

Shri accepted the invitation and at once repaired to his 'Wada' where they all took tea. After this the party visited Chhagan's father-in-law's place and then started walking back for Meherabad at 8.15. o'clock. All the way back Baba kept on referring to Chhagan who had remained behind and thus failed at the eleventh hour. Baba's 'tone' of remarks clearly showed Him to be greatly disappointed with what Chhagan had done.

Baba conveyed that for the last two or three days, Chhagan had shown an admirable spirit of sticking to Him through thick and thin, so much so that in spite of great persuasions he had persistently refused to attend this marriage alone; and now specially when he brought

He - Baba - to such a distance at so much in-  
convenience he ought to have stuck to the last - instead  
of giving way as he did in the presence of his relations.

He is given 'said' Baba and it was for this very  
reason that He - Baba - had been drawing the mandali's  
attention in general and Chhagan's in particular this  
morning in remarking about a real Man and so  
on. Baba also gave the examples of Shri Ramkrishna,  
Swami Vivekanand and Gopichand and his wife  
and pointed out how difficult was this 'Path to God'  
'It is as difficult as grasping your own shadow' continue  
Baba 'which though is so near to you, still it cannot  
be grasped' Many other explanations about this divine  
line were also conveyed by Baba during the return  
journey which are narrated in detail by Chauji in his  
separate notes.

At about eleven o'clock the party reached back  
at Meherabad. The return journey was very tiresome on  
account of the growing heat of the day, and on the  
whole the mandali was fairly run down with the  
non-too pleasant exertion. But the only thing that  
Shri seemed to feel was the 'loss of a sheep' from  
his fold, and <sup>He</sup> kept on remarking and thinking  
about Chhagan, even after coming back to Meherabad.

One of the later remarks of Baba conveyed that  
Chhagan was a very loving and sincere fellow, and but  
for today, so far his behaviour was such that He - Baba -  
had been induced in pushing him into the spiritual  
line and so it was all the more disappointing to find  
him having failed at the nick of time in spite of so  
many warnings and hints.

During later discussions about Chhagan it was

suggested that still there might be possibilities of a higher motive about Chhagan's latest dramatic decision; that he might have given up for Shri's own sake, to avoid more unpleasant discussions about Shri, rather than for his own private interest as appeared from his last attitude towards Shri before the departure from Aholner. So it was finally decided to send Vishnos with a message from Baba asking Chhagan to come away soon after the meals without touching his wife. This Baba 'said' would be His last attempt in saving Chhagan <sup>from</sup> going astray from the spiritual line ~~to~~ for which he has been prepared ~~after such~~ with so much time and labour. "He is a nice boy" concluded Baba "and so did not like him to lose the benefits of <sup>the</sup> spiritual advancement."

After Vishnos's departure a private meeting of some of the mandali was convened when Shri discussed with them as what to do to ensure the peaceful stay of Chhagan here in the future. It was settled that after the Birthday festivities a separate suite of rooms be given to Chhagan where he can stay with his wife. In the meantime Chhagan's wife should continue staying with her parents. Also that Chhagan be again sent to Aholner tomorrow to inform his father-in-law that he will take away his wife after ten days.

At one o'clock in the afternoon Vishnos returned from Aholner with the good news that the mandali's last guess was correct; Chhagan had not remained behind out of any selfish motives and he will come after the meals according to Baba's last message. Then began

a great 'watch and wait' for Chhagan's arrival. This was not without excitement or dramatic developments. Hours and hours passed away and yet there was no sign of him. Once again it set all thinking and guessing as to various possibilities. In the evening the mandali received another shock. The Police-Patel reported that a little while ago Chhagan came to him in the village, (Arungaon) took off all his clothes which he gave to him - Patel - for safe custody and and then on the pretence of finding out a thing he said he had lost - in the way while coming from Abolner, went away only with a "Langot" (loin cloth) on! Baba at once let loose a formidable searching party all round the country side to trace out the "lost sheep" but as He had ~~so~~ previously arranged to attend Gadekar's second marriage ceremony this evening at Ahmednagar, He reluctantly started himself for the city with a few of the mandali.

When Baba returned from Ahmednagar Chhagan's safe arrival at Tucherabad at 8. P.M. was reported to him. Chhagan was immediately called in Shri's presence and after a touching meeting he related all that happened to him since Baba's departure from Abolner this morning.

He first of all assured Shri that he had left his wife strictly alone save for a private conversation that he had with her. During this interview his wife requested him to keep her now with him as her parents and other relations ~~was~~ troubled her much and ~~to~~ were taunting her in many ways. Upon which he explained to her that at the time of their marriage he never knew he would fall into the

spiritual line, however now that he was once in it, she should also ~~be~~ be prepared to lead a simple and chaste life with him under Shri's shelter. And she agreed to this!

(Be it noted here, that without being aware of what was going on there, Shri just arranged Chhagan's future stay according to this very plan, only this afternoon as has already been described here!)

Thus encouraged with his wife's commendable attitude and with the subsequent message that he received from Baba through Vishwas, he informed his relations boldly that he was going to see Baba but he would return to them the same evening.

(Here Baba and the mandali said Chhagan had committed a mistake in telling his relations that he would come back to them so soon, but ~~it~~ happily it was not very serious, since Baba had already arranged for Chhagan to go back to Akholner the following morning)

Continuing his wonderful narration, Chhagan said so far all went well. Before leaving Akholner, as per the ceremonial custom on a marriage occasion, he was garlanded and presented with a new head gear by his relations.

But while walking back to Meherabad he began to feel much over having broken Shri's order in remaining back, in causing so much trouble and inconvenience to Baba, in compelling Shri to accompany him, and lastly for the cold reception and insulting remarks offered to Baba by his relations. So much so that by the time he came near to Arunachal he felt

like doing away with himself! With this dangerous decision in view he approached the Police-Patel, gave him ~~over~~ all his clothes and only with the 'Langote' on, set out after a lonely spot. All this time his mind was whirling and twirling with different emotions and he was half cognisant of his <sup>own</sup> movements. Soon he found himself over the tank hill (present Ashram).

Here he stopped short for a while and felt he heard some mysterious voice asking him to check himself. This brought him to his senses and made him fully realize the significance of the rash step that was under his contemplation. He immediately drove out the idea of committing a suicide and instead of, decided to approach Shri to solicit His - Baba's - pardon for the infringement of the order as well as <sup>for</sup> all the inconvenience and insult caused to Him and determined once again never again to break Baba's orders. With this decision he turned towards the Mahan and was soon joined by some of the searching party!

For all his faults and mistakes Baba and the mandali unanimously cheered the hero of the day for ~~his~~ <sup>the</sup> creditable part he played in the time of a crisis, as in all that he did he ~~was~~ never gave any thought to selfish <sup>motives</sup> thoughts but ~~all~~ throughout acted with a profound love ~~to~~ and consideration for Baba. Baba completely pardoned him all his faults and mistakes, but took a fresh promise from him never again to break even the smallest of His orders on a sacred oath by making Chhagan lay his head on His - Baba's - feet, and as if to seal this understanding Shri applied the "Dhoori Ash" over his forehead. Thus after great excitement the day came to a peaceful end.

After this interview with Chhagan, Baba discussed for sometime His visit to Ahmednagar, with the mandali, and compared and contrasted the grand reception He was accorded at the latter place with that of the Sholner happenings. There He and all saints in general were held at a discount while here at Gadekar's place there was quite a rush for His Darshan and so on. The Brahmin priest class was also criticized that "they are woefully puffed up with naughty notions of their self created social and spiritual greatness, they always have their heads and hearts concentrated towards Bhajans and Bhajans (Religious repetitions and meals) etc.

After the usual Arti at nine o'clock Shri ~~retired~~ <sup>retired</sup> towards the zhopdi where He also had a private conversation with Chhagan before retiring for the night.