point of view of social historians 'crime is not an essential' but an 'existential category' and basically the behaviour and acts of an individual achieve the status of crime. Furthermore, Anand A Yang observed that the transformation of the theme of crime 'into a historical theme rests on the notion that the definition of illegal behaviour lies in the eyes of the beholder'. Therefore, the perception of 'crime' as simple aberrant behaviour of an individual cannot be accepted uncritically. In this context Michael Foucault has noted that punishment should be studied as a complex social problem, and he did not consider 'punitive methods...as consequence of legislation or as indicators of social structure, but as techniques possessing their own specificity'.

During the 18th and 19th centuries colonial India witnessed an escalation of crime which could be attributed to the economic displacement of the people and specially the occurrence of widespread famines. On this score Ranajit Guha has observed: "In all feudal types of societies there have always been individual and small groups who were driven by hunger and humiliation to commit acts of violence".

Amongst the various types of crimes like murder, dacoity, house-breaking, and banditry the last one was perhaps the most potent threat to the British India Government.

The British firmly believed that in India crimes were carried over from generation to generation and with a view to halt this trend they mooted the concept of reformation in India.

Toeing the European perspective the British tried to give the 'gift' of reformation to those whom they have imprisoned. On the score of reformation the periodicity of imprisonment was important. And from several archival records it is gathered the Britishers tried to bring about literacy amongst the convicts. They were trained in some trade which could generate revenue for the prison and also equip them with the skills of some trade. Even in some prisons in Awadh and Bengal gardening and farming was taught.

However, once those convicts were released the society would not accept them as they were stigmatized as *Dagi* or 'Jail returned'. Thus the spirit of reformation got a nose dive as nobody would employ them. With no avenue left to them to eke out honest living the only alternative available to them was to take to crime again for their sustenance.

In the post-Independence period we find the same reformatory system in those archaic Jails without much changes. In the Jails several new trades were incorporated but the convicts were not allowed to adopt the trade of their choice. Thus seldom the desired results from the prison reformation could be achieved. Moreover, the mental health of the convicts did not improve and feeling of dejection and depression loomed large on their faces. The real benefits of the reformation never saw the light of the day.

Spiritual Reformation: A New Dawn in Indore Central Jail

Jails remain a fertile ground of spiritualism once they are used for the purpose. It so happened that Dr Viswamitraji Maharaj, head of Sri Ram Sharanam, New Delhi was

conducting *Sadhana Satsang* at Jhabua, in 1997—a tribal belt inhabited by the Bhils in Madhya Pradesh. There Dr Viswamitraji learnt that one of his disciples' son got him landed up in Jail though he claimed to be innocent. He wished to meet him and finally he could meet his disciple's son within the four walls of the Jail. Dr Viswamitraji conveyed his *Ram Rami* (salutation) and left the place.

The news that a *guru* or saint came to meet a disciple inside the Jail spread like forest fire. Even near and dear relatives seldom meet convicts because of social stigma. In this situation a saint came to inquire about the wellbeing of a simple *Sadhak* facing trial under IPC 302 (murder charge) raised many eyebrows. Before long, the convicts expressed their desire to have a glimpse of Dr Viswamitraji and listen to his *Pravachan*. He agreed and came for the discourse. He started his talk by saying that in this world there is nobody who has not committed any crime in his life time. The man who has never sinned in his life he only has not committed any crime.

Dr Viswamitraji through his modulation of speech and logic created an inroad in the minds of the convicts and a sense of spiritualism dawned on them. After the discourse people were given *Diksha* (initiation) with *Ram Naam*. Jailor and convicts alike made the Q to get initiation in 1997. Since then the atmosphere of Indore Central Jail has undergone a sea change. Strangely enough the convicts who used to fight among themselves and abuse each other on trifling matters became reformed and live a sacred life of *Japa* and meditation as Mr Khanna, Supdt. of Indore Central Jail opined.

Following a small news item in a vernacular daily of Madhya Pradesh I went to Indore to explore a 'mystic' reformation which was taking place in Indore Central Jail.

For a change I found the convicts moving around with woollen rosary beads in hand muttering *Ram Naam*. They greet you with *Namaskar* with folded hands sporting a spiritual smile on their lips and a sparkling glow in their eyes and then they slowly walk down to their barracks. Everybody gets up early to do the morning chores and then they listen to the *Amritvani*—the melodious *Kirtan* through the sound system fitted in 40 prison barracks. They meditate like *sadhaks*, practise Yoga and finally they go to the workshop to do their allotted work. With the fall of the evening they retire and do *Japa* like a saint before falling asleep. During the day none can hear the noise of fights and abuse as every person is getting reformed silently. There is no personality like Kiran Bedi to make this unusual and unbelievable happening as an international news item. Convicts get engrossed in deep *Sadhana* and nothing but simple *Ram Naam Japa* is working its own wonder. Before we address this wonderful reformation system we need to understand the mind of the convicts.

The Mind of Convicts: An Insight

Sociologically speaking vengeance, victimization, infliction of pain and greed etc. often lead one to commit a crime with or without design of the mind. Sometimes apparently innocent people are found as convict in jail and their souls cry when for the first time they land in the Jail. The gloom of darkness befall them as they are confronted with societal seclusion. One convict Ramesh (Name changed) got landed in the Jail alongwith his two brothers and father facing the charge of murder. First, Ramesh thought to commit suicide and became an introvert until 1997 when he took *Diksha* and became a different man. Likewise, many convicts fight out a deadly battle within their selves once they land up in Jail.

It is wellknown that most of the convicts when forced into 'isolation' undergo a tremendous trauma resulting in many negative psychological changes. The same negative changes were experienced in Indore Jail by many convicts. During several interactions with the convicts it was found that most of them nurture a suicidal tendency and live in the darkness of deadly silence with the prospect of nothing but pains and pathos. In most of the Jails this is the overall picture where reformation is only a bureaucratic fancy. But Indore Central Jail tells a different story where the reformation spirit is working within the convicts with no reformation thrust on them. The concept of spiritual therapy is working wonder to undo the negative impact of psychological deterioration.

Spiritual Reformation: A Statistical Result

To understand the spirit of Reformation I may like to quote some statistics which indicate results of *Naam* Reformation amongst the inmates of Indore Central Jail. Prior to 1996 around 20 to 30 convicts were made 'literate' through classes held in the Prison. Now around 175 convicts are being made literate in a year with the help of teachers within and with one benevolent Father of a Church who voluntary devotes time for this 'In-Jail Literacy Mission'.

Thus we see with the cultivation of spiritualism within the positivism has dawned on the convicts replacing their earlier negative 'disinterested set of mind'. Many learned men from all religious sects visit this Jail to give discourse and are working towards a secular development of the psyche of the convicts, as expressed by the Jailor of Central Jail, Indore.

During the last two years apart from Dr Viswamitraji, Biju Atkarji, Firoz Bhai, Swami Dayanand Saraswatiji

Maharaj, Yogi Alokandji and others came and tried to influence the mind of the convicts. Nevertheless, the concept of *Japa* remained an internal endeavour of the convicts which really brought the desired results.

If one wants to understand the internal condition of a Jail and its discipline then one should have a look at the list of prisoners released on parole or permanently released. Statistics of Indore Central Jail states that in 1994 only 10 convicts were released on parole. It may be kept in mind that recommendations for parole is subject to the personal improvement of the conduct of the convicts and only when it is ensured then the Jailor would move the file for the 'parole action'. The following figures will speak for themselves what a significant change had taken place in the lives of the convicts of Indore Central Jail after the intervention of Dr Viswamitraji of Sri Ram Sharanam in 1997.

Indore Central Jail
(Source : Jail Authorities)

Year	Convicts Released on Parole	Convicts Released
1994	10	—
1995	43	03
1996	72	05
1997	120	03
1998	303	51
1999	257	33
2000 (Jan-Mar)	94	N A

Thus with the help of statistics we find that after cultivating *Ram Naam* the number of prisoners on parole have increased, and through *Japa* prisoners are getting remission of their sentences as they themselves claim. At this juncture we must try to understand the concept and impact of *Ram Naam*. For this let us examine some case studies.

Escaping Gallows with *Naam* Philosophy

Ram Naam is the *mantra* as well as an icon which is having tremendous impact on the convicts of the Indore Central Jail. In several letters written to Dr Viswamitraji the convicts ventilate their concept of repentance and concede candidly that *Ram Naam* remains their most trusted *mantra*. They concede that *Ram Naam* has the effect of a medicine on their depressed mind and the sacred name has rejuvenated their life even in seclusion. The miracle of *Ram Naam* is detailed hereunder with a case study.

There are two convicts Sarnam Singh and Shivraj Singh, both of whom are convicted for committing seven and half murders or *Sare Saat Murderi* as the fellow convicts call them as they have killed 7 persons and luckily one person escaped death who remains Sarnam Singh's married daughter.

In 1990 it so happened that Sarnam Singh's daughter got married against his wish and both the brothers acting on a sheer fit of anger allegedly killed seven persons. Since then they were in Indore Central Jail. Several Warden Officers confided that Sarnam Singh was very ferocious earlier and used to pick up fights out of anything. Even once Sarnam Singh caused self injury by banging his head against the wall in order to initiate a fight with a fellow convict.

However, in 1997, he was visibly moved during the *Ram Naam* discourse and later on got *Diksha* or initiation from Dr Viswamitraji. His behavioural pattern began to change. Nevertheless, both the brothers languished in the Jail when finally on 30th July 1999 they were sentenced to death. Sarnam Singh and his brother spent most of their time doing *Japa* as they awaited the gallows. Sarnam Singh used to say that even God would not deprive him of a place in the heaven as he had uttered the name of *Paramatman* (the supreme soul) 18 to 19 hours a day. It was also observed Sarnam Singh practised Yoga and used to do *tretak* or concentrating on the rising sun for half an hour daily.

Finally, on 27th Jan 2000 Sarnam Singh wrote a letter to Dr Viswamitraji: *'Mujhe 25.1.2000 ko faisla sunadiya aapke aashriwad se tatha Param Pita Parmatman ki Asheem kripa se Hum dono bhaiyo ko Fansi ki saja aajeevan saja me badal di gaya'* (I have got the final judgement on 25th Jan. 2000 and with your blessings and with the blessings of the almighty the death sentences of we two brothers have been changed into life imprisonment). Such is the belief system and the impact of the sacred name as has been expressed and experienced by convict *Sadhaks*.

Very shortly they will be out of the Jail and Sarnam Singh declares that he has discovered an 'oil' which helps to grow hair. He said that its experimentation in the Jail was successful. He plans to make this discovery his future occupation after his release from the Jail and he would also run *yoga* classes for the benefit of the society. Such is the positive transformation of a convict destined to the extreme negativism i.e. hanging gallows just a few months back. Today he can plan for future as any other human being.

When Spiritualism Replaces Batons

Mr Khanna, Superintendent of the Indore Central Jail, said that a strong belief system had enveloped the whole atmosphere of the Jail and the Jail officials were no more using their batons to discipline the 'hardened criminals'. Rather the convicts have effected discipline within which is also having its impact on the newcomers. In both *Yogic* classes and *Kirtan* when Mr Khanna participates and even sings with the convicts, at times he wonders whether he is in a much stigmatized place called the Jail or sitting in some *Ashram*. Jailor K.S.Tomar opined that there was 90 percent reduction of infighting in the Jail. Mr Tomar further stated that there was an apparent psychological change within the Jail itself. He added that a sense of spiritualism was pervading everywhere even amongst the staff who were earlier very rude and reluctant to respect the convicts as till recent past they remained the branded class of human beings.

Creativity Unfolds

In order to fathom the depth of Reformation in the Jail I interacted with a few life convicts and it was found that due to the influence of spiritualism their creative urge have come to the fore.

Some of the convicts are writing lyrics and some are giving tune to them. They sing as well in melodious tune. Some have started aesthetics with paint and brush. Even some of them have taken up 'commercial drawings' and are creating concept visualization for the purpose of advertisements.

One convict Suresh (*Name changed as author feels that once he is out of Jail he should be known as an*

artist and not as ex-convict artist) from Maharashtra one day picked up a quarrel with another person as the other person was using slang language. Out of sheer rage he allegedly killed the person with a knife. After landing in the Jail he continued his bossism or *Dadagiri* and used to pick up quarrel with others out of nothing.

However, everything turned towards positivism once Suresh got the *Diksha* from Dr Viswamitra. *Ram Naam Mantra* not only reformed him but in fact made him a creative man.

Suresh has created an audio-cassette of his own known as 'Majnu' and he composed its music himself. He took to paintings and selected the subject on social awareness.

Suresh even bagged a prize for his creation of painting on AIDS awareness. He also created an 'oil-on-canvas' of Swami Satyanandji Maharaj who propounded the *Naam* Philosophy.

Suresh loves to serve others with his qualities of head and heart and continues to meditate on *Ram Naam Mantra*.

While interacting with the convicts one positive point has become loud and clear that many of them have given up their negative attitude to life and hopefully aspire to play a positive role in the society once they come out of the Jail.

The importance of the sacred name *Ram Naam* spreading over several millennia still works wonder and the glory of the almighty remains the only means of reformation possibly to be achieved within.

However, academically speaking, the spiritual reformation of Indore Jail got sparked off from the discourse of Dr Viswamitraji which brought about a positive turbulence in the minds of 'hard core' convicts.

Let us ponder over those words and expressions which laid the foundation stone of spiritualism in the mind of the convicts who in turn bounced back with the spirit of reformation.

Discourse: Laying of Foundation Stone

Discourse or *Pravachan* is a garland of words with an aroma of cosmic flower which sparks off the spiritual urge of the individual remain a most fanciful aesthetic called personal nurturing. In India nowadays religious discourse scales the height of *Gita* and *Pauranic* references are made to clear the mental doubts. In *Satsang* most learned men drive home the idea of celestial kind to mould the thinking and character of ordinary mortals. Thus we understand that discourse remains a spiritual foundation stone which is laid within the audience to initiate an internal cultivation.

Understanding this background of Discourse and realizing its importance we are devoting this part of the chapter to fathom the vision visualized by Dr Viswamitraji to frame the mind of influence of the convicts who remain isolated and neglected.

Dr Viswamitraji through his acoustic modulation and marshalling of logic created an inroad in the mind of the convicts and a sense of spiritualism dawned upon them.

From the records the contents of Dr Viswamitraji's Discourse of 1997 lasting about one and half hour were found. Initially, he uttered *Pranam* (salutation by bowing

with folded hands) at the feet of the convicts as they remain Ram's favourite ones. Then he declared there is nobody in this earth who has not committed a crime. Even if we search for them we will not find. The person who has not sinned in his life has not committed any crime.

Here Dr Viswamitraji clarifies that the concept of crime is universal and it has a direct relation with *papa* or sin. Now, as all are sinners so all have committed some sort of crime. Thus the first element of their stigma i.e. they are criminals is wiped out with the first sentence. The fact that all are sailing on the same boat of sin was established. This perhaps brought about a harmony between the speaker and the audience.

Furthermore, Dr Viswamitraji said: "You are imprisoned here—but you are *Sadhak* and you are worshipper and *Bhagat*, perhaps you are not aware. You have done one wrong so you are imprisoned. After coming here you have become prisoner. For our fault all of us remain imprisoned within our body. Factually speaking, we all who are sitting here are prisoners. One day you will be released. Even I am imprisoned. Everybody, including a *Sadhak* like me, Jail officials, all the Prime Ministers, all the Presidents and all the Chief Justices of the world are in prison. After some time you will be released. But what will happen to those who are imprisoned in this body?"

Now we see that Dr Viswamitraji first brought out the concept that everybody is a sinner, so the stigma of the 'convict' is not established. Then he propounded the philosophy of 'body' as a Jail where everybody is imprisoned. He further explained that "for my crime I am suffering my imprisonment and for your crime you are facing the conviction. The human life we have got is a chance given to us by the God to efface our *papa* (sin)."

The *Karma* philosophy is established. Again toning down his speech from the philosophy to materialism he asked: "who has never stolen and who has never killed a living thing?"

Then Dr Viswamitraji said: "You have got arrested so the State has punished you. But in Lord's conception of justice punishment does not come so quickly. In that perspective you are lucky that you are punished and your weight of sin has become lighter. But think of me that I will have to carry my sins on my head and walk along."

Thus we find that Dr Viswamitraji elaborates the concept of sin and celestial justice and compares it with the concept of State's Law and Punishment. He equates himself with the other convicts at the higher level. This perhaps created the initial rapport between the speaker and the listeners.

At the next level Dr Viswamitraji put forward some vital question before explaining a small storyline. "Perhaps you have stolen something or committed some crime and got arrested! But who is responsible for the crime? Perhaps the person who has committed the crime to some extent. One leaf from this big tree falls down then it is the fault of the tree with whom the leaf was attached. I recall a story of one Judge.

One Judge was wellknown for dispensing balanced judgment. They said that nobody ever complained about his judgment. Both the parties used to be satisfied after deliberation of his judgment. One day the Judge was confronted with a typical case. The accused had stolen some bread. While delivering the judgment he fined the accused a sum of Rs. 600 and also imposed a fine of Rs.100 on himself and all the staff of his court. His point of

view was that in the rat race of materialism we simply do not bother about others which leads a man even to steal bread."

Dr Viswamitraji tried to drive home the idea that while the rich is becoming richer the poor is becoming poorer.

So crime is the natural fallout of the indifferent attitude of the society. Thus he indirectly accused the society for this state of affairs. At the same time he touched upon the cord of the convict's mind by declaring that society is also responsible for making them convicts which remains a loud statement in the mind of those who languish in the solitary cells of the Jail.

Dr Viswamitraji narrated another storyline to prove that we all are sinners. He said: "A Saint used to live in a cottage outside a village. Once a group of the village headmen consisting of five elders or *Panch* came and told the Saint that there was one woman in the village whose character was bad as she had committed infidelity. The village headmen further said that they have found her guilty but the final judgment must be delivered by the Saint himself. The Saint after contemplating for a few minutes replied that he was incapable of delivering judgment as he was unable to do justice to her. However, the Saint said that the judgment should be delivered by the person who had not committed any sin in his life. On hearing this none came forward and all of them hung their head in shame."

After this Dr Viswamitraji directed the Discourse to another dimension by narrating another story. The story follows:

"In a hilly area there were two young brothers who eked out their living doing the shepherd's job. Once they lost

two sheep and subsequently they reported the loss to their master who never believed them. In association with villagers their master branded them as 'thief' and the letters ST were etched on their forehead which signified derogatory meaning.

The elder brother could not bear with the insult and soon died. But the younger one began to think how to get rid of such a stigma. So he cultivated *Ram Naam* and developed an attitude to serve others. He began to serve those who were ailing. As a matter of fact no family like to attend ailing persons especially at night as it disturbs their sleep. Thus people used to call him so that he could take care of the ailing person in their house and they could have a sound sleep at night. He became very popular for his selfless service and he was revered as a noble being.

Once a gentleman came there from outside with his luggage. The young boy offered to carry the gentleman's luggage to his destination. This young volunteer was praised by the gentleman for his noble gesture. After some chat with the villagers the discussion centred on the letters ST written on the forehead of the boy. To the gentleman's query as to what it was the villagers said it meant 'Saint'! Thus was the impact of *Ram Naam* and selfless service to the society which could efface the stigma of the shepherd boy. The so-called derogatory letters ST were transformed to mean Saint."

Thus we see that through the Discourse Dr Viswamitraji first tried to plant the idea of who was a convict and analyzed it in the context of Sin with *Karma* at the philosophic level. Again, through different storylines on the one hand he tried to project everybody as sinner and suggested that through atonement one could get over it. At the other level he proved that even if one was falsely

implicated in a crime as was seen in the case of the shepherd boy then also one could undo that stigma by selflessly serving the society.

All these points discussed in the Discourse left an indelible impression on the mind of the convicts. They not only took *diksha* in large number but also remain a reformed and enlightened lot. If we analyze the total Discourse from scholastic perspective we would find that the whole treatment line was meant to awaken the inner mind of the convicts. The psychological treatment through storyline counselling remains one of the enlightened means in this case. The concept of higher philosophy punctuated with *Pauranic* storylines were intentionally avoided so that the Discourse should not sound like dogmatic religious preaching. Moreover, the examples quoted were contemporary so the talk was intelligible to the convicts. It can be concluded that the Discourse was in actuality remained a psychological therapeutic process.

Indore Central Jail: Symbol of Reformation

As any other Jail Indore Central Jail is overcrowded. The capacity of the Jail was to house 850 prisoners. However, in 1999 this Jail accommodated 2200 prisoners which was almost three times than its actual capacity.

Generally speaking, overcrowding means there is dearth of requisite facilities for each of the convict. Then to avail of the scanty facilities muscle power or *Dadagiri* come to the fore. Prior to 1996, infighting amongst the prisoners was rampant. So the Jail officials and the Wardens used violent method as they felt 'rule of the baton' was the only mode to control the crowd of convicts who were not only ferocious but nurture all kind of negativism like vengeance, jealousy and perversion of all sorts.

Apart from 40 Barracks there is a secluded corner of Barrack lock-up meant for internal punishments. In those days even that remained overcrowded. Nevertheless, serious efforts were made to streamline the situation as well as to educate the convicts. From the statistics we find that around 50 to 60 convicts used to be made literate in a calendar year. However, since Mr R.R.Khanna took over the charge of the Jail many changes took place. Moreover, *Ram Naam Diksha* given to around 600 convicts in the first phase by Dr Viswamitraji which began in the Jail in 1997 brought about a total change in the mindset of the convicts. Those reluctant 'criminals' have now become willing 'students'. Now every year around 175 convicts are being made literate and a total of 963 convicts were elevated on the score of education since 1997.

Convicts and Jail officials recall that prior to 1996 the atmosphere of Indore Jail was non-conducive and there were many free-time convicts who created more problems. In the morning around 6.30 AM lock-ups were opened and after finishing morning chores the convicts used to go to the Prison Factory. Thenafter the prisoners had nothing to do except organizing groups and involving in fights. However, in 1997 after *Ram Naam Diksha* the total lifestyle of the convicts was given a lift. Every inmate after doing his morning chores listens to *Amritvani Kirtan* through the public address system of 40 amplifiers. Thenafter, before breakfast the convicts engage themselves in meditation. This practice helps discipline their mind. As a rule after breakfast they go to the Prison Factory. However, regular *Yoga class*, *Gita paath*, *Kirtan* and *Japa* are the major recreational methods being followed now. These activities channelise an internal discipline among the convicts and charge each one with

positive energy. This new method of reformation resulted in the decrease of internal fights by 90 per cent as Jailor Mr Tomar confided.

It may be noted that earlier the Jail officials who had decades of negative experience with the convicts were reluctant to change their attitude and even pooh poohed the spiritual endeavour of reforming the convicts. However, now they confess that due to the behavioural changes of the convicts they have shelved their 'forced methods' to discipline the convicts. During the last six years there was not even a single case of major incident as opined by the Jail officials.

We have found earlier that there was an increase in the number of parole cases and this facilitated the convicts with social connection. Convicts have learnt that the period of isolation can be best utilized spiritually. An aged convict said after release he would live a life of an ascetic and presently he reads the 18th chapter of *Gita*. When I later checked up I found that this chapter discusses about *moksha* or salvation.

Spiritual repentance has worked wonder to discipline the mental and physical endeavour of the convicts. After talking to many convicts it was learnt that due to their *Sadhana* many of their wishes were getting fulfilled and even peace was enveloping their family. They were expecting court orders for remission of their sentences and many were expected to be released very shortly. These are due to their staunch belief in *Ram Naam* which is also statistically proved. Convicts who live within many limitations are feeling a sense of bliss and experiencing trance at the meditative level which is finally emboldening their personality and changing their mind dynamics.

Thus we see spiritualism is no more a dogmatic or ritualistic expression. It has translated into action the true reformation in Indore Jail superseding the so called method of 'jail reformation' which is in vogue worldwide but yielding limited result.

The Perspective of Vernacular Press

To undertake a study on contemporary history one should take note of the Press especially the vernacular one which monitors every event of development very minutely. Reformation of Indore Jail should be understood from the standpoint of the Press Reports which are 'primary records' for this study of contemporary history. The most popular newspapers like *Nai Duniya*; *Dainik Bhaskar*; *Indore Samachar*; *Nava Bharat*; *Punjab Keshri* and *SDA Times* were looked into during the period 1997 to 2000 to fathom the vision of Hindi Newspapers which remain the main communication channel between the people and the Press.

Nai Duniya on 14.2.97 printed a two-column news item 'Follow the pious path leaving the negative life: Dr Viswamitraji'. The text elaborated that to activate positive reformation among the convicts in the Jail a Discourse by Dr Viswamitraji of Sri Ram Sharanam was organized who said: 'that cultivating spiritualism would not only help the person but would be a means of welfare for the whole society.' The correspondent said that Dr Viswamitraji explained the concept of *Diksha* and idea of cultivating the Name tradition. The paper further stated that "The Jail had the festive look today". The main discussion revolved around how to stem the aberration and cultivate a spiritual longing within. *Nava Bharat* added "there is nothing better than *Ram Naam* to do *prayaschitta* (repentance)".

Punjab Keshri (Jullundur Edition) on 26 May, 1997 wrote a feature on this subject. It said that during the Discourse in Indore Central Jail Maharajji indicated that despite imprisonment convicts do not get reformed. Dr Viswamitraji said that *Ram Naam* could efface the negative mentality and further the positive cultivation. After the discussion around 400 people stood in Q to get *diksha*. The article mentioned "With deep love, faith, respect and *Bhakti* convicts experienced trance".

Newspaper reports indicated that during the Janmashtami week (Aug. '98) a *Gita Gyan Yagna* was organised in the Jail. *Dainik Bhaskar* reported that intellectuals, bureaucrats and convicts participated in reading the *Gita* which concluded on the Janmashtami Day. One convict asked for a copy of *Gita* which he wanted to present to his mother and this request of the convict visibly moved the organizers of Sri Ram Sharanam, reported *Nai Duniya* on 29.8.97. Thus was the beginning of spiritual reformation in Indore Jail which was initiated in the month of Feb. 1997.

The city correspondent of *Nai Duniya* reported on 17th Sept. 1997 that those convicts who moved in the blind alleys of crime now wanted to reform themselves with no more desire to tread the path of crime. The newspaper also mentioned that there were frequent exchange of letters between the inmates of the Jail and Dr Viswamitraji. Keeping in view the interest generated amongst the inmates of the jail *Ramayana Paath* was organized in the Jail by the activists of Sri Ram Sharanam, reported *Nai Duniya*.

On the score of success of Reformation in Indore Jail *Nava Bharat* on 2nd Aug. 1998 wrote that Mr R.R.Khanna, Supdt. of Indore Jail had disclosed that 323 convicts were

released on parole which demonstrated the direct result of spiritual activities within the Jail.

The reformation aspect of the prisoners in Indore Central Jail became an editorial topic in *Dainik Indore* which discussed it in detail. The paper wrote that nobody is born criminal but certain societal behaviour traits like vengeance, humiliation, exploitation, desire and expectations do lead to crime. The original concept of Jail was to punish the convicts by several means and make them realize that if they repeated the crime the same punishment would be repeated. To keep pace with the modern times the Jail authorities changed their attitude and slowly reformation through creative production within the Jail came into being. Printing, carpet weaving and making stainless steel utensils are some of the jobs undertaken in the Jail of Indore which created positive market response. Along with it trade training was imparted to the convicts. However, spiritual developments of convicts remain a primary sector, the Editor added.

The paper further pointed out that on the score of Reformation at the mental level Mr R.R. Khanna had augmented the spiritual modes.

The Discourses by learned men had melted the hearts of even hard core criminals. Spiritualism had become a part of life of the convicts and *yoga*, meditation and *kirtan* are some of the highlights of the Indore Jail.

The editorial observed that simply by changing the name of a Jail to a Reformatory would not help as happened in West Bengal. Indore Jail had become an example of Reformation in the spiritual and mental perspective. Now, the convicts when they go out of the Jail would be reformed personalities and play a positive

role. The editorial concluded: "The Jail administration deserves kudos and such spiritual activities should be followed up in other Jails so that Jails become a Reformatory in actual sense."

In 1999, a five-column lead story was published in *Nai Duniya* elaborating the highlights of the philosophy of Swami Satyanandji Maharaj, who propounded the philosophy of *Ram Naam* and founded Sri Ram Sharanam.

It discussed in length why spiritual reformation is required in Jail and argued that the mindset of the person may be criminal but not necessarily the person as individual. So by correcting the mindset with spiritual means would usher in an internal change of the convict. The sense of self-control and other aspects of tolerance get enhanced through spiritual means. The newspaper emphasized the importance of *Ram Naam* in controlling the given negatives and quoted textual tradition of Swamiji who created *Amritvani*. Finally, the paper opined that similar experiments should be carried out elsewhere.

On 6th Jan. 2000 *Nava Bharat* reported that Dr Viswamitraji held a Discourse in Indore Central Jail and asked newly initiated *Sadhaks* 'to keep distance from crime, and pious deeds can make a person a Saint. So watch out what you do because you are known for your *Karma* and remember Almighty is watching you always'. Similarly, *Indore Samachar* quoted from the Discourse in the Jail "Man becomes great with his deeds".

Another vernacular newspaper *S D A Times* reported on 6th Jan. 2000 Dr Viswamitraji's Discourse to the inmates of Indore Jail. The correspondent quoted a storyline of Dr Viswamitraji extensively. Dr Viswamitraji

narrated that Taimurlang invaded India and killed lakhs of people and imprisoned thousands others treating them as slaves. Once Taimurlang asked an intellectual as to what should be the price of his slaves. The intellectual replied it should be 400 *Ashrafi* each. Then Taimurlang wanted to know what should be the price of his own self. The intellectual curtly said that it should be only 40 *Ashrafi*. Being angered Taimurlang replied in rage: "My costumes would cost 40 *Ashrafi*." The intellectual clarified: "Precisely so, I was only assessing the cost of your costume and you being the killer of so many people don't have any price at all."

Through all these media reporting we learn that the vernacular media took special interest to highlight the importance of spiritual reformation. Alongside it opened new vistas to help people use this tool to undo the aberrations of our society. At times media delved into the aspect of criminology and appreciated the role of Jail authorities, intellectuals and spiritual personalities. The sociological pondering in the context of Reformation through spiritualism was amply highlighted.

Keeping in Touch: A Guru-Shisya Correspondence

A spiritual head comes to a place to deliver Discourse and give *Diksha* and then he moves on to other places. Likewise millions of *Sadhaks* are streamed into spiritualism. At times they are confused and find no answer to their queries and remain incommunicado for a long time. But in the case of convicts of Indore Jail it is a different story. Convicts as a rule live in isolation, yet they are allowed to write letters to their dear and near ones. After taking *Diksha* the inmates of Indore Jail regularly write letters to Dr Viswamitraji and they get reply in due time.

The Vernacular paper *Nai Duniya* reported on 17th Sept. 1997 that one life convict Kuldeep Singh wrote to Dr Viswamitraji: 'You are our pious destiny. Your guidance has helped convicts like us muster internal power. We take part in *yoga* and recite *Amritvani* regularly. Please keep on guiding us.' Dr Viswamitraji replied: "We all should become an able and loving son of Almighty. As an obedient and pious son one becomes lovable for the parents. Similarly we should purify our deeds to become closer to the Almighty — our eternal parent."

Likewise Dr Viswamitraji installs the idea of reformation in the mind of the convicts. Since correspondence between *Guru* and *Shisya* is becoming a vital channel for constant reformation of the convicts we would discuss some of the correspondence to understand the role spiritualism has played as a tool of reformation.

A convict Rameshwar wrote to Dr Viswamitraji that since he got *Diksha* he had experienced peace and got respite from desire and attachments. He wanted to know the method how to control the anger as he sometimes got into that bout. His *Guru* elaborated the method how to control anger in his reply to Rameshwar. Furthermore, *Guru* wrote that *Japa* or chanting the sacred name remained the actual worship and that would bring peace.

In one letter dated 11th Nov.1998 Dr Viswamitraji advised some convict-*Sadhak* that everybody should take the name of the Lord and do his duties in Jail. The peaceful means of living remain the only method. Again, Dr Viswamitraji wrote to a convict who was to be released shortly: "I hope to see you free and attend *Sadhana Satsang* as a free man and as a *Sadhak*."

In a letter dated 9.8.98 Dr Viswamitraji assured one convict Kuldeep Singh that his "*Bhakti* and service would not be wasted rather Sri Ram would give you back everything".

Explaining the *Japa* philosophy Dr Viswamitraji wrote back to a convict on 11.11.99 that one should continue to take the name of *Ram* which would not only negate the negativism of the self but would facilitate self-control against anger or aberrations. Then within no time everybody would be reformed and elevated.

In a recent letter a convict Dhyal Singh confided to his *Guru* that he had been chanting *Ram Naam* since his *Diksha*. As a result he had been granted parole and the Court remitted his sentence. He was earlier convicted for life and now it had been reduced to seven years only, which would be completed very soon. He also wrote that he was in perfect bliss after culturing *Ram Naam* everyday.

Another convict Sada Shiv in his letter dated 3.4.2000 informed his *Guru* that he had been cultivating *Ram Naam* and as a result it dawned on him that once he was released he should serve and even lay down his life for the family which had suffered from his crime.

The sense of atonement had been dominating the mind of the convict Sada Shiv. It sounds that through the method of *Ram Naam* the feeling of repentance is nothing but a sense of *Prayaschitta* which provides avenue for reformation. Thus we see since 1997 inmates of Indore Jail have been in constant touch with their *Guru* through exchange of letters. The guidance from their *Guru* to expand the horizon of worship or *Sadhana* hastened the process of enlightenment and reformation. In several letters it is found that Dr Viswamitraji never tried to impose

an overlordship over his disciples. Rather he remained a friend, philosopher and guide who enquired about their health and family affairs. He took note of their 'Appeals' to higher court for review of their cases and expressed satisfaction when he learnt that the process of reformation was on the right track. Moreover, he stressed on *Japa* philosophy as a *Sadhak* himself and erased the mental confusions which disturbed the convicts most! An assurance, a little encouragement and some sincere counselling provided by their *Guru* worked as wonder machinery of self-realization and reformation of the convicts.

Self-Reformation: Realizations of Convicts

Reformation is a phenomenon experienced within. No matter scholastically how we should judge the effect of Reformation by employing different means but the essence of this Reformation remains an experience of the self. Thus we should try to understand the 'mind' of the 'convicts' who are realizing its essence. In the following passages we are giving the excerpts of the interviews with the convicts conducted during the field study. In many cases names of the convicts and places have been changed to hide their identity as their frank statements might harm them.

INTERVIEW 1

Gopal of Khandwa was imprisoned on the charge of murder in 1994. His village is Sharola which has some 500 inhabitants with a mixed population of different castes, namely *Kahar, Layora, Harijan, Rathore, Kunji Patel and Muslim*. The village mainly depends on agriculture. He used to take care of his old mother and wife. After his imprisonment these women are carrying out his job.

Gopal confessed that he was an addict of cigarettes and *Ganja*. He had allegedly killed a person who had an illicit relation with a woman in his house. He committed the crime out of anger.

After being imprisoned he became morose and repented for the heinous crime and wondered that it must have been his destiny.

He confessed that after getting *Diksha* from Dr Viswamitraji he had experienced bliss and peace. He feels that his memory power got enhanced. The practice of chanting the sacred name has empowered his mental and physical discipline and he always remains clean and tidy.

Due to his disciplined behaviour he had availed four paroles. On seeing visible changes in him his family members are very happy. He discusses the spiritual atmosphere of the Jail with his family and also ask them to follow the sacred path at home.

Soon he will be released on probation and plans to undertake mass deaddiction programme amongst the children in his village. He said children right from the age of fifteen start taking drinks in his village. Thus he is contemplating to undertake a movement of reformation and would take *Ram Naam* throughout his life to live in peace.

INTERVIEW 2

Ramesh belongs to Maharashtra but since long had been staying in Indore. He could not study because his parents died when he was young and he had to take responsibility of looking after his blind grandmother. He was eking out his living as a screen printer.

Slowly he got befriended with bad elements of the society and started drinking. Once in a marketplace he fought with a person and out of rage allegedly killed the person with a knife.

In 1991 he was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. In the Jail he continued his *Dadagiri* and even exploited the poor Jail inmates. Fighting remained his only pastime in the Jail.

When Dr Viswamitraji was to come to the Jail for Discourse he doubted the usefulness of his visit. On listening to Dr Viswamitraji's Discourse he became mesmerized and spellbound. A call from within came and he took *Diksha*. Since then he started doing *Japa of Ram Naam*.

The *Japa* philosophy transformed him from a hard-core ruffian to a soft man. He cultured sound aesthetics as he could not only sing *Bhajans* but also created a Cassette. Now he had become a renowned artist and won prizes from Jabbalpur for his visual Ad. campaign on AIDS. Though he was illiterate before but after *Diksha* he became literate enough and now he can read *Gita* and *Ramayana* with ease.

He lamented that had he been initiated earlier in the *Ram Naam* philosophy he would have neither committed murder nor suffer. He wants to take up the career of a singer to sing *Bhajan* (Devotional Songs) for the society.

INTERVIEW 3

Naresh belongs to District Divas and led a poverty stricken life. He allegedly murdered a person because the victim dared to tease his sister-in-law (*Bhabi*). This incident took place out of sheer anger. He along with his brother attacked

the person with a stick and incidentally it broke the head of that person and he died. His brother was imprisoned for five years and he had gone home after release, but Naresh is still languishing in the Jail with life-term sentence.

Naresh also has a family of three children and wife. Due to poverty one child could not study, however others are studying.

After *Diksha* or initiation in *Ram Naam* philosophy, Naresh finds an all-round change in his personality. He is feeling a sense of peace within. Suddenly some miraculous socio-economic changes have taken place in the family. Now he can control his anger through the *Japa* philosophy. Again, whenever he feels homesick he starts counting beads which reinforces consolation and confidence within. It is his desire that once out of the Jail he would spend his life taking the name of the Lord and live happily.

INTERVIEW 4

Ratanchand is an educated person and worked in the office of the Civil Defence. He had allegedly fired at a group of people who were insulting him. In the chaos that followed one little girl got entrapped and crushed under the feet of the crowd and subsequently she died. As a punishment for this crime he is serving a life sentence.

He has been a religious person and chanting *Ram Naam* for over 30 years. However, after *Diksha* he has experienced a lot of change within and is now blessed with mental peace. He regularly engages himself in *Swadhyay* or self-study of the 18th Chapter of *Gita*. After his release from the Jail he would like to take up cultivation and spend the rest of his life spiritually.

INTERVIEW 5

Since 1993 Deena Ram has been lodged in Indore Jail. He had allegedly killed a person who wanted to forcibly occupy his land. In the gun fight that ensued the victim lost his life but Deena Ram insists that the victim was not hit by his bullet.

However, the Court sentenced Deena Ram for life. After getting *Ram Naam Diksha* in 1997 he became very pious just contrary to his earlier lifestyle.

Nowadays, he performs *Puja* (worship) and devotes time in *Japa* three times a day. He wishes to do *Tapasya* or penance for the rest of his life. He has found peace within and become an ardent reader of *Gita*.

INTERVIEW 6

Prabhat, a middle-aged man, had come to the Jail in 1992 after being sentenced to life imprisonment. He had allegedly killed somebody who used to tease his sister. The victim's family was powerful, so they unleashed terror. He nourishes the fear that when he will be released from the Jail they would kill him. Prabhat was a tailor by profession and the crime was committed on provocation. He became frustrated because since 1992 he had been languishing in the Jail having never been out of the Jail on parole.

Since his *Diksha* he has been acquiring internal strength and soul-searching process has been set in motion. His mental disturbance is gradually getting diminished through *Japa*.

INTERVIEW 7

Vishnu of Kharvam District belongs to a large poverty stricken family. The family consisted of nine sisters and

brothers. He studied upto primary standard and left his study due to economic reason. He grew up as a ruffian and took to drinks. He used to fight with the people. In a dispute over the purchase of some property he fought and allegedly killed some person.

However, he confessed that the necessity of self-defence had made him a ruffian. In the Jail he behaved similarly. Interestingly, after *Diksha* he discovered an internal change engulfing him with some sort of sacredness. Peace reigned within. Nowadays, sometime he finds himself in trance and hears some unearthly voice as well. The void within has been perfectly replaced with *Ram Naam*, said Vishnu.

INTERVIEW 8

Narayan belongs to Gadi Chani village. As a nineteen-year-old boy he was involved in an incident which resulted in somebody's death and as a punishment he was sentenced for life. The dispute arose out of difference on the division of land.

When he came to Indore Central Jail in 1987 he became so frustrated that he even felt like committing suicide. Now he is thirty-two and feels very lonely as he is distanced from his own family. Twice he had been out of Jail on Parole and while coming back to Jail he felt very bad to leave behind his children.

Earlier to getting his *Diksha* he was never interested in worship. But after initiation he has become a spiritual person reading *Amritvani* and performing *Japa* regularly. These spiritual activities gave him internal strength and now he does not nurture suicidal tendency. He even had taken a copy of *Amritvanii* to his house while on Parole

and taught the sacred art of *Japa* to his family. Total bliss and peace he now experiences.

INTERVIEW 9

Yash is an educated person and belongs to a tribal family. They are 7 brothers and sisters. There was a fight over a disputed agricultural land and he was involved in it along with ten other persons. Yash asserted that the person who died was not his victim. Yet he was sentenced for life along with ten other accomplices.

Once his friend was out of the Jail on Parole and committed suicide by consuming poisonous table. Due to this unfortunate incident his request for Parole was turned down.

Initially, Yash suffered from regression and used to think that his life was damned. Yet after getting *Diksha* he discovered himself a new person after spiritual cultivation. He feels that *Ram Naam* can efface one's mental disturbances and its spread would ensure peace in the society. Spreading the philosophy of *Ram Naam* would be his mission after being released from the Jail, Yash asserted.

INTERVIEW 10

Singhu belongs to a poor agricultural family. He was convicted for murder and undergoing a sentence of life-term. He was involved in a fight which ensued when a group of people tried to forcefully occupy their land. He was never involved in any crime before. He became a depressed personality after living long as a convict in Indore Jail.

However, when Singhu listened to the *Pravachan* (Discourse) of Dr Viswamitraji he felt as if a stream of

pious Ganga water was flowing within. So he chose Dr Viswamitraji as his *Guru*. Since then *Japa* (meditation) has remained a part of his daily routine. He feels his soul is in absolute peace and after *Diksha* he finds a total change has taken place in his house as well. While on Parole he discovered that his house had been made *pucca* (permanent structure).

Singhu has taught everybody in his household how to do *Japa* of *Ram Ram* and one day he hopes to invite his *Guru* to his village for *Pravachan*. *Ram* is a matter of great experience and *Ram Mantra* is the source of peace, he finally concluded.

INTERVIEW 11

Sardari belongs to a poor agricultural family of Khondwa. He has been convicted under section 302 IPC. It so happened that there were three dacoits who used to rob the families in the village and subsequently they were killed. Sardari and his two brothers were falsely implicated in that incident. Now they have appealed to higher Court for justice.

All the three brothers have taken *Diksha* and now they religiously follow the orders of their *Guru*. Internal peace they have discovered. They are availing Parole as well. Sardari feels as long as he will live he should take the name of the Lord.

SUMMING UP

During the field study many such interviews with the convicts were taken outside and inside the Jail. Most of the convicts are interestingly 'first timers' and facing life imprisonment. Poor economic background, socio-economic exploitation and amoral activities of others often

lead to committing crime. Sometime innocent persons also languish in the Jail as some heart to heart talks revealed. However, whether they are innocent or otherwise is the concern of the Judiciary. But I can say Eyes do speak the Truth.

The Jail which was originally meant to inflict pain physically and mentally now remains limited to mental pain only. The sense of insecurity, loneliness, non-communication with the outer world lead to a state of malefic internalization which not only ruins the personality but causes a psychological death of the Jail inmates.

Spiritual intervention through *Japa* philosophy has created an atmosphere of mental satisfaction among the convicts. Acoustic harmonization has led to bliss and peace. Through this process one rediscovers the internal strength and positivism of life dawns as was expressed by the inmates of Indore Jail.

K.S.Tomar, the Jailor, observed that spiritual cultivation was having a very positive impact on the inmates of the Jail who were earlier a very difficult class to be disciplined.

In order to give a boost to the process of psychological reformation the Jail authorities invite large number of intellectuals and Saints to come and deliver sermons within the Jail premises. The Jailor said that now 90% of the inmates do not fight in the overcrowded Jail.

Spiritualism is a positive force of life which has time and again been emphasised by the Sages and Saints worldwide. This has once again been proved here in Indore Central Jail. Without the burden of dogma and relieved of religious rituals a spiritual aroma has enveloped the entire Jail. I wondered sometimes whether I was talking to the hard-core murderers and ferocious criminals or some Saints and *Sadhus* who preach love and peace.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Spiritual Reformation: An Overview

The given negatives within human beings are as old as our civilization. The primitive men when got united and formed the society also developed a sense of personal possession. This concept of 'mine' worked out at various levels of human behaviour which found expression in jealousy, hatred, vengeance, anger, frustration etc. etc. These behaviour traits made the ancient man culture negativism. To stem this malbehaviour the concept of law and order came into vogue. For several millennia this idea of justice and punishment tried to bring about a sense of harmony and promote peaceful co-existence in the society.

We have seen aberrations of social animals are universal. However, while treating the ills of the society different methodologies were used like social boycott, whipping, imprisonment and amputation or death sentence. Nevertheless the outcome remained restricted within the theory of 'Relativity of Truth'!

Down the ages thinkers and presently modern sociologists have been voicing for a social change at the grassroot level. However, the society remained dominated by a section of people known as Feudal Lords, Zamindars and Bourgeois who accumulated more and more wealth. Subsequently, the financial power gave them political power as well which they used to exploit the masses. These

exploited masses became 'have nots' who were marginalised again and again for centuries.

Historically speaking, this continuum of exploitative culture gave birth to an internal unrest within the society and time and again people voiced their unrest. Their protest against the exploitation was not very 'social' as it found expression in plundering, banditry and other criminal acts. But these were suppressed ruthlessly time and again.

Nevertheless this voice of 'protest' and 'suppression' was known as Power Struggle. Moreover, 'historical wrongs' could not be undone, so suffering and suppression continued as an undercurrent of the exploited society.

Bhils of the Jhabua region remain an example of socio-historical neglect. For long the poverty stricken Bhils were stigmatized as 'criminal class'. This notion is still in currency. The element of stigma they suffer from often translate into an action called vengeance. At one level Jhabua Bhils are illiterate, economically weak and psychologically wreck. On the other level they are strong, innocent yet spirited to avenge the insult they have been subjected to for centuries. Modern society sometimes call them 'primitive tribe' and sometimes they are termed as ferocious plunderer.

In the post Independence period these Bhils could not be reached by the government in the context of social welfare. Having infertile lands and capped within the age-old superstition the Bhils as a tribe are surviving almost below the poverty line. Being remained underdog for long, it is true some section of the Bhil population of Jhabua District got into the criminal web.

In order to understand the pattern and nature of criminal activities of the Bhils of Jhabua I talked to several people

in the corridor of Law and Justice. It was found that the crime committed mainly out of three major reasons namely *Zameen* or Land, *Joru* or Wife and *Daru* or Liquor. Most of the Bhils of Jhabua possess very little land and over and above due to expansion of family structure the land-holding is getting reduced from generation to generation. Moreover, due to the malpractice amongst *Patwaris* or revenue officers many a fight erupts. An Additional Judge commented: "If there is one Revenue Arbitration then there will be three Civil Cases and out of those Civil Cases there will be one Criminal Case."

This explains that the Bhil society as a whole is sitting over the volcano of social injustice. There is dearth of fertile land and as jungles are getting denuded the forest laws are being enforced stringently.

Another cause of in-fighting amongst the Bhils is their women. They as husbands never tolerate if somebody teases their wives. Moreover, physical exploitation of their women at times can even lead to murder. Furthermore, in case one's wife runs away with another person then the husband launches a violent attack. Nevertheless, most of the women-related cases are settled by monetary consideration.

The third major reason leading the Bhils to criminal life is their habit of drinking. Generally, drinking is the only pastime of the community and after 'drinking session' they indulge in fight and even plan for plundering or looting. Due to drinking habit of the males the family gets disturbed as wife-beating is a regular practice. Children grow up in this negative atmosphere without getting education so delinquency is the inevitable fallout. Due to abject poverty, people often become superstitious. The traditional *Badwas* stoke their superstitious inclinations. Basic

schooling facilities and primary health care remain a distant dream of the Bhils living in remote Jhabua villages.

This situation has been continuing for long and there is an attitude of apathy towards the Bhils of Jhabua. However, since 1997 Sri Ram Sharanam has been spreading spiritual name *Ram Naam* among them. It must be mentioned that around 250 villages in Jhabua District have been initiated into *Ram Naam* philosophy.

However, it must be kept in mind that *Ram Naam* movement is purely spiritual and has nothing to do with the 'Charity Mission' which was practised by the Christian Missionaries. In earlier days poor Bhils used to flock to those Christian Missions for their sustenance. Now, Madhya Pradesh Govt. is facilitating loans to the Bhils to meet the expenses for their various needs. However, the Bhils have discovered the simple *Japa* philosophy of *Ram Naam* does not cost a single paisa as this spiritual concept need neither ritual nor a Priest. The method remains simple acoustic cultivation which is everybody's cup of tea. This *Japa Mantra* at one level is empowering them mentally and spiritually. On the other level it is helping to achieve mass deaddiction among them which remain the prime problem of the society. After realizing the significance of the *Ram Naam* philosophy people are no more nurturing the superstitious belief system which has been in vogue for centuries. The cultivation of internal strength through this philosophy has worked wonder as cross sections of people opined during my field study.

Moreover, people are no more taking to crime as a means of living as they are smeared with sacredness within. The food and drinking habit of the Bhils have changed drastically without any direct propagation. The

internal realization perspective of the Jhabua Bhils remain a revolutionary movement within.

The study also covered the Indore Central Jail where criminals from Jhabua are lodged after convictions. Now the study in actual sense links all the Bhils within the society — those who are not imprisoned yet delinquent and others who are convicts and inmates of the Jail.

The Indore Jail receives long-term convicts from eight districts. There are many tribal or traditional people in the Jail who are also experiencing the same kind of bliss with *Ram Naam Japa*. The reformation of hardcore criminals is not possible as a gift from above the society i.e. Jail authorities or the Government. Nurturing and reformation should start from below. Now this philosophy of *Ram Naam* is having its impact in the heart of each of the convict. The Visiting Official who oversees the reformation activities has spoken highly of the positive success which visited the Indore Central Jail through spiritual means.

Through these pages of quest and questioning we have seen that the personality of a poor person can be changed and so the mindset can be altered through *Ram Naam*. Several interactive field interviews had amply shown that spiritualism without dogma and rituals can work as a wonderful tool for reformation within.

The spiritual dynamics within can be worked out so easily with *Japa* philosophy remain really very mystic. But delving deep into the changing habits of the convicts and their confessions of transformation amply testify the authenticity of this phenomenon.

The study proves that no individual is 'criminal' by birth, rather the circumstances in which he lives make him a criminal. The process of exploitation and stigmatization can lead to nothing but making people tools of 'social ills'.

We have also learnt that the concept of spiritual reformation can work wonder, and even the heart of a hardcore criminal can be melted within through the process of *Japa* philosophy.

The concept of *Japa* or chanting the sacred name remains an universal practice in all religion. This has a huge potential to undo the aberrations of our society be it at the socio-economic or criminology level.

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Glossary

Note: The indicative meaning of the Hindi/Sanskrit words are given hereunder. However, the meaning are not actual translation but close to the expression made by the author.

Hindi

English

- Aakha Kutumb** – The total family lineage encompassing near and distant relatives.
- (Sri) Adhistanji** – This is the sacred visualization by Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj, the propounder of *Ram Naam Philosophy*. He visualized the cosmos where at the centre there is a radiant Sun within which 'Ram' is encoded in the script. The script of 'Ram' is symbolic representation of eternal or primal sound. The blue cosmos is hemmed with four Swastikas which remains the *mangalic* or welfare aspects of the universe. Beneath the visualization one can find a lotus which remains the symbol of emancipation and elevation at the spiritual level. Atop the Visual one can see the *mantra* '*Sharbashaktimate Parmatmane Sri Ramaye Nama--*meaning a salutation to the omnipotent all powerful Sri Ram.

- Adwaitabad* – The philosophy of non-duality where almighty is one and who is formless omnipotent.
- Ajapa Japa* – When utterance of sacred name is taken within in an involuntary fashion without a conscious beginning.
- (Sri) Amritvani* – A sacred poetic text created by Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj who delved deeply into the *Ram Naam Philosophy*. In this text he propounded the philosophy of formless Sri Ram who exists beyond the time and space. In this sacred book the methodology of spiritual cultivation is encoded. This remains a Bible for *Ram Naam Sadhak*.
- Arupa* – Formless or which does not have any form or shape.
- Ashram* – Huts of Hermit.
- Atman Gyan* – Spiritual wisdom.
- Bala* – Bad omen or devil influence.
- Ber* – Plums.
- Bhabi* – Sister-in-law or Wife of elder brother.
- Bhajan* – Sacred Song or Devotional Music.
- Bhagat* – The person who leads a pious and sacred lifestyle.
- Bhakti* – The mode of worship through sacred feeling of eternal love with

- deep sentiment of oneness with the Lord. In the *Bhakti* school of thought the relationization with the Almighty.
- Bhil** – Largest Tribe or indigenous people in India settled mostly in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. But in this book the Bhils of Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh remain the focus of discussion and field research.
- Biri** – Indigenous cigarette made of *tendu* leaves.
- Brahma Gyan** – Supreme knowledge.
- Dadagiri** – Bossism with nefarious intention.
- Dagi** – One identified as Jail Bird.
- Daru** – Indigenous liquor or country drinks often referred as *Daru*, *Kacchi*, *Tari* etc.
- Dharma** – Broadly means religion. But in Hindu way of life it is encoded with certain duties which are also referred as one's *Dharma*.
- Diksha** – Initiation by *Guru* into a particular path for spiritual emancipation.
- Dikshit** – One who is initiated into a particular method of spiritual nurturing.
- Devi Shakti** – The power of Mother Goddess. However, with the passage of time

- many village goddesses have been conjured up and revered as source of divine power. The power of evil or ghost is equated with this *Devi Shakti* at times. *Badwas* or magico-religious men use this power to cure others.
- Ghee* – A kind of butter.
- Gofan* – *Gofan* is a traditional weapon of the Bhils of Jhabua which is made of Jute thread with a bag at one side. In this bag pebbles are kept and then the thread is swang and the pebbles are released on a given target. It is said that the pebbles move faster than the bullet.
- Guru* – Spiritual Guide.
- Guru Purnima* – The full moon day of July which is dedicated to the *Guru* or spiritual guide. It is like the Teacher's Day in Hindu spiritual way of life.
- Hanuman Chalisa* -- A sacred book on Hanuman, an icon of Hinduism. This sacred text is read by the Hindus to get over the difficult days.
- Japa Philosophy* – Remembering or silently chanting the name of Lord while counting beads is *Japa*. It is said through *Japa* one can control the sound of chaos in the body and ensure a harmonious state. Sages can also get connected with the Supreme Soul through this process.

- Jadu Tona* – Black Magic.
- Jamin or Zameen* -- Land.
- Jhabua* – Jhabua District in Madhya Pradesh (India) which remains the area study of this work.
- Jhum Cultivation* – Shift Cultivation.
- Joru* – Wife.
- Kacchi* – See Daru.
- Naam* – Name.
- Naam Karan* – Naming the newly born.
- Nagat* – Literally means Cash. Here symbolically means materialistic people who enjoy drinks and all kinds of food without inhibition.
- Nirakar* – Formless Almighty.
- Panchayat* – Village Council.
- Param Guru* – Supreme *Guru*. In this book *Param Guru* is Sri Ram as He celestially initiated Swamiji Satyanandji Maharaj who propounded *Ram Naam Philosophy* under the banner of Sri Ram Sharanam.
- Prayaschitta* – Repentance or performing penance.
- Pronam* – Hindu way of salutation by bowing or folding of hands. This gesture is shown to the gods or icons and also

to the human beings as Hindus believe that God reside in every soul.

- Pucci* -- The liquor which is properly prepared and sold legally.
- Puja* -- Worship.
- Ram Durbar* -- It's like a temple where a group of people meditate and chant the name of Ram by singing in chorus. In Sri Ram Sharnam the visualization of formless Cosmic Almighty- *Sri Adhistanji* is kept as an icon.
- Rishi* -- Sage.
- Rupa* -- The form of anything. However, it is mostly used to describe the visual of Gods and Goddesses.
- Sadhak* -- A spiritual aspirant or a devout who meditates and worships to attain spiritual salvation.
- Sadhana* -- The mode of spiritual cultivation adopted by the *Sadhaks* toward one's spiritual goal.
- Sadhu* -- An ascetic or sage.
- Sarpanch* -- Head of a village.
- Shakti* -- The eternal energy of Mother Goddess.
- Shanti* -- Peace or internal tranquillity.

- Shakkar or Sakar* – Sugar-like substance mostly used in rural India.
- Sharbat* – Sweetened water or syrup used as soft drink.
- Shishya* – Disciple.
- Simran*
(Sanskrit: *Smaran*)-- Mentally remembering the Lord's name repeatedly.
- Sloka* – Hymns or stanzas of Sacred Text.
- Sraddha* – Deep respect, trust, confidence etc.
- Sukh* – Happiness or experiencing bliss.
- Swadhyay* – Self-study.
- Tantra* – A school of thought in Hinduism with special reference to the power of *Shakti* of Mother Goddess.
- Tari* – See Daru.
- Upasana* – Hindu way of Worshipping by following certain methodologies.
- Vac* – Speech or Lord of Speech.
- Zameen* – Land.

APPENDIX - I

Discourse—Laying The Foundation

दिनांक 10.4.97 को प्रातः 7.30 बजे केन्द्रीय कारागार इन्दौर में आयोजित प्रथम अमृत-वाणी सत्संग में परम पूज्य डा. विश्वामित्र जी महाराज द्वारा व्यक्त किये गये उद्गार

हमारे राम प्रिय मित्रों! सर्वप्रथम मैं आप सबके श्रीचरणों में प्रणाम करता हूँ। आप सबको मेरा कोटि-कोटि प्रणाम। पूज्य खन्ना जी, जेलर साहब तथा जेल के अन्य अधिकारियों का मैं हृदय से आभारी हूँ जिन्होंने मेरे ऊपर कृपा करके यह अवसर प्रदान किया है। मेरे ऊपर परमेश्वर ने जो कृपा की है उस कृपा का निमित्त एक बालक है। उसी के कारण मेरा यहां आगमन हुआ। यह बच्चा परमेश्वर की कृपा से बहुत पुण्य का भागी है।

इस संसार में क्या कोई ऐसा आदमी है जिसने कभी कोई अपराध नहीं किया हो? शायद दूढ़ने से भी ऐसा व्यक्ति नहीं मिलेगा जिसने जिंदगी में कोई पाप न किया हो या एक भी अपराध न किया हो। आप इस कारावास में बंद हैं। भक्तजनों! मैं आपको भक्त ही कह रहा हूँ। भक्त तो आप हैं ही। शायद आप नहीं जानते हैं एक गलती करने पर कारावास मिला है। यहां आकर आप बंदी बने। अनेक गलतियां करने पर देह रूपी कारावास मिलता है। वास्तव में केवल आप ही बंदी नहीं हैं बल्कि सब व्यक्ति बंदी हैं। आप तो यहां से छूट कर चले जायेंगे लेकिन यह जो अपना, शरीर का, मन का, प्रारब्ध का कारावास है उससे हम कैसे छूटें? मैं स्वयं भी उसी कारागार में बंद हूँ। इस संसार में जितने भी भक्त, जितने भी जेल अधिकारी, प्रधानमंत्री, राष्ट्रपति, जजसाहब, मुख्य न्यायाधीश हैं इस कारागार के बंदी हैं। आप

तो कुछ समय के लिए आये हैं जैसे ही अवधि समाप्त हो जायेगी, आप यहां से चले जायेंगे। लेकिन उनका क्या होगा जो अपनी इच्छाओं के कारागार में बंद हैं।

भक्तजनों! मानव जीवन मिला है तो यह कर्म बंध छुड़ाने के लिए मिला है। जिस पाप के लिए, जिस अपराध के लिए, जिस कर्म के लिए कारावास है। कम से कम वह तो पाप का एक बोझ आपका हल्का होगा। मेरे जैसे अनेक अपराधी जिनके अपराधों का पता नहीं चलता उनका पता नहीं मिलता है। कौन ऐसा इंसान है जिसने चोरी नहीं की। ऐसा कौन व्यक्ति है जिसने कभी किसी की भी हत्या नहीं की? आप पकड़े गये हैं तो यहाँ सजा मिल गई? भक्तजनों! परमेश्वर तो आप पर कृपालु है। शास्त्र कहता है कि जिस पाप का आपको राज्य, दण्ड दे देता है उस अपराध की सजा परमेश्वर के यहाँ पर फिर नहीं मिलती इसलिए आप भाग्यशाली हैं कि यहां पर उस पाप से आप अपना बोझ सजा पाकर हल्का कर रहे हैं। मेरे जैसे व्यक्ति तो पाप की गठरी अभी भी अपने सिर पर उठाये हुए हैं।

थोड़ा विचार करें। आप ने चोरी की है अथवा अन्य कोई भी छोटा-बड़ा अपराध किया है। पकड़े गये हैं। लेकिन इस अपराध के लिए जिम्मेदार कौन है? क्या मनुष्य जो स्वयं अपराध करता है? हो सकता है कि कुछ हद तक वह हो। जब पेड़ से एक पत्ता गिरता है क्या उस पत्ते में इतनी सामर्थ्य है कि वह अपने आप नीचे गिरे। इतने विशाल पेड़ से पत्ता नीचे गिर गया है इसके लिए जिम्मेदार उस पत्ते (व्यक्ति) का दोष तो है ही लेकिन उस पेड़ का भी दोष है, जिसके साथ पत्ता लगा हुआ है। इसी बात पर एक जजसाहब की बात याद आती है। एक जजसाहब (न्यायाधीश) अपने न्याय के लिए प्रसिद्ध थे। कहते हैं कि जिंदगी में कभी किसी व्यक्ति को इनसे शिकायत नहीं थी कि मेरे साथ अन्याय किया। दोनों पक्ष उनकी प्रशंसा करते थे। संतुष्ट होते थे। बड़ा विलक्षण न्यायाधीश था। उनके न्याय से सब संतुष्ट होते थे। कहते हैं कि वह पानी का पानी और दूध का दूध करते थे। आज एक अजीब सा मुकद्मा आया। अपराधी ने कुछ रोटियाँ चुराई। कटघरे में खड़ा हुआ। आज जज साहब ने ६०० रुपये जुर्माना किया। इसके अलावा स्वयं न्यायाधीश तथा उनके न्यायालय, आशु-लिपिक सहित १००.०० रुपये जुर्माना सभी कर्मचारियों को हुआ, जो उस में कार्यरत थे। उनका

कहना था कि इस जमाने में लोग रोटियाँ क्यों चुराते हैं क्योंकि आपा-ए आपी में दूसरों की हम परवाह नहीं करते तो व्यक्ति अपराध नहीं करेंगे, तो क्या करेंगे? अतः प्रत्येक कर्मचारी को १००.०० रुपये जुर्माना कर दिया। यह बात शाब्दिक लगती है भक्तजनो! जो आदमी जमा कर रहा है वह तो जमा ही करता जा रहा है। जो गरीब है वह और गरीब होता जा रहा है। इसीलिये वह अपराधी बन जाता है।

एक महात्मा जी की बात याद आती है। भक्ति-प्रकाश में एक लघु कथा है। महाराज श्री फरमाते हैं कि गाँव के पास कुटिया बना कर एक महात्मा रहते थे। एक बार गाँव वालो ने उनसे कहा, "महाराज! हमारे गाँव में एक महिला है। उसने पाप किया है, उसने अपने सतीत्व को भंग कर दिया। वह परपुरुष के पास जाती है। वह व्यभिचारिणी है। हमारे अनुसार वह पापिनी है। हम सब पंचों ने निर्णय लिया है कि हम उसे गाँव से निकाल देंगे। अब महाराज आपके पास इसीलिए आये हैं कि आप स्वयं निर्णय सुनायें। आपके मुख से सुनना चाहते हैं।" महात्मा जी ने दो मिनट आँखे बंद करके विचार किया और कहा भाई! मैंने विचार करके देखा कि मैं निर्णय सुनाने योग्य नहीं हूँ। मैं उसे पापिनी घोषित करके उसको गाँव से निकालने का निर्णय सुनाने में असमर्थ हूँ। मुझे में तो इतनी योग्यता नहीं है, लेकिन आप में से जिस किसी ने भी पाप न किया हो तो वह निर्णय सुनाये। सबका सिर झुक गया। पंच मुंह लटकाये लौट गए। इससे यह स्पष्ट है कि ऐसा कोई इन्सान नहीं जिसने अपने जीवन में पाप न किया हो। हरेक इन्सान ने पाप किया है। भक्तजनों! हमें क्या करना चाहिए। पाप तो होते ही रहते हैं। साधु संत कहते हैं कि पाप रूपी धूल अपने ऊपर डालते हैं तो शरीर को वह गंदा करती है, भीतर बाहर गंदा ही होता रहता है। इसलिए धूल को झाड़ते रहना चाहिए और हमें अपनी धूल नित्य प्रति झाड़ देनी चाहिए। क्योंकि पाप भी तो नित्य ही होते हैं। कलयुग है। हम सबसे पाप किये बिना नहीं रहा जाता है। मन प्रेरणा देता है। पाप कर्म कहाँ नहीं होते? अस्पताल में वहाँ भी पाप होते हैं। घर से लेकर न्यायालय तक में भी पाप होते हैं। अतः ऐसी कोई भी जगह नहीं है जहाँ पाप न होते हों। भक्तजनों! जो भी पाप करने वाले व्यक्ति अपने भीतर बाहर के पाप आहिस्ता-आहिस्ता साफ करते रहते हैं वे इन्सान होते हैं। सर्वप्रथम आप को पता लगाना चाहिए कि आपने क्या पाप किया। पाप करना इतनी

बुरी बात नहीं है जितना कि पाप को स्वीकार न करना। यदि कोई पाप किया गया हो और उसका सुधार नहीं सोचा, तो यह उससे भी बड़ा पाप है।

एक विद्यार्थी था। छोटा सा बच्चा। घर से स्कूल के लिए बस्ता लेकर निकला। उस समय बरसात हो रही थी। वह गिर पड़ा। घर लोटता है तो डंट पड़ती है, उसे उठकर पाठशाला जाना है! ठीक इसी प्रकार पाप कर्म द्वारा गिरा हुआ व्यक्ति पुनः उठकर अपने गंतव्य स्थान पर पहुंच जाता है। गलती हुई, डंट पड़ी तो सुधार भी आ जाता है। बच्चा बनकर डंट सहो। इसी प्रकार जब कोई पुराना अपराध किया हुआ है तो उसकी सजा भुगतने को तैयार रहना चाहिये। जो पाप हुआ उसकी सजा भोगते समय कुढ़ना नहीं चाहिए। हर बात के लिए कुढ़ते नहीं रहना चाहिए। इससे अपना भार हल्का ही होगा। भक्तजनों! एक गाँव में दो बालक रहते थे। यह पहाड़ की बात है। वे दोनों पहाड़ में भेड़ चराने के लिए जाते थे। इस काम के लिए गाँव में एक या दो बालक चुन लेते थे। महीने-दो महीने में वह भेड़ चरा कर आते थे तो उनको उसका पैसा मिलता था। संयोग की बात है कि किसी मालिक की दो भेड़ें मर गईं। भला छोटे आदमी की बात पर कौन विश्वास करता है। अगर करता भी है तो बड़ी मुश्किल होती है। मालिक नौकरों पर बहुत आसानी से विश्वास नहीं करते। लड़कों ने भेड़ों के मरने के बारे में आकर बताया। इस पर मालिक ने कहा मर गई या मार डाली! मैंने सुना है कि तुम लोगों ने उसका मीट भी बेच खाया है। मालिक से वह कितना बोला, पर वह नहीं माना और उनको दण्ड के लिए पंचो के सामने सुपुर्द कर दिया। गाँव वालो ने मिलकर इन दोनों बच्चों को भेड़ चोर कहा। दोनों भाइयों को सजा मिली। उनके माथे पर लिख दिया एस.टी.। यह बहुत अपमानजनक तथा असम्माननीय शब्द है जिसका अर्थ है शीप-थीफ (भेड़ चोर)। अब आप सोचिये इतना बड़ा कलंक लगा तो उसके बड़े भाई से सहा नहीं गया। वह बड़ा भाई अपने आप में आत्म-ग्लानि से पीड़ित था। अपमान के कारण उसकी मृत्यु हो गई। परन्तु छोटे भाई ने माथे पर लगे इस कलंक को कैसे मिटाया जा सकता है, इससे मुक्त कैसे हुआ जा सकता है, इस बात की ओर ध्यान दिया। उसने वे साधन अपनाये और एक महात्मा के पास जा कर मंत्र लेकर जपना प्रारम्भ कर दिया। बुरा बनने में समय नहीं लगता है लेकिन अच्छा

बनने में बहुत समय लगता है। चोरी करने में व्यक्ति बलवान नहीं होता। हत्या करने से व्यक्ति बलवान नहीं होता बल्कि वह कमजोर होता है। मन से कमजोर होता है। एक पंजाबी हट्टा-कट्टा व्यक्ति था। एक बंगाली जो दुबला-पतला था, दोनों में गाली गलौज होने लगी। पंजाबी हट्टा-कट्टा, बंगाली कमजोर था। उसने फैंक दिया बंगाली को कुएं में। लेकिन पंजाबी केवल शरीर से बलवान था। मन का बड़ा ही कमजोर था, तभी तो इतनी सी बात सहन नहीं कर पाया। बलवान तो बहुत कुछ सहन करता है।

उस छोटे भाई ने राम नाम जपना प्रारम्भ कर दिया। राम राम राम राम राम जपना शुरू कर दिया। ज्यों-ज्यों विश्वास बढ़ता गया वह गुणवान होता गया और अन्दर से मजबूत होता गया। जिसकी भक्ति करते हैं, चाहें वह भगवान शिव हों, भगवान राम हों, भगवान कृष्ण हों उनके गुण धीरे-धीरे अपने अन्दर आते हैं। राम भक्त के अन्दर धीरे-धीरे गुण आने प्रारम्भ हो गये। जो गांव के लोग उसे धिक्कारते थे उस बालक ने अपने सेवाभाव से गांव वालों का मन मोह लिया। अब गांव वाले उसे अच्छी नजर से देखने लगे। प्रत्येक गांव वाले की इच्छा होती कि वह हमारे घर में आकर रोगी की सेवा करे। वह आ जाए तो हम चिन्ता से मुक्त हो कर सोयें। वह रोगी को संभाल लेगा। आज वह बालक गांव भर का सेवक बन गया। भक्त बन गया। महात्मा बन गया। एक दिन उस गांव में कोई व्यक्ति आया। वह उसका सामान उठाकर लेकर जाने लगा। जिस किसी के घर उनको जाना था वहाँ ले गया। सामान रखने के उपरान्त पूछा, "वह बालक कौन है? बड़ा सेवाभावी है, बड़ा निर्मल है"। उन्होंने खूब प्रशंसा की। कुछ देर बाद पूछा "यह क्या लिखा है"? बात घूमा फिराकर उसके माथे पर आ गई तो गाँव वालों ने कहा कि इस एस. टी. का अर्थ है सन्त। एक भेड़ चुराने वालों को सन्त महात्मा बना दिया। कल का अपराधी आज का महात्मा बन गया। अच्छा इन्सान हो गया। उस लड़के ने मात्र राम राम नाम जाप के द्वारा बल प्राप्त करके अपने आपको एक अच्छा इन्सान बना लिया। भक्तजनों! सन्त महात्मा कहते कि परमात्मा तो माँ है। वह तो सब कुछ सबको देना जानती है। अगर किसी माँ का लड़का गंदी नाली में गिर जाये तो माँ उसे अपनी गोद में बैठाती है। सन्त पापियों के पाप अपनी झोली में डलवा लेते हैं जैसे एक महात्मा ने किसी चोर अपराधी से कहा, "एक

लोटा लेकर आओ और संकल्प करो कि अपने सारे पाप मेरी झोली में डाल दो, साफ बन जाओगे। भक्तजनों! काश मैं भी उसी साधु—महात्मा के समान होता तो आज आप सब के पाप मैं अपनी झोली में डाल लेता। आप लोग भी जब इस कारागार से सजा काट कर बाहर जाओगे तो आपके घर में आपके बच्चे, आपके भाई, बहन, मित्र, माँ, पत्नी सभी सोचकर खुश होंगे कि आप सजा काट कर आ गए हैं। आप अच्छे इन्सान बन गए हैं। उधर परमात्मा भी इन्तजार कर रहा है अब हमारे बच्चे अच्छे बन गए हैं और हमारे पास लौटेंगे। समय भी हो गया है भक्तजनों! अगर मेरे मुख से चुभने वाला कोई शब्द निकल गया हो तो आप सब मुझे क्षमा करना। खन्ना साहब ने, जो मुझे इज्जत दी है उसके लिए मैं उनको प्रणाम करता हूँ। खन्ना साहब, जेलर साहब, एवं कारगार वासियों एवं अधिकारियों, जज साहब का मैं हृदय से धन्यवाद करता हूँ। आपको पुनः प्रणाम करता हूँ।

APPENDIX - II

Correspondence with Convict Sadhaks

"श्रीरामशरणम्"

8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4,
नई दिल्ली 110024

प्रिय मित्र कलदीप
 मेरे पास जो कुछ भी है मैं सबकुछ तुम्हारे नाम पर भेज रहा हूँ।
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पोस्ट कार्ड POST CARD

श्रीरामशरणम्
 8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4,
 नई दिल्ली 110024

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"श्रीराम"

"श्रीरामशरणम्"

8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4
नई दिल्ली - 110024

डिप्ट. कलकत्ता 20.3.
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डिप्ट कुलदीप मन्डि,

8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4

नई दिल्ली - 110024

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8- रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर - 4

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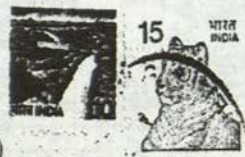
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8 - रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर - 4
 नई दिल्ली - 110 024

“श्रीराम”

Date 8.7.2000

परम पुज्य आध्यात्मिक श्री गुरुजी महाराज के परमों में हम सभी श्री फूलसिंह, श्री लखन नाथ वर्मा, गोपीचंद्र राठौर, किशोर, पुलाप, एवं सरदारसिंह, और नवलसिंह, का कोटि कोटि नमन स्वीकार है। मैं पत्र लिखने वाला श्री फूल सिंह गुरुजी मुझे आपकी एक फोटो चाहिए है। सभी प्रतिदिन सुध्या समय अमृतवाणी का पाठ कर रहे हैं। जिससे मैंने

धार्मिक शान्ति प्राप्त हुई और मुझे आपकी कृपा से जो आजीवन सखी की दुसरे मुझे होकर मेरी भला भाग साधन वृत्त की रही है जो मे लगेपगे कर ही रहा है मे सब श्री राम कृपा और आपकी आशीर्वाद का फल है मुझे आशा है आप अपना कोटि कोटि नमन आपकी वापस श्री फूलसिंह 8/0 बीछू श्रीराम भवन इन्डिया

समक

22

स्वच्छ अपनारं
रोज-से-बुटकारा पार्टी

श्री विश्वामित्रजी महाराज

श्री रामधारणम्, छरिंग रोड,
त्वाजपतनगर-4, नई दिल्ली

नई दिल्ली,

विप PIN 110024

कृपया फोटो जरूर भेजें &
आपकी कृपा होगी

ॐ

श्री लखोदेवायः नमः। (केंद्रिय जेल सद्वी. वे.)
(ला. उ. + २०००)

प्रथम प्रश्न - श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी महाराज,
हजारों की छत्रछाया में मेरा, श्री स्वामीजी की कृपा,
का कौटुंबिक सुख, स्वीकार है।

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श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी -
माता की एक ही चिन्ता
है, अतः श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी
की कृपा, श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी

कि मुझे एक बार इस अपराध
से छुटकारा द्या जाय, ताकि भित्तियार
के लोगो को मुझ पर हे कार्रवाई
नाहिये, मुझे जेके हे, उम्मा-अ
दुख है, इससे बचाव होना दोस्तु,
काँट काप श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी

माता सादा के रिश्तेदार लाकू, जल-श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी की कृपा

नात रोग उन्मूलन
में सहयोग दे,
नात रोगी बताएं,
इनाम प्राप्त।



POST CARD

श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी की कृपा
श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी की कृपा
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श्री लखोदेव स्वामीजी की कृपा

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39 राम

डिप्ट. बंगाल जी.

"श्रीरामशरणम्"
8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4
नई दिल्ली 110024

जय जय राम 3.11.76

परमात्मा की कृपा से मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की शक्ति को जाना है।
मैंने अपने जीवन में श्रीराम नाम की
कृपा को जाना है। मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की कृपा को जाना है।
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कृपा को जाना है। मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की कृपा को जाना है।

श्रीराम शरणम्

49 राम

डिप्ट. बंगाल जी.

"श्रीरामशरणम्"
8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4
नई दिल्ली 110024

जय जय राम 8.10.74

परमात्मा की कृपा से मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की शक्ति को जाना है।
मैंने अपने जीवन में श्रीराम नाम की
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श्रीराम नाम की कृपा को जाना है।

श्रीराम शरणम्

"श्रीराम"

"श्रीरामशरणम्"

डिप्ट. बंगाल जी. 8-रिंग रोड, लाजपत नगर-4
नई दिल्ली - 110024

जय जय राम 21.12.78

परमात्मा की कृपा से मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की शक्ति को जाना है।
मैंने अपने जीवन में श्रीराम नाम की
कृपा को जाना है। मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की कृपा को जाना है।
मैंने अपने जीवन में श्रीराम नाम की
कृपा को जाना है। मैंने अपने जीवन में
श्रीराम नाम की कृपा को जाना है।

श्रीराम शरणम्

APPENDIX - III

Reformation in Jail: Press Clippings

केंद्रीय व जिला जेल में सत्संग के कार्यक्रम १२ व १३ फरवरी को

इंदौर ३ फरवरी। संस्था 'वीरामहाराज' द्वारा एक बार फिर केंद्रीय व जिला जेल में सत्संग के कार्यक्रम आयोजन १२ व १३ फरवरी को किए जा रहे हैं। वीरामहाराजजी महाराज के सार्वजनिक ११ व १५ फरवरी तक विभिन्न कार्यक्रम होंगे।

वीरामहाराज के आध्यात्मिक अध्यापन को गुंजाता में १२ फरवरी को जिला जेल में अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग होगा तथा

१३ फरवरी को केंद्रीय जेल में बड़ी आयोजन होगा। केंद्रीय जेल में टी वी वार विशेष सत्संग हो चुके हैं। संस्था के अनुसार वीरामहाराजजी महाराज ११ फरवरी को रात्रि ८ बजे दिल्ली से सायलान द्वारा आगें और १५ फरवरी को प्रातः ५ बजे टटरमिडी गुमनाम से भोजाल प्रस्थान करेंगे। इस बार महाराजजी आगम में १२ व १५ फरवरी तक महाकाल ५.३० बजे में ७ बजे साधुजी को आगत साधुग के बारे में बताएंगे एवं आगत कराएंगे। १३ फरवरी को वे जिला

जेल में आयोजित अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग में बड़ी भागीदारी को प्राप्त जीवन के रक्षणकर्ता उपरोक्त और उपरोक्त सत्संग के बारे में उपरोक्त देंगे। जिला जेल में उपरोक्त बड़े सत्संग कार्यक्रम है।

१३ फरवरी को वीरामहाराजजी महाराज जेल केंद्रीय जेल में सत्संग प्रवचन करेंगे। १५ फरवरी महाविश्रामजी को प्रातः ५.३० व ५ बजे के सत्संगों में सत्संग में उपरोक्त स्थित वीरामहाराज में अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग एवं अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग प्रवचन करेंगे। उरी दिन सत्संग के बाद

मनुष्य व्यभिचार को प्राप्त होता है। १५ फरवरी को सत्संग सत्संग में, १५ फरवरी को प्रातः भोजाल केंद्रीय जेल में प्रातः २० फरवरी को प्रातः ० व ८.३० तक भोजाल में वीरामहाराजजी के सत्संग एवं टी वी वार कार्यक्रम सत्संग होंगे। वीरामहाराजजी अध्यापन उपरोक्त सत्संग में सत्संगों कराएंगे हैं। आगम को अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग जा रहा है। उंदौर में १५ फरवरी को उपरोक्त, देवास, सायलान, रायल, धार आदि जिलों में भी अनेक सत्संग आयोजित होंगे।

नई दुनिया-4 फरवरी 1999
मनुष्य अपने कर्म से ही महान बनता है



इंदौर: केंद्रीय जेल इंदौर में डॉ. विश्वामित्र महाराज पभार। खरट जल अधीनस्थ श्री आर.आर. खजाना ने किया। डॉ. विश्वामित्र महाराज ने अपने अमृत वाणी में कहा कि मनुष्य अपने कर्म से ही महान बनता है। उसकी कीर्ति गाथा उसके किये हुए कर्मों से ही होगी है। भगवान श्रीराम ने अपने कार्य लोक कल्याण हेतु किये जिन्हें पर ही पूरा संसार उनके नाम को नमन करता है।

श्रीराम महाराजजी के सत्संगों में सत्संग
गाथा-ज्ञान-समाह का आयोजन

इंदौर, ३ फरवरी। संस्था 'वीरामहाराज' द्वारा एक बार फिर केंद्रीय व जिला जेल में सत्संग के कार्यक्रम आयोजन १२ व १३ फरवरी को किए जा रहे हैं। वीरामहाराजजी महाराज के सार्वजनिक ११ व १५ फरवरी तक विभिन्न कार्यक्रम होंगे।

वीरामहाराज के आध्यात्मिक अध्यापन को गुंजाता में १२ फरवरी को जिला जेल में अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग होगा तथा १३ फरवरी को केंद्रीय जेल में बड़ी आयोजन होगा। केंद्रीय जेल में टी वी वार विशेष सत्संग हो चुके हैं। संस्था के अनुसार वीरामहाराजजी महाराज ११ फरवरी को रात्रि ८ बजे दिल्ली से सायलान द्वारा आगें और १५ फरवरी को प्रातः ५ बजे टटरमिडी गुमनाम से भोजाल प्रस्थान करेंगे। इस बार महाराजजी आगम में १२ व १५ फरवरी तक महाकाल ५.३० बजे में ७ बजे साधुजी को आगत साधुग के बारे में बताएंगे एवं आगत कराएंगे। १३ फरवरी को वे जिला जेल में आयोजित अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग में बड़ी भागीदारी को प्राप्त जीवन के रक्षणकर्ता उपरोक्त और उपरोक्त सत्संग के बारे में उपरोक्त देंगे। जिला जेल में उपरोक्त बड़े सत्संग कार्यक्रम है।

१३ फरवरी को वीरामहाराजजी महाराज जेल केंद्रीय जेल में सत्संग प्रवचन करेंगे। १५ फरवरी महाविश्रामजी को प्रातः ५.३० व ५ बजे के सत्संगों में सत्संग में उपरोक्त स्थित वीरामहाराज में अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग एवं अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग प्रवचन करेंगे। उरी दिन सत्संग के बाद मनुष्य व्यभिचार को प्राप्त होता है। १५ फरवरी को सत्संग सत्संग में, १५ फरवरी को प्रातः भोजाल केंद्रीय जेल में प्रातः २० फरवरी को प्रातः ० व ८.३० तक भोजाल में वीरामहाराजजी के सत्संग एवं टी वी वार कार्यक्रम सत्संग होंगे। वीरामहाराजजी अध्यापन उपरोक्त सत्संग में सत्संगों कराएंगे हैं। आगम को अनुष्ठानिक सत्संग जा रहा है। उंदौर में १५ फरवरी को उपरोक्त, देवास, सायलान, रायल, धार आदि जिलों में भी अनेक सत्संग आयोजित होंगे।

समाचार

गीता ज्ञान यज्ञ में ढाई सौ कैदी भी सम्मिलित, समापन २५ को

इंदौर २१ अगस्त। श्री राम शरणम् के तत्वावधान में गीता ज्ञान यज्ञ का शुभारंभ हो गया है। केंद्रीय कारागार के ढाई सौ से अधिक कैदी भी नियमित गीता पाठ कर रहे हैं। समापन २५ अगस्त को होगा।

जन्माष्टमी के उपलक्ष्य में उद्यानगर एकसंदेशन स्थित आश्रम द्वारा आयोजित इस ज्ञान यज्ञ सप्ताह में ८५० से अधिक साधकगण सम्मिलित हुए हैं। सभी साधक जन्माष्टमी के पहले गीता के १७ अध्यायों का पाठ पूर्ण करेंगे। स्वामी सत्यानंदजी महाराज द्वारा रचित श्रीमद् भागवत गीता की सरल टीका के ७०१ प्रयोगों का पाठ इस पर्व पर निर्धारित किया गया था। २५ अगस्त को समापन अवसर पर विशेष सत्संग का आयोजन

होगा। केंद्रीय कारागार में दोपहर १२ से सभा बजे के बीच कार्यक्रम आयोजित होगा। उल्लेखनीय है कि इन आयोजनों के दौरान आश्रम में किसी प्रकार की पुष्प साज-सज्जा, प्रसाद, आरती, भेंट, पूजा, चढ़ावा आदि का चलन नहीं है।

नई दुनिया इन्दौर-22/8/97

गीता ज्ञान सप्ताह

इन्दौर। श्रीराम शरणम् संस्था द्वारा आयोजित गीता ज्ञान सप्ताह गत दिवस से प्रारंभ हो गया है।

संस्था के एम.एस. मोहिते ने बताया कि उद्यानगर में आयोजित इस ज्ञान सप्ताह में श्री सत्यानंदजी महाराज द्वारा भगवत गीता का पाठ किया जा रहा है। जनमाष्टमी के दिन समापन समारोह में सत्संग का 17वां अध्याय पढ़ा जावेगा। संस्था ने नागरिकों से अधिकाधिक संछ्द्र में भाग लेने की अपील की है।

कैदी की इच्छा से वे भावविह्वल हो गए!

इंदौर २८ अगस्त (नम्र)। ...और जब उस कैदी ने अपनी माँ के लिए 'गीता' की प्रति भेंट करने की इच्छा व्यक्त की तो संस्था श्रीराम शरणम् के कार्यकर्ता भावविह्वल हो गए। प्रसंग था केंद्रीय कारागार में आयोजित गीता ज्ञानयज्ञ के समापन का: कैदियों की मन:स्थिति परिवर्तित करने व उनकी ऊर्जा को सकारात्मक दिशा में प्रवाहित करने के उद्देश्य से 'श्रीराम शरणम्' द्वारा यह कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया गया: इससे पहले गत अप्रैल में भी संस्था द्वारा प्रवचन एवं सत्संग का आयोजन कारागार में किया जा चुका है। बाद में कैदियों ने ही इच्छा व्यक्त की कि सत्संग होता रहे। सो जन्माष्टमी के उपलक्ष्य में पुन: ७ दिनी कार्यक्रम रखा गया। इसके समापन अवसर पर एक कैदी नवीन माधुरिया ने गीता की एक पुरतक अपनी माँ के लिए भेंट स्वरूप भेजने की इच्छा व्यक्त की और तुरंत यह भेंट भेजी भी। संस्था के कार्यकर्ता, नवीन की इस पहल से भावविह्वल हो गए। संस्था ने जेल अधिकारी श्री आर.आर. खन्ना के सहयोग के प्रति आभार व्यक्त किया है।

नई दुनिया-29/8/97

विश्वध्रमण

इन्दौर, मंगलवार १३ जुलाई १९९९

जनता और सरकारी कर्मचारियों के बीच का अंतर यथा संभव समाप्त होना चाहिए।

-पं.नेहरू

सुधारगृह की सराहनीय सफलता

आक्रोश, प्रतिशोध, अपमान-प्रताड़ना लोभ-मोह, लालच, आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति हेतु जब व्यक्ति सामाजिक मर्यादा छोड़कर व कानून को तोड़कर अपराध कर बैठता है तब कारागृह में जाना ही पड़ता है। कोई भी व्यक्ति जन्म से अपराधी नहीं होता है। स्थिति, वातावरण, संगति, प्रलोभनों के कारण व्यक्ति अपराध की दुनिया में जाने-अनजाने पहुंच जाता है। फिर अपराध करना उसकी प्रवृत्ति बन जाती है, जिसके कारण एक न एक दिन उसे कारागृह में जाना ही पड़ता है।

कारागृह, बंदीगृह, कैदीखाना या जेल कहो- जहां मान्य सामाजिक एवं कानूनी व्यवस्था का उल्लंघन करने वालों को निश्चित निर्धारित अवधि तक अवरुद्ध रखा जाता है। पहले आजादी के समय जेलों में बंदियों को अत्यधिक प्रताड़ित किया जाता था। उनसे चक्की (घड़ी) चलवाई जाती थी। पत्थर तुड़वाए जाते थे, कठोर शारीरिक श्रम, कैदियों से कराया जाता था, उस समय जेलों में अंग्रेजी प्रशासन की खिलाफत करने वाले आजादी के दीवानों को जो यातनाएं दी जाती थीं, वे अन्य अपराधियों की तुलना में अधिक सख्त होती थीं, उस समय तक यह धारणा थी कि अपराधी को जेल में जितना हो सके अधिक से अधिक प्रताड़ित किया जाए, ताकि वह पुनः जिस अपराध में जेल में आया है, वह अपराध पुनः न करे।

परव, जस-जस समाज कल्याण की विचारधाराओं का प्रसार-प्रचार हुआ है, कैदियों की प्रति भी प्रशासन के व्यवहार में परिवर्तन शुरू हुआ। आजन्म कैदियों से खेती-बाड़ी के कार्यों के साथ लघु उद्योगों का कार्य कराया जाने लगा, जैसा कि इन्दौर सेंट्रल जेल में दरी बुनाई, प्रिंटिंग का कार्य शुरू किया गया था। यहां की बनी मजबूत सुन्दर दरियां काफी लोकप्रिय हुई थीं। इसी तरह कई शासकीय विभागों का मुद्रण कार्य सेंट्रल जेल की प्रिंटिंग शाखा में होता था। इसके बाद इसी जेल में स्टेनलेस स्टील के बर्तन बनाने का कार्य शुरू हुआ जो कि काफी सस्ते और अच्छे होने से उपजेलों सहित शासकीय संस्थाओं में खरीदे जाने लगे। इसी तरह सेंट्रल जेल इन्दौर में कैदियों को विभिन्न उद्यमों का प्रशिक्षण देकर यह उम्मीद की गई थी कि वे जेल से निकलने के बाद सीखे हुनर से अपनी जीविका चला सकेंगे। यह कैदियों के जीवन के एक पक्षीय सुधार का प्रयास था। कैदियों के जीवन में बहुमुखी सुधार हेतु देश में सबसे पहले लखनऊ में खुली जेल का प्रयोग किया गया था, जहां कैदियों को पूर्ण रूपेण कार्यों की जिम्मेदारी सौंपकर जीवन में सुधार लाने का प्रयास किया गया। इसी तरह के प्रयास इन्दौर की सेंट्रल जेल में मुख्यमंत्री श्री दिग्विजय सिंह की प्रेरणा से अध्यात्म के माध्यम से कैदियों के सुधार का प्रयास पिछले तीन वर्षों से किया जा रहा है। इसके तहत कैदियों को आध्यात्मिक कार्यक्रमों के तहत प्रार्थना, योग, ध्यान दिनचर्या के साथ ही विभिन्न धर्मचार्यों, ज्ञानी विद्वजनों के प्रवचन सेंट्रल जेल में कैदियों के लिए आयोजित किए जाते रहे हैं। शारीरिक श्रम के बाद मानसिक पृष्ठभूमि के परिवर्तन का यह प्रयास कारागृह से सुधारगृह का एक अनुपम उदाहरण सिद्ध हुआ है। संतों की वाणी का अपराधियों के मन मस्तिष्क पर गहरा प्रभाव परिलक्षित हुआ। उनके आचरण-व्यवहार में परिवर्तन स्पष्ट दृष्टिगोचर होने लगा। पहले ये छोटी-छोटी बातों के लिए झगड़ पड़ते थे, अब इनमें सहनशीलता-समझदारी की भावना विकसित होने से प्रशासन को अपने दायित्व निर्वाह करने में भी सुगमता हो गई। संतों के प्रवचनों से न केवल कैदियों के आचरण में सुधार हुआ बल्कि जेल कर्मियों के व्यवहार में परिवर्तन होने से वास्तव में सेंट्रल जेल मात्र जेल न रहकर सुधारगृह की श्रेणी में पहुंच गया है। वैसे पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार ने कारागृहों का नाम बदलकर सुधारगृह रखने की घोषणा की है, किन्तु मात्र नाम बदलने से सबकुछ तो बदल नहीं जाता। विद्वजनों-ईश्वरभक्तों प्रवचनकारों की ओजस्वी वाणी का प्रभाव कठोर से कठोर हृदयी व्यक्ति पर भी होता है। इस संदर्भ में महर्षि वाल्मिकी का दृष्टांत एक उदाहरण है, जिन्होंने साधुओं के यथार्थ वचनों के कारण ही अपराधिक जीवन का परित्याग कर अध्यात्म की शरण में पहुंचकर महाज्ञानी महर्षि बने। सेंट्रल जेल के वरिष्ठ अधीक्षक श्री आर.आर. खन्ना बताते हैं कि आध्यात्मिक आयोजनों से कैदियों के जीवन में आ रहे बदलाव से वे काफी उत्साहित हैं। कैदी कठोर साधना नहीं बल्कि सामान्य प्रतिज्ञाओं के द्वारा जीवन में किए कार्यों का पश्चाताप करते हुए, दुर्गुणों-बुराइयों से

रहने की प्रतिज्ञा करते हैं। यह एक बड़ी बात है। ये कैदी आत्मावलोकन कर अपने आपको सुधारने के प्रयास कर रहे हैं, यही हमारे प्रयासों की सबसे बड़ी सफलता है। इसीलिए श्री खन्ना कहते हैं कि ये लोग जीवन के मोड़ पर जेल तक आ गए, अब जब ये यहां से निकल कर जाएंगे तो एक नया जीवन नई राह, बेहतर जिन्दगी जीने का हूनर साथ लेकर जाएंगे। सच है, पारस के सम्पर्क में आने से लोहा भी सोना हो जाता है। सद्जनों, ज्ञानियों, विद्वजनों के सानिध्य से सेन्ट्रल जेल इन्दौर के कई अपराधी प्रभावित हुए इसका सबसे बड़ा प्रमाण यह है कि कई जेलवासियों ने डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज को पत्र लिखकर अपना संकल्प जाहिर किया कि वे जेल से निकलने के बाद एक नया जीवन शुरू करेंगे। जीवन में हुई भूलों को भूलकर आपकी प्रेरणानुरूप सत्याचरण कर जीवन यापन करेंगे। इस तरह के प्रयासों के लिए पूरा जेल प्रशासन बधाई का पात्र है। आशा करते हैं कि प्रदेश की अन्य जेलों में भी इसी तरह के आध्यात्मिक आयोजन हों तो ये जेल यथार्थ में सुधारालय बन जाए।

दैनिक इन्दौर

कैदियों के पत्र उन्हें अत्यंत उत्साह से भर रहे हैं!

(नगर प्रतिनिधि)
संस्था 'श्रीराम शरणम्' द्वारा कारागृहों की जेल में रखकर गुन को गई पहल के अनुकूल परिणाम सामने आ रहे हैं। संस्था ने जुड़े कार्यकर्ता काफी उत्साहित हैं उन पत्रों को पाकर जो विभिन्न कारागृहों में सजा भोग रहे कैदियों ने बहुत अहीनाय से लिखे हैं। वत वर्ष मुरत की जेल में कैदियों के बीच आयोजित सत्रों के बाद कई कैदियों के पत्र संस्था के वर्तमान प्रमुख कार्यकर्ता डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज को मिले हैं। एनेटुनिक इंजीनियरिंग में स्नातक २४ वर्षीय श्री अनिल पटेल ने मुरत जेल में स्वामीजी को निरख भेजा है- 'हर जमाने में अच्छा चलने और अच्छा चलवाने की इच्छा रहती है। इस सदृच्छा को सदृच्छा में बदलने के लिए तथा दुःख से राहत करने के लिए किसी न किसी सहारे की आवश्यकता की व प्रेरणा की आवश्यकता होती है। इस बदलाव के लिए अच्छा समय भी अवसरित होता है। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि श्रीराम भूषा में मेरे जीवन में अच्छा समय आ गया है।' अपने पत्र में श्री पटेल ने शासकीय सेवा के

दौरान हुई त्रुटि को स्वीकार है जिसके कारण उन्हें जेल हुई। संस्था द्वारा भी पटेल को प्रेषित पत्रोत्तर में यही निवेदन किया गया है कि ईश्वर आपसे साहस, बल, उत्साह, प्रेरणा, प्रेम और विश्वास का संचार करें। जीवन की दशा और दिशा में परिवर्तन की भावना का हुस्ने में भी संचार करें।



इंदौर के केंद्रीय कारागार में प्रबचन देते हुए डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज

कैदियों के बीच इस प्रकार का पत्र व्यवहार अब सामान्य सी बात हो गई है। संस्था द्वारा एक वर्ष पूर्व सबसे पहले इंदौर के केंद्रीय कारागार में ही सत्रों का आयोजन था। विश्वामित्रजी महाराज के साक्षिज्य में हुआ था। बाद में स्वाभिपर और मुरत की जेलों में भी इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रम जेल प्रशासन की मदद से हुए।

इंदौर केंद्रीय कारागार के ती से अधिक कैदियों ने तो नाम दीक्षा धारण की और अब वे जेल में रहते हुए भी 'श्रीराम शरणम्' के कार्यक्रमों में अपनी सहभागिता दर्ज कराते हैं। अभी १ मार्च से ५ अप्रैल तक रामनवमी के उपलक्ष्य में संस्था द्वारा बाल्मीकी रामायण के मार का पाठ आयोजित किया गया है। इसमें भी केंद्रीय कारागार के अनेक कैदी भाई सम्मिलित हुए हैं। जेलन कारागार ही नहीं बल्कि ग्रामीण अंचलों में भी आध्यात्मिक जागृति का अभियान 'श्रीराम शरणम्' ने चलाया है। मध्यप्रदेश के झाबुजा से लेकर गुजरात के बनारहा ग्राम तक अनेक सत्रों आयोजित करे हैं। झाबुजा के समीप सुपोर के जंगल में आयोजित अनुभवार्णी सत्र पर डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज के साक्षिज्य में आयोजित हुए और २५ ती यथावृत्तों में बड़ी तादाद वनवासियों की रही। उन्होंने सत्रों को परिपूर्ण अर्थ

भी प्रदान किए। करीब २१० वनवासियों ने नाम दीक्षा धारण की। 'श्रीराम शरणम्' का यह क्रम जारी है। संस्था के समस्त कार्यकर्ताओं में समय की पावटी और अनुमानन के अलावा चरण सगरी करने कराने की मनाही, भेट या चढ़ाने का न होना तथा पूर्णतः आहंकरविहीन होना का विशेषकर्ता है। स्वामी महात्माजी महाराज द्वारा स्थापित की गई भक्ति प्रधान आयोजनों की यह परंपरा अब देशभर में फैल गई है। कारागारों में कारागृहों में आज कैदित करने का प्रकृत परिणाम यह भी हुआ है कि बड़ी संख्या में कैदी आत्म सुधार की ओर अग्रसर हो रहे हैं। इससे अलावा अन्य सत्रों में ध्यान, योग, रातोंच व प्रबचन के कार्यक्रम अब जिलों में आयोजित कर रही हैं। मुरत जेल में श्री विल का एक सत्रों के कार्यक्रमों को उल्लास में भरता है। दीगर जेलों भाइयों में भी एक लिखे हैं।

दैनिक नई दुनिया इन्दौर (म. प्र.)
 दिनांक 03/03/1997

नव-अभारत
इंदौर पत्रिका
INDOOR PATRIKA

सद्कार्य संत बना देते हैं : डॉ. विश्वामित्र

(हमारे प्रतिनिधि)

इंदौर, 5 जनवरी. मनुष्य के सद्कार्य उसे संत बना सकते हैं. उसकी कीर्तिगाथा उसके कार्यों से ही होती है. भगवान् श्रीराम के लोककल्याणकारी कार्यों के कारण ही पूरा संसार उन्हें नमन करता है.

ये बात डॉ. विश्वामित्र महाराज ने आज सुबह सेंट्रल जेल में आयोजित निर्गमित प्रवचन कार्यक्रम में बंदियों को संबोधित करते हुए कही. इस अवसर पर श्रीराम शरणाग्त मंडल ने भगवान् श्रीराम की महिमा गाथा का सस्वर गायन कर श्रोताओं को भावविभोर कर दिया. आरंभ में वरिष्ठ जेल अधीक्षक आर.आर. खन्ना ने संत श्री व मंडली का आत्मीय अभिन्दन किया. विश्वामित्रजी ने अपनी अमृतवाणी में अनेक उदाहरणों के साथ कहा कि सबसे मधुर व्यवहार करें, अच्छे आचरण से समाज सुधार और मानवता को सेवा में ही जीवन को सार्थकता है.

उन्होंने कहा कि मनुष्य के अपने कर्म

ही उसे ईसान या शैतान की श्रेणी में ला खड़ा करते हैं. उन्होंने कहा कि मनुष्य पाप को ये मानकर चलना चाहिए कि हम जो भी कुछ कर रहे हैं, उसे ईश्वर देख रहा है. काम ऐसा करें, जिससे किसी को दुःख न पहुँचे.

डॉ. विश्वामित्र ने अंत में बंदियों को दीक्षा प्रवचन करते हुए अपराध से दूर रहने का संकल्प दिलाया. कार्यक्रम में जिला जेल अधीक्षक श्री तोमर, कल्याण अधिकारी एन.बी. सिंह, जेलर सुरेश कीर्तन, जी.एस. रघुवंशी, श्री भट्ट, श्री पाण्डे, नरेंद्रसिंह यादव सहित अनेक जेलकर्मी उपस्थित थे.

विश्वामित्र महाराज के आज प्रवचन
श्री रामशरणम् उधानगर एक्सप्रेसन में श्री रामशरणम् के प्रमुख डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज के 6 जनवरी की शाम 7.15 बजे से 8.30 बजे तक अमृतवाणी सत्रांग व प्रवचन होगी. इसके बाद इच्छुक भाई-बहनों को नाम दीक्षा आश्रम परिवार में ही दी जायेगी.

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केंद्रीय जेल में डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज बंदीजनों को संबोधित करते हुए

अपने कर्म यह मानकर करें कि ईश्वर देख रहा है

इंदौर ५ जनवरी। मनुष्य अपने कर्मों से ही मनुष्यवान बनता है। उसकी कीर्ति उसके कर्मों से ही होती है। मनुष्य को अपने कर्म यह मानकर करना चाहिए कि ईश्वर देख रहा है। यह ध्यान रखना चाहिए कि हमारे कार्यों से दूसरे को कभी कोई कष्ट न हो।

ये विचार मंत्रालय 'श्रीरामशरणम्' के प्रमुख संत श्री डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज ने केंद्रीय जेल में आयोजित अमृतवाणी सत्रांग में बंदीजनों को संबोधित करते हुए व्यक्त किए। उन्होंने कहा कि अग्रवाल

श्रीराम ने अपने कार्य लोक कल्याण के लिए किए। इस कारण पूरा संसार उनका अष्टाशुभक स्मरण करता है। महाराजजी ने उदाहरण दिया कि तैमूरलंग ने भारत पर आक्रमण कर यहाँ हजारों हत्याओं की, नूटमार मचाई। वह कुटिल हृदय, दुर्दांत हत्यारा व बर्बर था। उसने बहुत लोगों को गुनाह बनाया। एक बार उसने एक विद्वान से दो गुनासों का मूल्य पूछा। विद्वान ने बताया बार-बार भी बर्खास्त। तब तैमूर ने खुद का मूल्य पूछा। विद्वान ने कहा- आत्मीय अक्षरों। इस पर तैमूर

अश्रित हो गया और बोला मेरे बन्धु ही ४० अक्षरों के हैं। तब उस विद्वान ने बड़ा-आपके बन्धु की ही कीमत बताई है, क्योंकि आपका स्वयं का तो कोई मूल्य नहीं है। महाराजजी ने कहा कि हमका मान्यें यह हुआ कि मनुष्य को उसके कर्म ही मनुष्यवान या मनुष्यहीन बनते हैं। बरिष्ठ जेल अधीक्षक श्री आर.आर. खन्ना ने महाराजजी का आत्मीय स्वागत किया। आधा घंटा अमृतवाणी का पाठ हुआ। महाराजजी ने बंदीजनों में संकल्प कराया कि भविष्य में बुरे कार्यों से दूर रहेंगे।

नई दुनिया

इंदौर गुरुवार 6 जनवरी 2000

नई दुनिया

कैदियों की अंतर आत्मा से आत्मसुधार की आवाज !

(नगर प्रतिनिधि)

अंधराश को बंधी गलियों में घटकते हुए वे नीम कारागार में ऊँद अबस्य हैं लेकिन आत्मसुधार की नलक उनमें हैं। अब वे चाहते हैं कि जिस रास्ते से चलकर वे कारागृह तक आए, सजा पूरी होने के बाद उन्हीं रास्तों पर उनका लौटना न हो। जीवन को श्रेष्ठ बनाने का मार्गदर्शन भी मिलता रहे। इसी उद्देश्य से इंदौर के



डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी

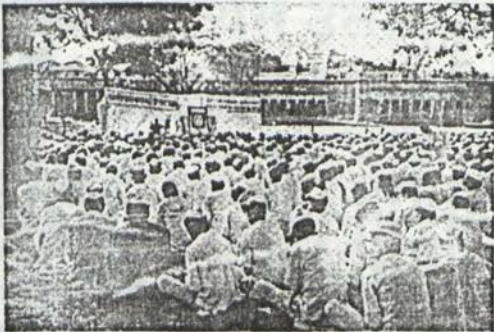
के केंद्रीय कारागार में एक कैदी कुलदीपसिंह ने संस्था 'श्रीराम शरणम्' के कर्ताधर्ता डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज को पत्र में लिखा है कि 'आप हमारे अहोभाग्य हैं। आपके साधित्र्य और मार्गदर्शन से हम कैदी भाइयों में अंदर से बहुत जक्ति आई है। हम सब निवमित कर से योग और अमृतवाणी का पाठ कर रहे हैं। आप हमें मार्गदर्शन देते रहें।'

दरअसल यह अग्रैल में केंद्रीय कारागार में 'श्रीराम शरणम्' द्वारा आयोजित सत्संग में डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज का साधित्र्य प्राप्त करने के बाद कई कैदियों ने उन्हीं पत्र लिखे। पत्र लिखने से पूर्व तक से अरब तक इन कैदियों ने योग, जाप और अमृतवाणी के पाठ को भी नियमित रखा है। ५८

बर्षीय रामेश्वर पिता प्रभुदयाल ने स्वामीजी को लिखे अपने पत्र में कहा है कि 'मुझे अ्रोघ बहुत आता है। कृपया इसे शांत करने का मार्ग बताएं।' एक अन्य कैदी श्रीलेन्द्रसिंह ने पत्र में उन्हीं बताया है कि अपनी सजा पूरी कर बाहर गए कुछ कैदी भाई योग और अमृतवाणी का पाठ नियमित रूप से करने का संकल्प लेकर गए हैं।

डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज ने अपने पत्रोत्तर में कुलदीपसिंह से कहा है कि सायक न दुगों बच्चा माँ-बाप को अधिक प्रिय होता है। हमें ऐसा ही बनना है कि हम परमपिता परमेश्वर के प्रिय बन सकें... आत्मसुधार की दिशा में प्रयासरत कैदियों और उनके गुरु के बीच यह पत्र व्यवहार जारी है। अग्रैल में बड़ी संख्या में कैदी दीक्षा ले चुके हैं।

कैदियों की सक्रियता व रुचि को देखते हुए इंदौर स्थित 'श्रीराम शरणम्' के कार्यकर्ताओं ने इन दिनों पुनः श्री बाल्मीकि रामायण पाठ का आयोजन किया है। यह कार्यक्रम विजयादशमी को संपन्न होगा। सास बात यह है कि उषादगर एफस्टेशन स्थित सायम के अस्ताबा केंद्रीय कारागृह में भी चल रहे इस पाठ में करीब १५० कैदी भी हिस्सा ले रहे



इंदौर के केंद्रीय कारागृह में आयोजित सत्संग में भाग लेते हुए कैदीगण

हैं। वे ब्रह्मलीन स्वामी सत्यानंदजी महाराज द्वारा रचित बाल्मीकि रामायण का पाठ कर रहे हैं। इससे पहले भी जन्माष्टमी पर सबा माह तक गीता ज्ञान यज्ञ में करीब २५० कैदी सम्मिलित हो चुके हैं। केवल सम्मिलित ही नहीं हुए बल्कि उन्होंने आत्मसुधार की इस पहल को अपनी नियमित दिनचर्या में भी सामिल कर लिया है। 'श्रीराम शरणम्' के कार्यकर्ता कैदियों की इस सक्रियता से उत्साहित भी हैं और नियमित संपर्क

में भी... अब जब वे कार्यकर्ता कारागृह में उनसे मिलने जाते हैं तो ज्ञान-योग को लेकर उन्हीं यथासंभव मार्गदर्शन भी देते हैं और जो कैदी विश्व-पड़ नहीं सकते उनके संदेश बुझजी की दिल्ली तक पहुँचाते भी हैं। सत्संग का यह आयोजन विजयादशमी तक चलेगा और कार्यकर्ताओं का कहना है कि विजयादशमी के बाद भी कोई त्रिज्वर आयोजित करना होगा। क्योंकि कैदी भाई चाहते हैं कि एक श्रेष्ठ कार्य हाथ लगा, अब यह लगन

मगी रहे। कार्यकर्ता भी तो 'गो पाठो' है।

केवल इंदौर ही नहीं देग के अनेक शहरों में इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रम 'श्रीराम शरणम्' द्वारा चलाने जा रहे हैं। सन् १८९१ में रावलपिंडी जिले के ग्राम जगू का मोरा में जन्मे स्वामीजी सत्यानंदजी महाराज द्वारा अपनी दीर्घ तपसाधना के बाद हरिद्वार में स्थापित 'श्रीराम शरणम्' का यह आध्यात्मिक अभियान आम धार्मिक प्रियाकरणाओं से पीड़ा असंग है। अलग-अलग प्रकार की दान-दक्षिणा, चढ़ावा इत्यादि का चलन नहीं है, स्वामीजी १३ नवंबर १९६० को जिस 'राम' नाम का जप करते हुए ब्रह्मलीन हुए उसे ही मूलमंत्र की भांति उनके हृदय बरों के अनुयायियों ने ग्रहण किया है। स्वामीजी के बाद भी प्रेमजी महाराज ने अपना उच्च अधिकारी का पद छोड़ा और 'श्रीराम शरणम्' का दायित्व संभाला। वर्तमान में डॉ. विश्वामित्रजी महाराज के कर्णों पर इस आग्रह्य अभियान का दायित्व है। डॉ. साहब/शास्त्रीबापनाजी नियम से हैं और अ.भा. आधुनिक सत्यानंद दिल्ली में २२ वर्ष तक सेवाएत रहे हैं। तप साधना भी करते रहे और अलग-अलग को मार्गक पाया।

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केंद्रीय जेल में स्वामी विश्वामित्र बंदिनों को प्रवचन देते हुए।

राम नाम के जाप से हृदय निर्मल हो जाता है : स्वामीजी

इंदौर, ९ फरवरी। केंद्रीय जेल में दिल्ली स्थित श्रीराम शरणम् आश्रम के स्वामी विश्वामित्र महाराज द्वारा कैदियों को राजनाम को दोषा दी गयी। इस अवसर पर ११९ कैदियों को गुरु दोषा दी गयी। इस अवसर पर स्वामी विश्वामित्र महाराज ने रामनाम की महिमा बताते हुए कहा कि रामनाम जाप एवं ध्यान अपने आप में पूर्ण साधना है। नामजाप एवं ध्यान से हृदय निर्मल हो जाता है। निरंतर जाप करने से मनुष्य के सभी प्रकार के दुःख दूर हो जाते हैं तथा आत्मशक्ति में वृद्धि हो जाती है।

स्वामीजी ने आगे कहा कि मनुष्य अपराध तब करता है कि जब भगवान को भूल जाता है और काम, क्रोध, ईर्ष्या, द्वेष, अहंकार आदि के नशे में अपराध कर बैठता है। पापकर्म प्रत्येक इनसान से हो जाता है, चाहे वह कितना ही धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति का स्वयं न हो। पाप से रहित सिर्फ परम पिता परमात्मा ही है। मनुष्य तो अज्ञान का भंडार है, उससे पाप होना स्वाभाविक है। सिद्ध गुरु से नामदीक्षा लेने के बाद मनुष्य के अपराधों में कमी आती है।

इस अवसर पर नवदलकुमार साहब, अधीक्षक आर.आर. खन्ना, कै.एस. तोमर, जेलर एवं एस.के. चौहान जेलर, जी.एस.

रघुवंशी सहायक जेलर, भूपेंद्रसिंह रघुवंशी, आर.एस. पांडे, सुनील शर्मा, आर.एस.सिंह एवं ए.के. पट्ट सहायक जेलर उपस्थित थे। कार्यक्रम के अंत में बरिष्ठ जेल अधीक्षक आर.आर. खन्ना ने स्वामी विश्वामित्र महाराज एवं उनके साथ आये सदस्यों का का आभार व्यक्त किया।

विश्वामित्र जी के प्रवचन आज से

इन्दौर। श्रीराम शरणम् उधानगर एक्सटेन्शन इन्दौर में परमपूज्य श्री विश्वामित्र जी महाराज की अध्यक्षता में तीन रात्रि साधना सत्संग प्रारंभ हुआ। इसमें अनेक प्रंतो के 400 से अधिक साधकगण सम्मिलित हुए हैं, जो तीन दिन तक मौन भाव से श्रीराम की आराधना के रूप में ध्यान, जाप, भजन, संकीर्तन आदि आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में तल्लीन रहते हुए पूर्ण अनुशासन के साथ भक्तिरस में ओत-प्रोत रहेंगे। 10 व 11 फरवरी को दोपहर 3.30 बजे से 4.30 बजे तक श्री रामनाम मय अमृतवाणी सत्संग के कार्यक्रम में परमपूज्य श्री विश्वामित्र जी महाराज के आध्यात्मिक प्रवचन भी होंगे।

10 फरवरी 2001

उधानगर एक्सटेन्शन में

साधना सत्संग प्रारंभ

इन्दौर। श्रीराम शरणम् उधानगर एक्सटेन्शन में विश्वामित्र जी महाराज की अध्यक्षता में तीन रात्रि साधना सत्संग प्रारंभ हो गया इसमें विभिन्न प्रंतो के ४०० से अधिक साधक तीन दिन तक मौन भाव से श्रीराम की आराधना के रूप में ध्यान, जाप, भजन, संकीर्तन आदि आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में तल्लीन रहते हुए भक्तिरस में ओत-प्रोत रहेंगे। १० तथा ११ फरवरी को दोपहर ३.३० बजे से ४.३० बजे तक श्री रामनाम मय अमृतवाणी सत्संग के कार्यक्रम में विश्वामित्र जी के आध्यात्मिक प्रवचन भी होंगे। नाम टीका समावेश ११ फरवरी को ४.३० बजे होगा।

साधना सत्संग में प्रवचन आज से

इंदौर, ९ फरवरी। श्रीराम शरणम् उधानगर एक्सटेन्शन इंदौर में परमपूज्य विश्वामित्र महाराज की अध्यक्षता में तीन रात्रि साधना सत्संग प्रारंभ हो गया है। सत्संग में अनेक प्रंतो से ४०० से अधिक साधकगण सम्मिलित हुए हैं, जो तीन दिन तक मौन भाव से श्रीराम की आराधना के रूप में जाप, भजन, संकीर्तन, आदि आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में तल्लीन रहते हुए पूर्ण अनुशासन के साथ भक्तिरस में ओत-प्रोत रहेंगे।

↑ चौथा संसार
10 फरवरी 2001



इंदौर समाचार
10 फरवरी 2001

भगवान को जब मनुष्य भुल जाता है तब अपराध करता है

इंदौर समाचार 10 फरवरी 2001

इन्दी। विरल में मित्र की परामर्श
 भक्षण में एक सुन्दरिणी स्वामी विरलिनकी
 आकाश, शक्ति जेल अर्थिक और आर.
 स्वयं के विरोध आज पर चरणक बरिदा
 की दर्शन देने एवं परामर्श की टीका देने
 हेतु केन्द्रीय जेल इन्दौर पर पधारी। पूर्ण
 स्वामीजी ने 119 वीरियों को गुन टीका
 की। टीका देने में दो सुनिश्च बंधी बंधी की
 सुनिश्चि है। टीका देने में पहले पूर्ण
 स्वामीजी ने रामनाम की शक्ति पर प्रकाश
 डालने हुए कहा कि रामनाम जप एवं
 भजन करने आर में पूर्ण स्वामी है। जगत्प
 एवं पदम में इतना निर्मित हो जात है
 किभी कोपकाम, भगवान की अविश्वकाम
 नहीं होती है। निर्मित जात करने में मनुष्य
 के सभी प्रकार के दुःख दूर हो जाते हैं तथा
 अन्तः कर्म में सुदृढ होती है। स्वामीजी ने
 काले कहा कि मनुष्य अपराध कर करता
 है, जब रामनाम को भूल जाता है और
 काम, मोक्ष, ईश्वरी, देव, अक्षरक, जति
 सारी में आकाश बन बैठता है। परमार्थ
 अन्तःक शक्ति में ही जात है काले भक्त
 किशोरी ही परमेश्वर मनुष्य बन कर ही हो।
 राम से निकल किशोरी परम शक्ति प्राप्त होती
 है। स्वामी जो अक्षरक बन पंडित ही इतने
 राम शक्ति प्राप्त है। शक्ति गुण से
 स्वामीजी होने के बाद मनुष्य के अकारणों
 के कर्म अकारण ही जाती है। अकारण की
 शक्ति को विरल की ही स्वामी ही काम
 सुखीका भी परमार्थ करने में देखी है।
 गुरुदास भगवान राम का नाम विरल के
 जेल: अकारण में स्वामीजी को जगत है। और
 विरल के जेल: करत को विरल राम देता
 है। स्वामीजी ने कहा कि पहले जब में

अकारण को भूलने परमार्थ को परमार्थ के
 विरल बन प्रयोग होता है लेकिन आज
 रामनाम के प्रयोग से परमार्थको में मन में
 बड़ी ही शक्ति मिलती है। स्वामी के पहले
 पर परमार्थ करने पड़ती है। स्वामी ने कहा
 कि पहले में जाने के बाद भी अकारण
 परमार्थ के मन का जो रूप प्रकाश आकार
 की करत इतना इतना अकारण अपने आर
 एक जगत है। और सभी लोगों को अकारण
 अपने विरलिनकी ही की विरलिन होती।
 विरलिनकी में शक्ति नहीं ही बनने है। परमार्थ
 राम का नाम कर्म का पूर्ण, अकारण मन
 कर्म परमार्थ का ध्यान करने में वह एक
 एक परमार्थ होने ही गुणर, सारी है। परमार्थ
 पर नाम जप करने जाता परमार्थ के
 स्वामी को बड़ी ही गर्व के साथ का प्रकाश
 है। स्वामी में परमार्थ जति, राम स्वामीका
 की अकारणका सब एवं परमार्थ ही एक है।

सब स्वामीका में प्रकटी में। श्रीपरमार्थ
 के कर्म 25-30 स्वामीका द्वारा नाम विरल
 राम। शक्ति जेल अर्थिक और आर, काम,
 श्री के परम, देव, जगत एवं की एक के
 जीवन जगत, श्री श्री परम, स्वामीका प्रकाश
 जगत, सुन्दरिणी सुन्दरी की आर, आर,
 परम, श्री सुनिश्च स्वामी, श्री आर, एक
 शक्ति एवं देव, परम स्वामीका जगत सुनिश्चि
 है। स्वामीका के आर में शक्ति जेल अर्थिक
 की आर, आर, जगत द्वारा परमार्थकोक स्वामी
 विरलिन परमार्थ एवं जगत, स्वामीका राम से
 स्वामी परमार्थ परमार्थ का शक्ति रूप से
 अकारण स्वामीका राम शक्ति जगत एवं
 बंधी स्वामी में जो गुणर विरल जगत एवं
 जगत में स्वामीका रूप में स्वामीका राम
 अकारण शक्ति में इतने परम में सुनिश्चि राम
 शक्ति जगत के जति विरल बड़ी एक
 की और अकारणों में परम।

भगवान को भूलने पर ही मनुष्य अपराध करता है

इंदौर। श्रीराम रामनाम आकार
 विरल की स्वामी विरलिनकी गुरुदास
 रामनाम की टीका देने हेतु केन्द्रीय जेल में
 आये।
 स्वामीजी ने 119 वीरियों को गुन टीका
 की। टीका देने में दो सुनिश्च बंधी की
 सुनिश्चि है। टीका देने में पहले पूर्ण
 स्वामीजी ने रामनाम की शक्ति पर प्रकाश
 डालने हुए कहा कि रामनाम जप एवं
 भजन करने आर में पूर्ण स्वामी है। जगत्प
 एवं पदम में इतना निर्मित हो जात है
 किभी कोपकाम, भगवान की अविश्वकाम
 नहीं होती है। निर्मित जात करने में मनुष्य
 के सभी प्रकार के दुःख दूर हो जाते हैं तथा
 अन्तः कर्म में सुदृढ होती है।



अकारण को भूलने परमार्थ को परमार्थ के
 विरल बन प्रयोग होता है लेकिन आज
 रामनाम के प्रयोग से परमार्थको में मन में
 बड़ी ही शक्ति मिलती है। स्वामी के पहले
 पर परमार्थ करने पड़ती है। स्वामी ने कहा
 कि पहले में जाने के बाद भी अकारण
 परमार्थ के मन का जो रूप प्रकाश आकार
 की करत इतना इतना अकारण अपने आर
 एक जगत है। और सभी लोगों को अकारण
 अपने विरलिनकी ही की विरलिन होती।
 विरलिनकी में शक्ति नहीं ही बनने है। परमार्थ
 राम का नाम कर्म का पूर्ण, अकारण मन
 कर्म परमार्थ का ध्यान करने में वह एक
 एक परमार्थ होने ही गुणर, सारी है। परमार्थ
 पर नाम जप करने जाता परमार्थ के
 स्वामी को बड़ी ही गर्व के साथ का प्रकाश
 है। स्वामी में परमार्थ जति, राम स्वामीका
 की अकारणका सब एवं परमार्थ ही एक है।

पर शक्ति राम स्वामीका रामनाम राम एवं
 देव, श्री, परम स्वामीका में जगत से। शक्ति
 जेल अर्थिक और आर, काम, जगत
 के परम, देव, परम के जीवन, श्री परम
 सुन्दरिणी परमेश्वर जगत, सुन्दरिणी सुन्दरी,
 आर, परम, श्री, सुनिश्च स्वामी, और देव,
 शक्ति, एवं देव, परम स्वामीका जगत श्री
 स्वामीका है।

स्वदेश
10 फरवरी 2001

स्वामीजी ने अपने कहा कि मनुष्य
 अपराध कर करता है, जब परमार्थ को भूल

जात है और काम, मोक्ष ईश्वरी, देव अक्षरक
 जति के सारी में आकाश बन बैठता है। परम

उन्हीं कहा कि पहले जब में जगत पर
 दो वीरियों को परमार्थ के विरल बन प्रयोग
 होता है लेकिन आज राम नाम के प्रयोग से
 इतने परम में बड़ी ही शक्ति है। इस अकारण

स्वदेश 10 फरवरी 2001

रामनाम जाप से हृदय निर्मल व दुःख दूर

नवभारत प्रतिनिधि
इन्दौर, 9 फरवरी

नवभारत

रामनाम जाप व ध्यान अपने आपमें पूर्ण सख्यता है। इससे हृदय निर्मल हो जाता है और किसी योग्यभास को जबरन नहीं रहती। निरंतर जाप से मनुष्य के सभी दुःख दूर हो जाते हैं एवं अलसताक में वृद्धि होती है।

राम शरणम् आश्रम टिकरी के स्वामी विश्वामित्र महाराज ने केन्द्रीय जेल में प्रवचन देते हुए यह बात कही। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने 119 कैदियों को गुरुदोष भी दी। स्वामीजी ने कहा कि मनुष्य अपराध तब करता है, जब भगवान को भूल जाता है। यह काम, क्रोध, ईर्ष्या, द्वेष, अहंकार आदि के मूलों में अपराध कर बैठता है। पाप कर्म प्रत्येक इंसान से हो जाता है, चाहे वह कितना ही धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति का क्यों न हो। पाप से रहित सिर्फ परम पिता परमात्मा ही हैं। मनुष्य तो अज्ञान का भंडार है, उससे पाप होना स्वाभाविक है। सिद्ध गुरु से नामदोष लेने के बाद मनुष्य के अपराधों में कमी अवश्य हो जाती है। अपराध की तरफ वृत्ति होती है, उससे अंतस्तरा का प्रेरणा तो मिलती है, साथ ही साथ गुरुदोष भी पाप कर्म करने से रोकती है। गुरु द्वारा भगवान राम का नाम हिम्ब के अंतःकरण में स्थापित हो जाता है और शिष्य के अंतःकरण को निर्मल बना

देता है। स्वामीजी ने कहा कि पहले जब मैं आया था तो बंदी भाइयों को समझाने के लिए बल प्रयोग होता था, लेकिन अब रामनाम के प्रभाव से बंदी भाइयों के मन में बंदी ही खाति मिलती है। भातों के चेहरे पर चमक बनी रहती है। स्वामीजी ने कहा कि यहाँ से जाने के बाद भी आपको भगवान के नाम का जाप एवं ध्यान अवश्य ही करना चाहिए, इससे अपराध अपने आप छूट जाएंगे। आप सभी लोगों को अपनी-अपनी

में वॉर जेल अधिक आर.आर. खन्ना, ए.एस. के. जोहान जेल, ए.एस. रज्जवंशी सहायक जेल, भुवनेश्वर रज्जवंशी, आर.एस. पाण्डे, सुनील शर्मा, आर.एस. सिंह एवं

भक्तिरस में ओत-प्रोत रहेंगे। 10 एवं 11 फरवरी को दोपहर 3.30 बजे से 4.30 तक श्रीराम नाम मय अमृतवाणी सलंग के कार्यक्रम में श्री विश्वामित्रजी के आध्यात्मिक प्रवचन भी होंगे।



ए.के. भट्ट सहायक जेलर उपस्थित वे सत्सत्ता सलंग में विश्वामित्रजी के प्रवचन

श्रीराम शरणम् उषानगर एकसंस्थान में आज शाम 4 बजे से श्री विश्वामित्रजी

नवभारत
10 फरवरी 2001



स्वामी विश्वामित्रजी महाराज केन्द्रीय जेल में प्रवचन देते हुए.

जिम्मेदारियों भी निभानी होंगी। आप जिम्मेदारी से मुक्त नहीं हो सकते हैं। भगवान राम का जाप कभी मत भूलो, अपराध मत करो, भगवान का ध्यान करने से यह लोक एवं परलोक दोनों ही सुखरूप होते हैं। सलंग में अति न्यायाधीश श्री नवलकुमार एवं एन.के.गार्गवालियर से पश्चिमे. कार्यक्रम

महाराज की अध्यक्षता में तीन रात्रि सख्यता सलंग प्रारंभ हो गया है। इसमें अनेक प्रातों के 400 से अधिक साधकगण सम्मिलित हुए हैं, जो तीन दिन तक मीन भाव से श्रीराम की आराधना के रूप में ध्यान, जाप, भजन, संकीर्तन अति आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में तल्लीन रहते हुए पूर्ण अनुसन्धान के साथ

10024

केंद्रीय जेल के ११९ बंदियों ने स्वामीजी से गुरुदीक्षा ली

दुबारा ९ फरवरी। श्रीराम सरधाम आश्रम दिल्ली के स्वामी श्री विश्वामित्रजी ने केंद्रीय जेल के ११९ बंदियों को गुरु दीक्षा दी। स्वामीजी ने कहा कि मनुष्य अज्ञान का भंडार है। उससे पाप होना स्वाभाविक है।

स्वामी श्री विश्वामित्रजी ने दीक्षा देने वालों में दूसरे धर्म को मानने वाले श्रद्धी भी हैं। दीक्षा देने से पूर्व स्वामीजी ने कहा कि राम नाम जब पूर्व ध्यान अपने आप में पूर्ण साधना है। नाम जाप एवं ध्यान से रूप निर्धन हो जाता है। किसी योगाभ्यास, व्यायाम की आवश्यकता नहीं होती है। निरंतर जाप करने से मनुष्य के सभी प्रकार के बुद्ध दूर हो जाते हैं तथा आत्मप्रसन्न में वृद्धि होती है।

स्वामीजी ने आगे कहा कि मनुष्य अपराध तब करता है जब भगवान् को भूल जाता है। वह काम, क्रोध, ईर्ष्या, द्वेष, अहंकार आदि के नशे में अपराध कर बैठता है। पाप कर्म प्रत्येक इंसान में ही जाता है चाहे वह कितना ही धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति का क्यों न हो। पाप से रहित सिर्फ परम पिता परमात्मा ही हैं। मनुष्य तो अज्ञान का भंडार है। उससे पाप होना स्वाभाविक है। मित्र गुरु से नाम दीक्षा लेने के बाद मनुष्य के अपराधों में कमी अवश्य ही आती है। गुरु दीक्षा पाप कर्म

करने में रोकती है। गुरु द्वारा भगवान राम का नाम शिष्य के अंतःकरण में स्थापित हो जाता है और शिष्य के अंतःकरण को निर्धन बना देता है। तत्सम में अपर तत्प स्वाधीन श्री एन के सर्वे स्वानिबर ने पत्राचार में। कार्यक्रम के अंत में वरिष्ठ जैन अधीश्वर भी आर.आर. चव्वा ने स्वामी श्री विश्वामित्र महाराजजी एवं उनके साथ आए सभी सदस्यों का आभार व्यक्त किया।

साधना सत्संग

श्रीराम सरधाम् उपायनगर एम्पेटेशन में श्री विश्वामित्रजी महाराज की अध्यक्षता में तीन राति साधना सत्संग प्रारंभ हो गया है। इनमें अनेक प्रांतों के ४०० से अधिक साधककृप सम्मिलित हुए। जो तीन दिन तक मौन भाव में श्रीराम की आराधना के रूप में ध्यान, जाप, भजन, सजीतन आदि आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में तल्लीन रहते हुए पूर्ण अनुनासम् के साथ प्रकृतिक में आत्मप्राप्त रहेंगे। १० तथा ११ फरवरी को दोपहर १.३० से ४.३० बजे तक श्रीराम नामधय अनुनासनी सत्संग के कार्यक्रम में श्री विश्वामित्रजी महाराज के आध्यात्मिक प्रकषन भी होते। नाम दीक्षा अगरीह ११ फरवरी को ४.३० बजे पञ्चाल मंत्राग्न होगा।

गर्भडुनिया

10 फरवरी 2001

गर्भडुनिया 10 फरवरी 2001



केंद्रीय जेल में धर्मसभा को संबोधित करते हुए स्वामीश्री विश्वामित्रजी महाराज

श्री राम 27.2.01

परम गुरुदेव परमराम गुरुदेवजी के चरण
 कुमलों में आपके अविचल सनेह राजेश
 श्री प्रदीप श्री प्रदीप
 परम गुरुदेव गुरुदेव से इतनी प्रेमना
 ही बिना अविचल सनेह के अपने
 चरण कुमलों एवं हृदय में स्थान हेम
 श्री कृपा करोगे। और केडीय जेल
 के कारे से अने गार इत गुणनाम विषय
 के पत्र के जवाब देगे। गुरुदेव मुझे दीक्षा
 लिए हुए डरीव एक पत्र हो चुका होप है
 मैं आपके चरणों पर माफ़ी चढ़ाते हुए
 अन्य देवताओं की पूजा एवं मान्यता का
 त्याग रहा। दिगु रमणवर्ष 9 फरवरी-19 (आपके
 आगमन से एक सप्ताह मेरे मन में रामनाम का
 आप करने की इच्छा जागृत हुई। जब आप
 यहाँ पहुँचे थे। सब हवाएँ लेना लगीं। मानों
 मुझे मेरे स्वयं हुए हव परम गुरुदेव गुरुदेव
 मिल गए। शिष्यत्वं आप मुझे व्यक्तिगत रूप से
 मही जानने ही परन्तु आपसे इस लेख के
 अख मही इच्छा है। बिना आपके हृदय एवं नेत्रों
 में अपनी जगह बनाने के लिए एक छोटी
 सा कोना मिल जावे।

मुझे 5 वर्ष की रचनाओं को विवेक
 पत्र के अन्त में समाप्त हो जायेगा।
 हृदय के बाव मही इच्छा है। बि
 मैं रामनाम का प्रचार करूँ और
 अपने परिवार एवं अन्य लोगों को
 रामनाम की महीमा का गुणनाम
 ब्रह्मनाडा गया। सन: आपके
 सम्पर्क में रहूँ जिससे मेरा जीवन
 सार्थक एवं सफल हो जाये।
 आपका ही
 राजेश राम दिवान याद
 केडीय जेल इटावा
 (म.प्र.)
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श्री राम चरणामः
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"My little experience with Ram Naam, its power and effect makes me declare with force and confidence that it is a panacea for all such ills. The moment, people were initiated into 'Ram Mantra', many took the vow, not to consume alcohol, not to eat meat, not to go for adultery and not to gamble. In no case, they were asked to do so. This change came of its own from within. In many homes, even serving of alcohol has also

been stopped. Their love for Ram Naam makes them chant it most of the time even while at work. They claim that Ram Naam is a man-making machine! They are in the process of becoming good, and perfect human beings."

Dr Viswamitraji Maharaj, Sri Ram Sharanam, New Delhi

"In attempting to explain some of those facets of life which are inexplicable Dr Gautam Chatterjee has made an interesting compilation. Devotion brings reformation with the magic of phonetic resonance. This is an essay contemporising a legacy—an ancient heritage".

Shriti Nath, Editor, *Discover India*

'Reformation Through Ram Naam is a work that tenaciously seeks to establish that the 'stigma' attached to behaviour of the Bhils of Jhabua has its roots in the mindsets of the 'outside' world. Dr Gautam Chatterjee has the right credentials for undertaking such an onerous task, summoning all the responsibility that it demands. The book does not treat criminal behaviour in isolation but puts it in the context of the social environment in which the person finds himself. Without trivializing the issue Dr Chatterjee shows why biases and preconceived notions have a damning effect on communities and through his thesis offered a socially relevant therapy for its cure and herein lies the essence of this book. It highlights the benefits of reformation in jails and through interview records the admission of hardened criminals that a spiritual approach to reformation is perhaps the one thing truly changes one prone to deviant behaviour. This is amply proved by the facts that convicts have now found recognition as painters and singers. In such, spiritualism has succeeded in channeling energy towards cultivated and civilized action. An unusual and difficult subject that has been sensitively handled by a dedicated and humane scholar."

Ananda Mazumdar, Coordinating Editor, *The Hindustan Times*

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