

Fri. 11. 2. '27.

The Chhagan Day.

It is indeed peculiar to call this a 'Chhagan Day' but the following narration will prove its suitability since it was full of events concerning Chhagan. In order to grasp the full significances it is necessary to understand that Chhagan is one of the few Baba's devotees who have completely surrendered themselves to Shri. He has been sincerely and very devotedly following every order and instruction of Baba since he came into Shri's contact during

"The Stay At-Meherabad". ~~After~~ ^{Long} before coming in Baba's contact Chhagan was married in a very early age. But this marriage was merely a ceremonial affair since both the bride and the bride groom were then but merely children. So far all went well, but of late the bride is reported to have reached maturity and with it have begun overtures from Chhagan's family members to make him leave Baba and lead the worldly life. Yesterday Chhagan's brother in law had come to see him and insist upon his coming home in participating in the marriage of his sister-in-law which is to take place today. At the time of the brother-in-law's arrival yesterday, Chhagan was busy in the kitchen doing his duty of cooking with "shorts" on. He came out to see his relation without changing his work-dress and the latter was greatly shocked to see him in that condition.

However the visitor returned home satisfied with a promise from Chhagan that he will come and attend the marriage ceremony today. But since that moment the trouble began. Baba gave Chhagan permission to attend the marriage, but the latter refused to go on the strength of Sri's previous instructions to him which were "Don't leave me under any circumstances even when I ask you to do so". At last Baba decided to go there ~~himself~~ himself with a few of the mandali including Chhagan, and we have already read how last night Baba asked the mandali to go to bed soon and get up today at four o'clock.

In spite of it, when all got up early this morning at the appointed hour, it transpired that Baba passed almost the whole night awake

in persuading Chhagan to go to Akolner alone without troubling Baba and the other members to accompany him.

But Chhagan remained firm in his resolve not to leave Baba under any circumstances and refused to go alone. At 4 P.M. sharp, ^{this morning} Baba came into the Mahan and took his seat there. First of all those who were not to accompany him to Akolner were asked to go to bed again and get up at the usual hour of six. The remaining members were served with breakfast consisting of jelly-puffs and milk tea. Perhaps anticipating the crisis that awaited Chhagan, Baba was constantly passing remarks that all should behave as Imler in a tight corner and also conveying that there was no real Mall (मल्ल) in the mandali. At five thirty o'clock Sri and the party started for Akolner by the Railway lines. Chhagan was found to be wearing the short pants still, when Baba remarked this, He sent for a Dolar and insisted upon Chhagan to change for it there and then on the Ry lines and made him look a 'respectable Hindoo'. Then Baba asked Chhagan to lead the party by walking abreast of them all, but this he refused to do and insisted upon Baba to lead them. Baba did so, but passed a significant remark to Chhagan "Remember, take care". With a brisk pace and an occasional run too, the mandali did the distance of ^{five} miles to Akolner very quickly. But here some difficulty was experienced in finding out the place where the marriage ceremony was to take place since all including Chhagan were new to it.

Consequently the party had to wander at-random in the village for some time when as a strange fact a certain villager - stranger - was always come across

at every round and corner of the village!

Ultimately the 'marriage-house' was spotted out and another suggestive coincidence was that the party came upon it at the very nick of time, just when the actual ceremony was about to be performed by the Brahmin Priests! But at the end of their hot tramp the party were met with a very cold reception there! In spite of having formally invited Shri Baba the hosts had apparently made no arrangements for a special seat for Baba for short of a befitting reception. So much so that Baba took his seat in a corner outside the Mandap and signed the mandali to take part in the ceremony. Perhaps it was for this very reason that the party had been delayed in the village in a search after this place to avoid the discomfiture of a cold reception which would have been more perceptible had they arrived earlier.

Be that as it may, the marriage ceremony was soon duly finished up, but instead of thanking Baba for his gracious presence, ~~his~~ ~~trouble~~ for which Shri had to undergo so much trouble and inconvenience as to walk five miles, or to show regrets for the shortcomings in receiving the party, or offering them any refreshments, Chhagan's family members, and particularly an uncle-in-law of his began to discuss Chhagan's life with Baba!

~~The Poor little~~ Chhagan became a target for all of them to fling taunts and remarks at him in the very presence of Shri Himself, and he was constantly goaded to begin (242) household life and challenged to stay home leaving

Baba's shells and connection for good! The discussions were carried to the limits of almost a dispute with Baba as some of the family members went to the length of passing insulting remarks against Shri!!

Not only Baba, but Saints in general were indirectly abused by them. It was indeed a *Shilpi* - *Shun* An patience that was displayed by Baba on this occasion in face of ~~at~~ so many grave provocations. Ofcourse Baba meant Chhagan to stick to Him to the last and had particularly emphasised on this point during some discussions with him for the last two or three days, but on the face of it Baba seemed concurring with ~~the~~ Chhagan's family members that he should leave Him and stay at home.

Inspite of their insulting behaviour Baba remained calm and composed and even 'asked' Chhagan through signs in the presence of all to remain at home. Chhagan, for a long time remained unmoved and refused to leave Baba, but in the end the discussions seemed to be too much for him and to the great surprise of the mandali Chhagan gave in! He declared his willingness to his relations to stay home and not to return with Baba!! The critical moment had arrived and Chhagan was found wanting! For all the warnings and remarks conveyed to him by Shri directly and indirectly, including the discussions about a Man this morning, also the significant words conveyed by Baba while starting from Ancherabad viz: "Remember, take care" Chhagan failed at the right moment. The mandali could discern faint signs of disappointment and distress about Shri's features for the first time at this

declaration of Chhagan. Baba had remained perfectly unaffected with the cold reception and the insulting tone of Chhagan's family members during the discussions, but this unexpected failure of his disciple no doubt made Shri feel greatly, and Baba was on the point of walking away when Chhagan entreated Shri to stay and take some refreshments. Baba agreed to this but lo! when Chhagan asked his family members to provide ~~the~~ Shri and the mandali with refreshments, they said they can't do it in all the existing hem-drum and said that if the party would wait for a few hours they would be provided with meals too. Baba refused to stay for so long. Just at this moment one of the mandali found a brahmin friend of the local village amongst the guests who offered to provide tea to the whole party.