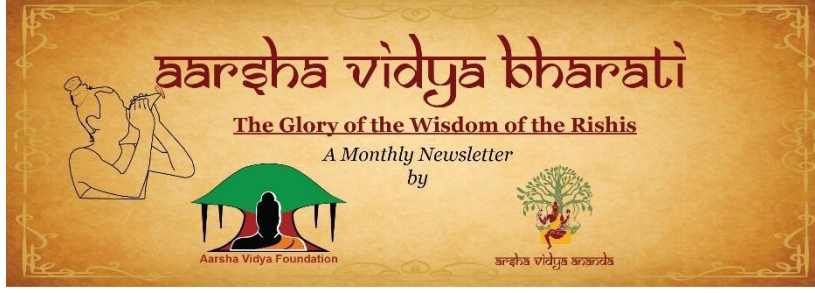

Aarsha Vidya Bharati – Dec 2023

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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



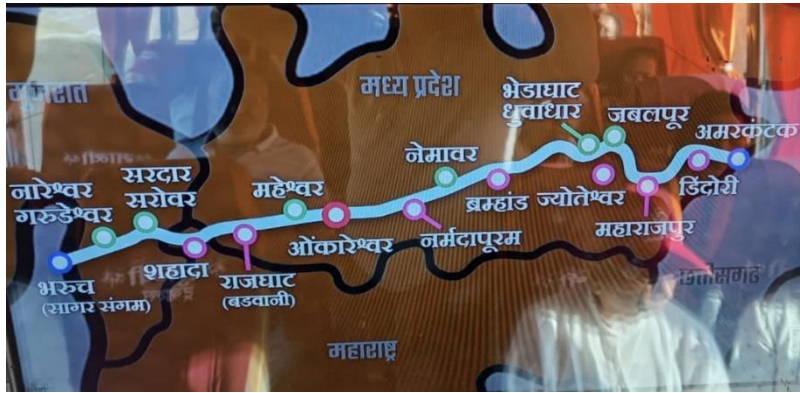
This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [dec 2023 issue](#) and read any of [the articles](#).

Narmada Parikramā – Along the South Bank

Part 2/4

By Varsha Patel, Mumbai

Editor: Last month we read [part 1 of Varsha Patel's Narmada Parikramā tīrtha-yātrā](#) where she explained the significance of River Narmada Maiya and gave us a peek into how the journey starts. We now continue with part 2 as she describes the daily routine followed and some of the first places visited as the yātrā takes the devotees west along the south bank of Narmada Maiya.



Every day we used to begin the day by 5:30 am to reach the banks of Narmada Maiya. Before boarding the bus, we would do a *kalaśa pūjā*, do *Ārati* and chant Narmada *Aṣṭakam* and chant shlokas. On the banks we would offer lamps (in perishable leaf bowls) and recite Narmada *Aṣṭakam*, pour some water from *kalaśa* into the river, add some new water from the river into the *kalaśa*, and proceed further. We would have our lunch somewhere on the way and afterwards dinner in the hotel. Our subgroup used to read *Bhagavad Gītā* and write the *mantra*s in their own books. There used to be competition on who will write the maximum in a day. This was our routine until we completed the *parikramā*.

Shri Desai, the tour organiser, is very devoted and has done the *parikramā* with different groups 268 times in the last 30 yrs. He narrated his experiences of doing

the *parikramā*. He has met many *siddha*-s who are more than 110 yrs old. Our *yātrā* was made more enjoyable by listening to such miraculous stories and watching religious movies. He gave us the knowledge of the importance of Narmada Maiya and we felt blessed that we are doing *parikramā*.

While travelling west along the south bank of river, we stopped at Raj Ghat. Shri



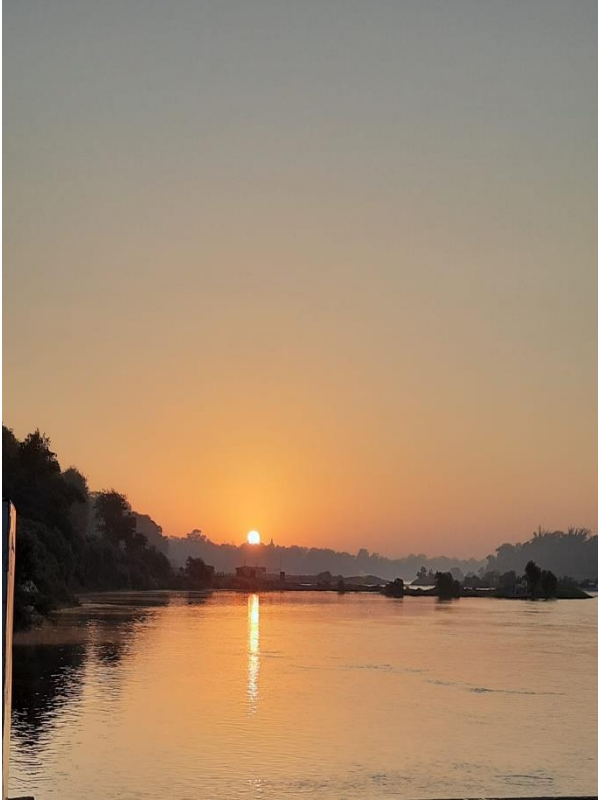
Vasudevanand Saraswati (Shri Tembe Swami) of Datta Sampradaya had done *tapasyā* here and consecrated *Ekamukhi Dattā* idol. Since this place was submerged under water, we could not enter the temple. But we performed *pūjā*, *Ārati* and offered lamps by the riverside.

We then visited a huge Jain temple complex called Bawan Gaja, surrounded by 52 hills. It is an ancient Jain Temple. It is a quiet, contemplative place with a calming effect. Across the beautiful gardens stood an impressive 84' tall statue of Adinathji. In the temple premises, we found references to Mandodari, Ravan's wife who was Jain. We also found a foot print of Kumbhakarna.

The early start, *kalaśa pūjā*, *Ārati*, *Aṣṭakam* recital and chanting of additional *stotra*-s like *Rāmarakṣā Stotram*, Hanuman chalisa, *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣam*, Vishnu *Sahasranāma*, Ganesha *Pañcaratnam*, Datta Bawani, Shiva Mahima, Shiva *Pañcākṣaram* etc made every day divine.

We went from Ankleshwar on the south bank to Bharuch on the north bank of Maiya Narmada by crossing a creek bridge. As per Narmada Puran *parikramā*, *yātri*-s cannot cross the river. But here the river loses its identity when it joins the sea.

Next we stopped at Neelkanteshwar Temple at Sagar Sangam near Bharuch. Here we did *pūjā*, offered lamps and recited *Aṣṭakam*. Then we headed to Nareshwar, where Shri Rang Avadhoot Swami did his *tapasyā*. He guided a lot of social and religious activities for the locals and community at large by writing in English, Gujarati, Hindi & Sanskrit. We visited his *samādhi* in Nareshwar Ashram. The shop run by this temple management sells CDs of Datta Bawani sung in various raga-s which is known to be beneficial to listeners who have different ailments. Positive vibes & meditative serenity was felt in the air.



After this, we proceeded to Garudeshwar before sunrise, where we visited an ancient Mahadev Temple built by Shri Vasudevananda Saraswati. Narmada was in full flow downstream from the dam. Here there are more than 150 steps to reach the bank of the river. From the observation platform we spotted a crocodile. Crocodile is the vehicle of Maiya Narmada, hence the significance of sighting one on our Narmada *Parikramā*.

On the way we visited Maruti Mandir at a local village, Umralli, in the forest. And another temple 'Bayda Shani' where in Śani is riding an elephant. Earlier we had seen Śani riding a peacock. It is said Śani has 9 different vehicles and his arrival riding each specific vehicle has a different effect.

After lunch we proceeded towards Maheshwar through Shurpani forest.

To be continued ...