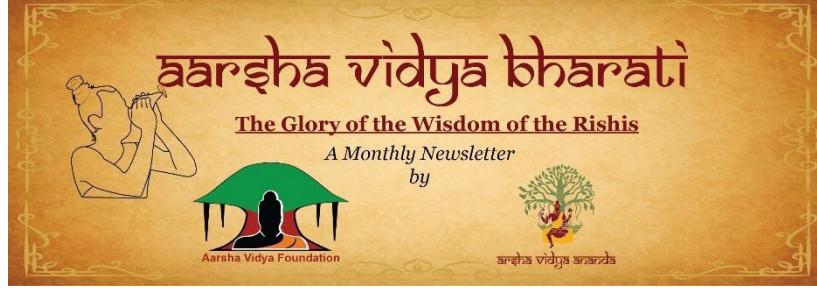

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Narmada Parikramā – Completing the Yātrā

Part 4/4

By Varsha Patel, Mumbai

Editor: Over the last 3 months we read [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#) of Varsha Patel's Narmada Parikramā tīrtha-yātrā. We now conclude with Part 4 as the yātri-s complete the Parikramā.



Each of us took a kalash with us and walked down a jungle trail to reach Mai ki Bagiya. Here Narmada Maiya originates i.e. *Udgam sthān*. In a *kuṇḍ* we saw water springing up drop by drop, filling the *kuṇḍ* and over flowing into another *kuṇḍ*. And in the third *kuṇḍ* the stream mysteriously disappeared. Narmada Maiya flows underground from here and reappears in a sacred *kuṇḍ* in Narmada Mandir, about half a mile further down.

After seeing the origin of River Narmada, I was astonished. We had earlier seen such huge water bodies and the vast span of river at Bharuch, Maheshwar and at different places while her origin is just a small *kuṇḍ* where the water comes out drop

by drop. Such is *Īśvara sṛṣṭi*. Next, we went to see the origins of two more rivers called Shon and Bhadra, on the same Maikal mountain. Both flow towards the east and meet river Ganga in Bihar. Shon and Bhadra are both referred to as masculine, sons of Brahma-ji while Narmada Maya is feminine, *Mānas Kanyā* of Lord Shiva and Mother of all of us.



At Mai Ki Bagiya we poured out some water from the *kalaśa* and filled it with new water from the *kuṇḍ* and did *pūjā*. From here Narmada Maiya takes a westward course and is joined by several small rivers, thus gaining momentum. Next, we went to Maharajpur where we saw Banjar River joining the Narmada River at Narmada Sangam.

We travelled on to Lodheshwar where a crystal Shivalinga is consecrated, and several other linga-s are installed around the temple. Here we visited Guru Gufa, where *Bhagavān Ādi Śankarācārya* did penance. Maiya appeared and he recited *Aṣṭakam* singing her glories. We saw the *kuṇḍ* near that cave too. *Tripura Sundari* Temple, which is the main temple in the complex, has two Lakshmi *yantra*-s and *Sabhā maṇḍal* has 64 yogini's *mūrti*-s beautifully made, dressed and adorned with jewels. All this is newly developed. The last *Śankarācārya-ji* of Dwarakapeeth had *samādhi* here and they are developing *Samādhi Sthal* here. We also saw *bhoja patra* tree here.

As usual we started early next day to visit Brahman Ghat for daily *pūjā*, *Ārati*, *Aṣṭakam* and headed to Narmadapuram, previously known as Hoshangabad. On the way, we passed a small town of Gadarwada where Shri Acharya Rajneesh /Osho spent his childhood. We also visited Dutt Mandir where Shri Gulwani Maharaj got his shaktipat.

In the evening, we went to Shethani Ghat. Here we could reach Maiya as we went down the beautifully laid steps. We offered lamps and visited shrines on the bank. It was a full Moon night and also Holi that day. The ghat was elaborately decorated with coloured rice and different flowers and rangolis. A Holi Pyre was made from dried cow dung. There are no words to explain the festive spirit. The local people were very enthusiastic and were very well dressed. There was an elaborate *pūjā* with *mantra*-s and huge oil lamps were lit for *Ārati*. It was a really joyful experience – different from anything I had experienced before.



On the way back to Martakka we stopped at Khandwa to visit the Darbar of Dhunivale Dadaji. He was an Avdhoot saint - most highly respected by devotees of MP and further North. We saw his photographs and things he used. Interestingly, we also saw a certificate given by British officer more than 200 yrs ago, preserved in a small glass museum. The certificate was given to the babaji when the British officer witnessed how Maiya herself helped Babaji & parikrama yatris. We paid our respect at his shrine and offered coconut in the ever-burning fire that is *Dhūnī* (धूनी).

At this point, we all were very happy as it was last day of *parikramā*. We were grateful that we could complete it without any mishap given many of us were senior citizens above 60 to 70 years.

After completing the *parikramā*, we came back to Mamleshwar from where we had started. We went to a safe spot on the ghat for the *snān* which was followed by offering lamps and settled on the ghat for *sankalpa pūrṭi pūjā* with the *kalaśa* which we carried throughout the *parikramā*. We offered a saree, *japā* notebook and *prasāda* to Narmada Maiya.

Now we were allowed to cross the river and so took the ferry to go to Omkareshwar Temple. Even here we did *abhiṣeka* to the Shivalinga by the Holy water of *kalaśa*. After the *darśana*, Panditji took our group to a quieter place in the temple premises for *Rudra abhiṣeka* and chanted *Rudram*. Then we had *darśana*. After that, while coming down, we visited a place where *Ādi Śankarācārya*-ji had stayed with his Guru, Shri *Govindapāda*. After completing all this, we did *Kanyā pūjā* of five young girls.

The satisfaction of successfully completing the *parikramā* was immense and very apparent on the faces of each one of us. All because of *Īśvara-s anugraha* only.