



# SHRI SAI SATCHARITA

by *Laura Keller*, New York, USA.



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**SHRI SAI SATCHARITA**  
**OR**  
**THE WONDERFUL LIFE AND TEACHINGS**  
**OF**  
**SHRI SAI BABA**

Adapted from the original Marathi book by Hemadpant

by

Nagesh Vasudev Gunaji, B.A., L.L.B.  
227, Thalakwadi, Belgaum.

changes to the current version  
to make a easy reading experience  
to American devotees.

*This book is available for free to all devotees.*

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## **DEDICATION**

“Whosoever offers to me, with love or devotion,  
a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that  
offering of love of the pure and self-controlled man  
is willingly and readily accepted by me.”

**Lord Shri Krishna**  
in Bhagavad Gita, IX - 26

To

**Shri Sai Baba**

The Antaryamin  
This work with myself



***Editor :***



**Laura Keller**  
New York, USA

# SHRI SAI SATCHARITA

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## PREFACE

(By the author)

Many years ago I heard about Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi and His miracles from some of my friends, but, unfortunately for me, He did not draw me to Him while He was living. Some thirteen or fourteen years after His mahasamadhi, I went to visit my noble and worthy friend, the late Mr. K.G. Deshpande, Bar-at-Law in Baroda, in his temporary residence on Charni Road, Girgaum, Bombay. There, I happened to see for the first time, Shri Sai Baba. His small portrait was kept in the household shrine for worship. Then, four or five years later, I, along with my friend, the late Mr. K.G. Ajrekar who was a government pleader, saw the book *Shri Sai Satcharita* written in Marathi (ovi-verse) by Mr. Govind Raghunath (Annasaheb) Dabholkar, alias Hemadpant. I also saw some stray publications of 'Shri Sai Leela', a magazine written in Marathi. As I perused the book and magazines carefully, I felt a very great love and devotion for Sai Baba, who then captured me.

In 1936 I went to Bombay for some private work and had intended to go to the holy place (tirth) of Shirdi on my way home, but finding that I did not have sufficient money for the pilgrimage, I changed my mind. With what little money I had, I purchased (1) *Shri Sai Satcharita* (Marathi), (2) *Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi - a glimpse of Indian Spirituality* (English) by R.B.M.W. Pradhan, (3) two Marathi pamphlets named 'Sainath Sagunopasana' and 'Sai Leela Kirtan - anka' ( a special edition of 'Sai Leela' magazine) and lastly, I purchased

some pictures of Sai Baba. Thus, I brought “the real Sai Baba” home with me. Since then, He has been staying with me and guiding me in all possible ways.

In 1941, I made a pilgrimage to Shirdi and took darshan of Shri Sai Baba from His big picture in the Dwarkamai (masjid). I also took His darshan in the Samadhi Mandir, as well as in the Chavadi, and in His guru’s samadhi under the neem tree and in the Lendi baug etc. After my return, I began to write articles in simple Marathi prose in the ‘Sai Leela’ magazine describing Baba’s leelas under the caption “Shri Sai Gathamrita”. Seven articles have already been published and others are to follow.

Knowing my short comings very well, I had no intention to write anything in English about Shri Sai Baba, but it seems that He has forced this very thing on me in this wise. Mr. S.N. Kharkar, the then editor of ‘Shri Sai Leela’ magazine, wrote me a letter dated December 8, 1943 stating, “In the English section of each issue of ‘Sai Leela’, in the absence of competent contributors coming forward at present, the South Indian devotees desire that if in each issue a purport of each chapter of the *Sai Satcharita* is given in English, it may be greatly appreciated by the South Indian subscribers as they have an ardent desire to know and possess the teachings contained in the book, which, being in Marathi, is a sealed one to them. I, for one, look upon you as the only bhakta who can take up this work and help in Baba’s



service.”

I could not help but comply with Mr. Kharkar’s request and therefore rendered a few chapters of the book in English. I then sent them to him for perusal and approval. He, and the Sai Sansthan Committee, approved of my rendering and asked me to go on with the work. I sent the chapters as they were ready, and they began to appear in the English section of ‘Sai Leela’ magazine. Up to this point, seven chapters have been published therein. ‘Sai Leela’ is now a quarterly magazine, and if one chapter were to be published every third month, it would take many years for the completion of the whole work of *Shri Sai Satcharita*, which contains more than fifty chapters. Sai Baba, therefore, in His mysterious way, suggested to me to finish the work soon and helped me to accomplish it in the last chaturmas (monsoon).

As I worked from day to day, I found that I sometimes stumbled upon many difficulties, but they were solved quickly by Baba’s grace. Thus, the whole work was completed within three or four months. I am very glad to mention here that my spiritual friends, Dr. V. H. Date , M.A., Ph.D., of the Lingaraj College, Belgaum and Mr. D. L. Nirokhekar, B.A., L.L.B., and M.B.E. of Nasik, have read through the whole manuscript carefully, and very willingly assisted me in this service of Sai Baba, as well as some of my other friends who offered their suggestions and encouragement. I am very grateful to them and pray that:

May Shri Sai Baba bless them all.

I should mention here in passing that I belong to the same community and the same gotra (Bharadwaj) to which Hemadpant belonged, and I also bear the same pet name as he, the only difference being that he was called Annasaheb, while I am merely Anna.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lastly, I conclude this brief preface with a short prayer:

May Sai Baba bless us, one and all, and lead us on the path of Self-realization.  
Amen.

**Bow to Shri Sai Baba - Peace be to all**

Thalakwadi, Belgaum,  
Dated 12/12/1944

**N.V. Gunaji**

## Post Script

Since the foregoing lines were written, I am very sorry to state that Rao Saheb Yashwant Janardan Galvankar, B.A., residing in "Sai Prasad", Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, passed away early in September, 1945. He was the son-in-law of Mr. Annasaheb Dabholkar, alias Hemadpant - the author of *Sai Satcharita* - and he worked as Senior Superintendent, Home Department, Secretariat, in Bombay. After his retirement from service, he devoted himself heart and soul to the service of Shri Sai Baba. He was one of the working and prominent members of Shri Sai Baba's Sansthan Committee and took great interest in its deliberations and work. Latterly, he was also the editor of 'Sai Leela' magazine and published in it the above mentioned seven chapters, plus two more, thus, nine chapters in all of the present work (English *Sai Satcharita*).

Mr. Galvankar was a very well read man with a special liking for, and great interest in, the literature of the sages and saints. He reviewed this work very carefully and frequently wrote to me that the rendering was correct and excellent, as it conveyed the exact meaning and sentiment of the original author. He strongly wished, and tried his best, to publish this work as soon as possible, but owing to the scarcity of paper and paper control regulations, the publication had to be postponed.

I feel very sorry that he did not survive to see the book published. Before he

passed away, he was ardently doing Sai Baba's work and I do not know why he was called away so soon. Perhaps, Sai Baba wanted him for some other work of His. As we know, Baba's ways are mysterious and inscrutable, and we have to submit to what He decrees. May He help him and lead him onward on the path, granting him peace, happiness and Self-realization.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

N.V. Gunaji

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I am glad to state that the first edition of *Shri Sai Satcharita* sold out in the course of a few years and that a new edition is in demand. The book was very much appreciated by the public, as will be seen from the few extracts of the reviews given below:

1.) Mr. R.K. Koustubham wrote on January 6, 1948 from Gandhinagaram Coconada, "Your valuable book, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, is to me - who could not read Marathi - like the Bible to the Christians and the Gita to the Hindus. You have done a good service to all who could not read the original."

2.) Shri G.C. Kesavelu wrote on October 8, 1947 from Nandyal Dt. Kurnaul, "On going through your book, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, which I bought from Sai Sansthan, I see your edition is very good and the best in the market. May God Sai bless you."

3.) Shri K.M. Talgeri, M.S., wrote on November 13, 1948 from 26 Atul Grove, New Delhi, "Sjt. Gunaji has done a good service to humanity by bringing out *Shri Sai Satcharita* at a time when the world is torn by hatred and fear and man is eschewing moral and spiritual values. Such an authentic chronicle of a jivanmukta's life and teachings has come not a day too soon. It is a silent challenge to the unrepentent rationalist. It is a call to the doubter to have faith in faith. The book is of enduring value."

4.) Shri B. Krishnarao, Superintendent Engineer, P.W.D. (Retd.), wrote on July 15, 1947 from Bangalore, "Not having had the good fortune to have come in personal contact with the sage, the records of His sayings and doings are a revelation of the godliness of Shri Sai Baba to all of us. Shri Gunaji has done a unique service in carrying out the light of bhakti to the rest of India and particularly to South India."

A graduate friend of mine, who is a student of philosophy, said to me after reading *Shri Sai Satcharita*, "Mr. Gunaji, though you have stated that this is an adaptation of the original Marathi book of the same name, I think that your version in English has added so

many insights to the excellent Marathi book that your version may be treated as unique and original. In support of this statement, the following passages may be noted.

(1) Many devotees do not recognize the real worth of Shri Sai Baba, and to enable them to get the correct and right appreciation of Shri Sai Baba, the portion in the introductory part, "Who is SAI BABA" has been included and the doctrine of the Immanence of God and the Antaryamin (Inner Controller and Ruler) has been mentioned.

(2) A very beautiful and philosophic significance, which is acceptable and agreeable to all, has been given to the story of grinding wheat in the first chapter. The significance is most appropriate and deserves consideration by all.

(3) Chapter II. Towards the end of this chapter, the point of the necessity of a guru has been dwelt upon and settled here from other sources, as Hemadpant left no note, nor memo in his original work about this matter.

(4) Chapter IV. A very nice and appropriate definition of Baba's Dwarkamai has been given here in the footnote (p.18).

(5) Chapter V. A complete version of the story of the padukas under the neem tree has been given (p. 24).

(6) Chapter VII p. 39. Definite evidence of (1) Mhalasapati, an intimate Shirdi devotee of Baba and (2) Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar, the famous learned woman of Poona, has been adduced here to prove that Sai Baba was a pure Brahmin by birth.

(7) Chapter VIII, p.45. The special value of the human body has been well treated here.

(8) Chapter IX, p.56. The moral of Shri Sai Baba's leelas viz. "See God in all



beings” is well pointed here.

(9) Chapter XIV, p.80. The subject of dakshina is dealt with fully.

(10) Chapter XVI. The subject of Brahma jnana is very nicely and coherently treated.

(11) Chapter XVIII and XIX. The story of Hemadpant, how he was accepted and blessed, and Baba’s way of bestowing grace and blessings on the devotees.

(12) Chapter XX. The gist or essence of the Ishavasya Upanishad is well explained here.

(13) Chapter XXXII. In this chapter Hemadpant has given the story of Baba’s quest of a guru and God. That story - how Baba was suspended topsy-turvy for a long time in a well – is unintelligible. An attempt has been made here by Baba’s grace to explain the story. (See footnote, p. 176) which seems plausible.

These passages are sufficient. The discerning reader may find many more, but that is not necessary.

An attempt has been made here (in the 2nd edition) to improve the get-up of the book and add to its usefulness and to remove the many printer’s devils that had crept into the first edition. It is for the reader to see how far it is successful.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

Thwalakwadi, Belgaum

N.V. Gunaji

Dated: Jan 14, 1954

## **PREFACE**

(By the Sansthan Committee)

**“A written word is the choicest of relics.”**  
**Thoreau**

We feel the greatest pleasure in offering the *Sai Satcharita* in the English garb to the devotees of Shri Sai Baba and to the public in general.

Ever since the mahasamadhi of Sai Baba in 1918, and ever since the sanctioning of the plan for the management of the Shirdi Sansthan of Sai Baba by the District Court of Ahmednagar in 1921, the committee, formed under the plan, has been functioning and doing the management of all aspects of the Sansthan, including the arrangement for the worship of the shrine and the celebration of the annual festival etc. Reports are being published month by month and year by year in the columns of ‘Sai Leela’ magazine, which is published by the Sansthan.

We think, however, that the main estate of the Sansthan consists, not in the property, both movable and immovable, but in the precious immortal teachings and leelas of Shri Sai Baba. The entire committee think it their chief duty to guard and cherish this invaluable estate and make this treasure available to the general public.

### **The Origin and Accumulation of this Estate**

While Sai Baba was living in the flesh, He was personally imparting His teachings

and spiritual instructions, partly by His spoken words, and mainly by His deeds (leelas). To collect these previous teachings and to put them in a durable and available form by publishing them in a book, was a hard and stupendous task, but Sai Baba, in His mysterious ways, got it done. He inspired Mr. Annasaheb Dabholkar (Hemadpant) to write the *Shri Sai Satcharita* and showered him with His grace and blessings (Vide Chapter II). Under Baba's loving guidance, Hemadpant collected the stories (leelas) of Sai Baba by keeping notes, which he then began to publish after Baba's mahasamadhi in 1918. The work was published in seriatim in 'Sai Leela' magazine. It was commenced in 1923 and finished in 1930.

As this work was undertaken and finished under the express direction, guidance and grace of Sai Baba, this has become the Veda of His devotees. Shri Sai Baba is considered to be an incarnation of God Dattatreya. Two of the first incarnations of this deity were (1) Shri Shripada Shrivallabha and (2) Shri Narasimha Saraswati. The miracles and teachings of these two incarnations are described by the devotee Saraswati Gangadhar in the well known Marathi work, *Shri Gurucharita*. The leelas of Shri Sai Baba, the present incarnation, have been likewise chronicled by Hemadpant in his equally famous *Shri Sai Satcharita*. The devotees of Sai Baba consider this work to be the modern form of *Shri Gurucharita* and regard its parayan (study) equally meritorious and efficacious.

### **Fame of Sai Baba**

Sai Baba first came to Shirdi - no one knows from where - about the year 1854 when He was a lad of sixteen. He lived there for about three years, then disappeared for

some time, and again returned to Shirdi with Chand Patil's marriage party in about 1858. He remained in Shirdi for sixty years until His mahasamadhi in 1918. During this long period, He never stirred out of Shirdi krosh (limits) to any outside place. Occasionally, He used to visit Rahata, which was south of Shirdi, or Neemgaon to the north, the two villages being only about three miles from Shirdi.

In the beginning, He was not well known outside these villages. Only the people who came in contact with Him and had experiences with Him, knew and revered Him. One of Sai Baba's closest devotees, Nanasaheb Chandorkar, came to Shirdi in about the year 1892, and after him, another great devotee, Das Ganu Maharaj. Both these devotees spread the fame of Sai Baba far and wide in the Konkan and Bombay Presidency, the former by his talks to his friends and acquaintances and the latter by his splendid and invaluable kirtans in various places. Since that time, people from these parts began to flock to Shirdi, thus making it a veritable place of pilgrimage. It was the influence of Nanasaheb Chandorkar that brought Hemadpant to Shirdi in the year 1910.

A few years before His mahasamadhi, Sai Baba had predicted that even after His passing away, He will speak through His samadhi (tomb). This prediction, we now find, came out true. Sai Baba seems to be more active (in the matter of communicating with the devotees and giving them experiences) now, than when He was living. During the last fifteen years, His fame has spread far and wide throughout the country.

## **The Genesis of This Work**

In the English section of 'Sai Leela' magazine, some articles about Sai Baba appeared in 1943. Some South Indian devotees wrote to the then editor, Mr. S. N. Kharkar, suggesting that the *Shri Sai Satcharita*, being in Marathi, was a sealed book to them and that it would be better if the purport of the chapters of that book be published in serialim in the English section of 'Sai Leela'. The editor requested Shri N.V. Gunaji to undertake this work and by Sai Baba's grace, he did it as part of his service to Him. By Baba's inspiration and guidance, the work was completed by the end of 1944, but owing to the scarcity of paper, as well as the paper control regulations under the Defense of India Rules, the publication was delayed for some time.

The committee cordially thanks Mr. N.V. Gunaji, who has rendered lasting service to countless devotees of Shri Sai Baba, in making Baba's life and teachings available in English to those who do not understand Marathi.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

Bombay, Dec. 31, 1953

Nagesh A. Sawant  
For the committee  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi

## **Acknowledgments**

We record our thanks to all those who helped us in preparing this third edition. Particular mention must be made of Mr. D.D. Neroy for the blocks and of Mr. V.S. Kirtikar, who read the proofs with indefatigable energy. We also thank the manager, Nirnaya Sagar Press, for bringing out this volume in a short space of time.

Bombay, Oct. 31, 1959

Dr. G.G. Dabholkar  
Haribhawoo T. Shelke  
Joint Hon. Secretaries  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi



## **FORWARD TO THE 4TH EDITION**

It gives us great pleasure to present this 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *Shri Sai Satcharita*, written by the late Shri Gunaji. As the three previous English editions have been sold out, its popularity with the English speaking devotees of Sai Baba is uncontested.

Though the cost of paper and printing have increased, the price of the book has been kept the same so that it will be affordable to all who are interested in reading it.

Shirdi  
Guru Poornima  
July 13, 1965

B.G. Potnis  
Court Receiver,  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi

## **FORWARD TO THE 5TH EDITION**

It gives us great pleasure to present the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of this precious book within a short period of time. This shows the popularity of the book. The late Shri N.V. Gunaji was a staunch devotee and a great philosopher. By translating this book into English, he has rendered a great service to the English speaking devotees of Shri Sai Baba.

At present, the cost of printing, as well as the cost of paper, have increased enormously, thus necessitating a small increase in price. It is hoped the readers will understand.

We earnestly pray to Shri Sai Baba that He will lead one and all upward on the path of salvation.

D.D. Patankar, Receiver  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi

## **FORWARD TO THE 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

It gives us great pleasure to present the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of this precious book within a short period of time. The book is as popular as ever. We have had to increase the price of this edition, as the cost of materials, etc. has increased tremendously.

We earnestly pray to Shri Sai Baba that He will lead one and all upward on the path of salvation.

K.S. Pathak, Receiver  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi

## **FORWARD TO THE 7<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

It gives us great pleasure to bring out the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of this precious book within a short time. The very fact that the previous edition sold out so soon, shows the popularity and need of this book.

Due to the tremendous increase in the cost of printing materials and paper, we are forced to increase the price a little, which we hope Sai devotees will not mind.

We earnestly pray to Shri Sai Baba that He may lead one and all onward on the path of salvation.

September 19, 1974  
Bombay

K.S. Pathak,  
Receiver  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi

## FORWARD TO THE 8TH EDITION

The English edition of *Shri Sai Satcharita* is an adaptation of the original Marathi book of the same name. It is not a verbatim translation of the original Marathi book. It is, therefore, quite natural that some important points from the original book might not have been included in the English version. As such, it was necessary to compare the Marathi pothi with the English version. This laborious and tiresome job was entrusted to Dr. Parchure, Executive Editor of 'Sai Leela' magazine and Shri P.M. Atre, a Sai Baba devotee from Bombay. I am glad they accomplished this awesome task satisfactorily, within a short period of time, and that they made corrections wherever necessary.

It gives us great pleasure to place this eighth edition in the hands of Sai Baba devotees who are anxiously awaiting it. The spread of Sai Baba interest is quite evident from the fact that the last (seventh) edition of *Shri Sai Satcharita* was sold out much earlier than expected.

Bombay

January 1, 1978

K.S. Pathak, Court  
Receiver  
Shri Sai Baba Sansthan,  
Shirdi Page 17

## FORWARD TO THE REVISED EDITION

As 62 years have passed since Shri N. V. Gunaji translated the original *Shri Sai Satcharita* from Marathi to English, and as the last edition (8<sup>th</sup>) was produced in 1978, Sai Baba inspired me to undertake the task of creating a slightly more modern version of the *Satcharita*. The edited and revised format of this edition will allow the reader greater comprehension and speed when completing a saptaha. With Baba's grace, this edition will be most helpful to Sai devotees, and to those who would become Sai devotees.

\* \* \* \* \*

Note: I loved doing saptahas of this amazing book, but at times I had some difficulties reading the fine print late at night when I was very tired. Thus, I was inspired by Baba to create a format that would make the *Satcharita* easier to read (especially when doing a saptaha) and one which would lend emphasis to particularly important passages in the text. This edited and revised edition was a labor of love and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to serve Baba in this work. I urge the reader to open heart and soul when reading the *Shri Sai Satcharita* and to be filled with Baba's grace.

\* \* \* \* \*

May Sai Baba's grace be showered upon all who read *Shri Sai Satcharita* and may the readers be inspired to do a saptaha. All thanks be given to Shri Sai Baba who teaches us that God is the sole wire puller of the universe.

August 13, 2009

Liora  
New York, U.S.A.

# SHRI SAI SATCHARITA

## PROLOGUE

(The book and its author)

### Modern Gurucharita

The well known Marathi work, *Gurucharita*, is familiar to all the people of Maharashtra. It is read and studied daily by all the devotees of the God Dattatreya all over the country. The author, Saraswati Gangadhar, describes in this book the miracles and teachings of Shri Shripad Shrivallabha and Shri Narasinha Saraswati Swami - the two prominent incarnations of the God Dattatreya. According to the opinion of the expert Marathi scholar, Mr. L. R. Pangarkar, these two incarnations flourished in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (vide his *History of Marathi Literature*, Vol. II, p. 116). There were other later incarnations of Dattatreya: the prominent amongst them were Shri Manikprabhu in the Nizam's dominions and Shri Akkalkotkar Maharaj in the Sholapur District, and lastly, Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar District, who took his mahasamadhi in 1918. Shri Sai Baba is believed by some devotees to be the incarnation of the avatar, Shri Akkalkotkar Maharaj. The story of the padukas (foot prints) under the neem tree given in chapter V, and the account of Mr. Harischandra Pitale given in the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Shri Sai Satcharita*, lend support to this belief.

Just as Saraswati Gangadhar described the miracles of both the above mentioned incarnations in the fifty-three chapters of *Gurucharita*, so Mr. Govind Raghunath, alias Annasaheb Dabholkar, chronicled the leelas of Shri Sai Baba in the fifty chapters of his

*Shri Sai Satcharita*. We may, therefore, very well say that this *Sai Satcharita* is the modern *Gurucharita*. The following points, however, may be noted with regard to these two great works:

(a) The author of *Gurucharita* was a Kanarese devotee and, as such, was not very conversant in the Marathi language. Nevertheless, with the grace of his deity, he was able to produce one of the best works in the Marathi language. The author of *Sai Satcharita*, on the other hand, was well versed in the Marathi language, as he not only had read the works of many saints of Maharashtra, but did a special daily study of the well known work, *Ekanathi Bhagawat*. A thoughtful reader can trace the influence of this work in *Shri Sai Satcharita*.

(b) As *Gurucharita* is mainly based on the karmakanda, the ritualistic portion of the Vedas, many of its chapters (viz. the 26<sup>th</sup> dealing with the expansion of the Vedas, the 38<sup>th</sup> dealing with karma-vipaka, the 34<sup>th</sup> dealing with the importance of the Rudradhyaya, the 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> dealing with the rules of conduct and duties of the householders) are difficult to understand and even more so, to follow. Even great devotees of the God Dattatreya are not able to follow and act according to these precepts in these times. In the case of the *Shri Sai Satcharita*, it is very different. The matters dealt with therein are very plain and simple and all can follow the precepts and rules which are described.

(c) *Gurucharita* is believed to be composed (according to Mr. Pangarkar) about one hundred years after the miracles and incidents described therein actually happened, but in



the case of the *Shri Sai Satcharita*, some of the leelas of Sai Baba were personally seen and noted by the author and his brother devotees. The work was undertaken with the permission and blessings of Sai Baba Himself, and His instructions of keeping notes were followed.

Soon after Sai Baba's mahasamadhi in 1918, this work was published in serialim in the 'Sai Leela' magazine. It was commenced in 1923 and finished in 1930, so *Shri Sai Satcharita* is more modern, historic and reliable than *Gurucharita*. The author of this work has conferred a great boon on all the Marathi readers, as he brings home the *real* Sai Baba to those who did not have the good fortune of seeing Sai Baba in person while He was living in Shirdi.

**The author: Hemadpant** We have seen that *Sai Satcharita* was composed by Annasaheb Dabholkar, but the work itself states at the end of each chapter that it was composed by Hemadpant at the inspiration of Sai Baba. Now the readers might ask, who is this Hemadpant? In explanation, we shall explain that Hemadpant is a name of significant title bestowed on Mr. Dabholkar by Sai Baba Himself at their first meeting. How and when it was bestowed, and how significant and prophetic it turned out to be, the author himself has told us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Shri Sai Satcharita*. For the present, we give below a short sketch of Hemadpant's life.

The author, Mr. Annasaheb Dabholkar, (aka Hemadpant), was born in 1859 in a poor Adya Gowd Brahmin family in Kelave Mahim, a small town in the Thana district. His

father and grand- father were religious and devout persons. As the family was poor, his primary education was done in his native place, following which, his English education up to the 5<sup>th</sup> standard was completed in Poona. Due to adverse circumstances, he could not continue his education any further. He could only manage to pass the public service examination of the time. He then had to accept the post of a school master in his native village.

His good nature, intelligence and work were noted by Mr. Sabaji Chintaman Chitnis, who was at that time, the mamlatdar in the Colaba district. At first, Mr. Chitnis appointed Hemadpant as a talati (village officer), then as an English clerk, and afterward, as an aval (head clerk) in the mamlatdar's court. Sometime afterward, he was appointed as a forest settlement officer and again as a Special Officer on famine relief works at Broach (Gujarat). Annasaheb Dabholkar (Hemadpant) carried out these duties extremely well.

In 1901 he was appointed mamlatdar of Sholapur (Thana district) and in 1903, he became the Resident Magistrate 1<sup>st</sup> class in Bandra where he served until 1907. Thereafter, he was transferred to Murbad, Anand, Borsad (Kheda district) and, in 1910, he once again was assigned as a resident magistrate in Bandra. It was in this year that Hemadpant had the good fortune to go to Shirdi and get the darshan of Sai Baba.

He retired from service in 1916. After this, he once again got a temporary government job, but it was of short duration. After his retirement, Hemadpant served Sai Baba heart and soul until Baba's mahasamadhi. Hemadpant continued to manage Sai

Baba's Shirdi Sansthan very skillfully and efficiently until his death, which occurred in 1929.

He left behind a wife and a son, Dr. Gajanan.

**Peace be unto these and all**

## WHO IS SAI BABA?

There are three views regarding the question 'Who is Sai Baba?'

(1) Many people who are accustomed to perceiving things and people superficially, said that Sai Baba was a mad fakir who lived for many years in a worn out and dilapidated masjid in Shirdi, and who talked at random and extracted money in the form of dakshina from people who went to see Him.

This view is quite wrong. To a friend of Mr. R.A.Tarkhadkar who was full of tears when he was taking Sai Baba's leave at the time of leaving for Bombay, Baba said, "Why do you behave like a madman? Am I not with you there in Bombay?" The friend said, "I know that, but I have no experience of Your being with me there in Bombay." Thereupon, **Sai Baba said that the person who thinks that Baba is in Shirdi only, has yet to understand Baba.** Vide p. 308 of 'Sai Leela' magazine, dated January 15, 1925.

(2) Some people said that Sai Baba was a saint. The Mohammedans took Him for one of their pirs and the Hindus regarded Him as one of their saints. The managers of the festivals celebrated annually at Shirdi refer to Sai Baba in their announcements as the crest jewel of the saints. This view is also not correct, because:

(3) Those who knew Sai Baba intimately regarded Him, and regard Him still, as God incarnate. The following are a few examples:

1. Hon. Mr. Justice M.B. Rege, B.A., L.A.B., High Court Judge, Indore, in his

forward to *Sai Baba's Sayings and Charters* by B.V. Narashimhaswami (page 1-2) says: Baba in the flesh was to his devotees, the embodiment of the supreme spirit, lighting the sadhakas' path by His words and actions. The mortal body has passed away, but the "Baba" once abiding in it, now lives in the spirit eternal, helping in a silent way. He often helped and gave solace to myriads of His devotees who sought His help while He was in His physical body.

2. A High Court judge from a state in the north made the following statement quoted on page 1 in *Devotees' Experiences* by B.V. Narasimhaswami: I look upon Shri Sai Baba as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. I did so before His mahasamadhi in 1918 and do so now. To me, He is not gone. He exists even now. To me, He had no limitations. Of course, when He was with us, there was the fleshy tabernacle. That was prominently brought to our attention at times. But mostly, the infinite aspect of His was what remained before me. I thought of Him as a mental or spiritual image in which the finite and infinite blended quite perfectly - yet allowing the finite to appear before us at times. Now that the body has been cast off, the infinite Sai Baba alone remains.

3. Professor G.G.Narke, M.A., M.Sc. of the College of Engineering, Poona, made the following statement which was printed on page 10-20 in *Devotees' Experiences* by B.V. Narasimhaswami: I have placed Sai Baba amongst the

household gods we worship daily at my home. Sai Baba is God, not an ordinary satpurusha. My father-in-law, Mr. Buti, my wife, and my mother, were all great devotees of Sai Baba and worshiped Him as God. At an arati, in my early visit, Sai Baba was in a towering passion. He fumed, cursed and threatened for no visible cause. I doubted if He was a madman (a passing thought I had had). The arati was completed in the usual way. In the afternoon of that day, I went and massaged Baba's feet and legs. As I did so, He stroked my head and said, "I am not mad." Lo! He is seeing my heart. Nothing is concealed from him. He is my antaryamin - the inner soul of my soul, I thought. Thenceforward, numerous instances occurred in my own experience of His antaryamitwa. When He talked, he spoke as one seated in my heart, knowing all its thoughts and all its wishes, etc. This is God within. I had no hesitation in deciding that He was God. I tested Him at times and each test produced the same conviction, that He was all knowing and able to mold all things to His will.

4. The Honorable Dadasaheb Khaparde, the famous and learned advocate of Amraoti- Berar, in his introduction to *Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi* by R.B.M.W. Pradhan (pg 3) wrote: He appeared to know the innermost thoughts of everybody, relieved their wants and provided comforts to all. He fulfilled my idea of God on earth.

5. Shri Das Ganu Maharaj in his *Stavanamanjiri* (ovi 17) refers to Sai Baba

as the Primary Cause of the universe, the Pure Consciousness, the Ever Merciful.

6. Hemadpant referred to Baba in the first chapter of *Shri Sai Satcharita* as a wonderful saint who ground wheat, but after coming in closer contact, he referred to Him as God or Brahma. (vide - *Sai Satcharita*, chapter 11 -25, 18-41, 21-126, 31-85, 41-17 etc.)

7. Shirdi devotees, especially Madhavarao Deshpande, alias Shama, who was very intimate with Sai Baba, as well as other devotees from outside, always addressed Sai Baba as Deva (God). We agree in toto with all these devotees and think they are perfectly right.

### **The Doctrine of the Immanence of God**

Our ancient rishis, the seers of the Upanishads, propounded the doctrine of the Brihadaranyak, Chhandogya, Katha and Shwetashwater Upanishads, that the whole of nature, including all that is living as well as nonliving, (all of which are God's handiwork), is filled and inspired by the antaryamin, i.e. the Inner Controller and Ruler. If any illustration or proof be needed to prove this doctrine, it is Shri Sai Baba. If the reader reads carefully the *Shri Sai Satcharita* and other Sai literature, he will experience the real Sai Baba.

N.V. Gunaji

## **Life History of Shri Sai Baba**

### **Sai Baba's Fame**

Rare is the man living in this country (India) who does not know Sai Baba. Ever since His advent in Shirdi about the year 1838, He has been giving a wide variety of spiritual, moral and physical experiences to many people, both during His lifetime in a physical body, and as He predicted, after His mahasamadhi as well. From these various accounts, it seems Sai Baba is more alive and active now than when He was living in a physical form. His fame continues to spread throughout the country, and His devotees are increasing day by day. Everyone is anxious to read of His leelas (experiences) and to know everything about Him and His exceptional life.

### **Baba's Birth, Birthplace, Parents etc.**

We are indeed unfortunate as no one knew or knows about Sai Baba's birth, birthplace, parents etc. No one has definitely ascertained where Baba was born, in what family, or of which parents. Many devotees used to ask Baba about these questions, but they never got straight replies. When pressed too much, Baba said that He came from Naurangabad and that He was in His mama's house and His name was Nasatya.

Once, He received a summons to attend the Dhulia Magistrate's Court to testify against a thief who had stolen some jewels. When Baba was asked by the magistrate about His own personal background, He replied evasively, merely telling them that He is called Sai Baba, His guru was Venkusa, His creed or religion was Kabir, and His caste or race was parvardigar (God).



## **Chief of the Nath Panchayatan**

It is said that a few centuries ago there was a Daspanchayatan (group of five saints) consisting of Samarth Ramdas, Jayaramswami, Ranganathswami, Keshavswami and Anandmurthi. Similarly, it is said that there was Nath Panchayatan in those days, consisting of Madhavnath, Shri Satguru Sainath, Dhundiraj Palusi, Gajananmaharaj of Shegaum and Gopaldas (Narsingmaharaj) of Nasik. They all worked together by inner control or force (vide *Madhavnath Deipprakash* 22-109.110.) Mr. Suman Sundar has also written about this in 'Sai Leela' magazine vol. 19 no. 7-9, wherein he says that Sai Nath (Baba) was greatly respected in this Panchayatan and was referred to as Triloknath and Kohinoor by Madhavnath.

## **Choice of Shirdi**

To some, why Baba chose Shirdi, which was a small hamlet of Rahata, (District Ahmednagar) for His residence was a problem, but thinking a little more intently, we find that this is really no problem at all. Baba described His guru as follows:

He brought Me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love, nay He was love incarnate. He loved Me most. Rare is a guru like Him. He was My sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on Him From this statement it is clear what extraordinary love Baba had for His guru. It seems that the incognito period of His life was spent with His guru practicing tapas.

There is indication that at some point Baba's guru left Him, leaving Baba to continue His tapas. Then, in Baba's sixteenth or seventeenth year, He commenced making inquiries about the whereabouts of His guru or His samadhi, and in that search, He came to Shirdi. There, He was observed by the mother of Nana Chopdar who first saw Him under the neem tree (vide *Shri Sai Satcharita* chapter IV) in front of what is now Sathe's wada. Baba lived there for some time and then left, returning three or four years later with Chand Patil's marriage party. Thus, Sai Baba lived in Shirdi near His guru's padukas until His mahasamadhi.

After His second advent in Shirdi with Chand Patil's marriage party, Baba lived in the limelight with men and women devotees, officers, and all types of people. His later life is known to all, the details of which are carefully described in 'Sai Leela' magazine as well as in the *Shri Sai Satcharita*. Thus, no further details are deemed necessary in this description.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

Thalakwadi, Belgaum  
Dated Jan 14, 1954

N.V. Gunaji



View of **"Shirdi Sai Baba"** at  
**Sai Mandir USA**  
465 Lincoln Highway,  
Iselin, NJ 08830, USA.



# Chapter I

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### ***Salutations - The story of grinding wheat and its philosophical significance***

According to the ancient and revered custom, Hemadpant begins the work, *Sai Satcharita*, with various salutations:

1. First, he makes obeisance to the **God Ganesh to remove all obstacles** and make the work a success, saying that Shri Sai is the God Ganesh.
2. Next, to the Goddess Saraswati, to inspire him to write the work, saying that Shri Sai is one with this goddess, and that He, Himself, is singing His own life.
3. Then to the Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar - the creating, preserving and destroying deities respectively - saying that Sainath is one with them and He, as the great teacher, will carry us across the river of worldly existence.
4. Then to his tutelary deity, Narayan Adinat, who manifested himself in Konkon - the land reclaimed by Parashuram from the sea - and to the adi (original) purush of the family.
5. Then to the Bharadwaja Muni, into whose gotra (clan) he was born, and also to various rishis, Yajnavalkya, Bhrgu, Parashara, Narad, Vedavyasa, Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatkumar, Shuka, Shounak, Vishwamitra, Vasistha, Valmiki, Vamadeva, Jaimini, Vaishampayan, Nava, Yogindra etc. as well as to the modern saints such as Nivritti, Jnanadev, Sopan, Muktabai, Janardan, Ekanath, Namdev, Tukaram, Kanha, Narahari etc.

6. Then to his grandfather Sadashiv, to his father Raghunath, to his mother who left him in his infancy, to his paternal aunt who brought him up, and to his loving elder brother.
7. Then to the readers who, he prays, will give their whole and undivided attention to this work.
8. Then to his guru Shri Sainath, an incarnation of Sri Dattatreya, who is his sole refuge and who will make him realize that Brahma is the only reality and the world an illusion.
9. Finally, to all beings in whom the Lord God dwells.

After describing in brief the various modes of devotion according to Parashara, Vyasa and Shandilya etc., the author goes on to relate the following story:

“Sometime after 1910, I went to the masjid in Shirdi one morning to receive Sai Baba’s darshan. I was wonderstruck to see the following phenomenon. After washing His mouth and face, Sai Baba began to make preparations for grinding wheat. He spread a sack on the floor, upon which He set a hand-mill. He then took some wheat in a winnowing fan, drew up the sleeves of His kafni (robe), and taking hold of the peg of the hand-mill, started grinding the wheat by putting a few handfuls of wheat in the upper opening of the mill and turning it. I then thought, “Why would Baba be grinding wheat, when He possessed nothing, and stored nothing, as He lived on alms?” Some people who had come there had similar thoughts, but none had the courage to ask Baba what He was doing.

Immediately, the news of Baba’s grinding wheat spread into the village and at once, men and women flocked to the masjid to watch Baba as He worked. Four bold women forced their way through the crowd and, moving Baba aside, forcibly took the peg (handle) into their own hands. They started singing Baba’s leelas while beginning to grind the wheat. At first Baba was enraged, but seeing the women’s love and devotion, He became pleased and began to smile.

While the women were grinding the wheat, they began to think that Baba had no house, no property, no children, nor anyone to look after, and as He lived on alms, He did not require any wheat flour for making bread or roti. What would He do with this big quantity of flour? Perhaps as Baba is very kind, He will distribute the flour amongst us. Thinking in this way and singing, they finished the grinding and, putting the hand-mill aside, divided



the flour into four portions and began to remove them, one by one. Baba, who was calm and quiet till then, became wild and started abusing them saying, “Ladies, have you gone mad? Whose father’s property are you looting away? Have I borrowed any wheat from you so that you can safely take the flour? Now please do this. Take the flour and throw it on the village border limits.” Hearing this, the women felt abashed and whispering amongst themselves, went off to the outskirts of the village and spread the flour as directed by Baba. I asked the Shirdi people, “Why did Baba do this?” They replied that the cholera epidemic was spreading in the village and that was Baba’s remedy to stop it. It was not wheat that was ground, but cholera itself that was ground to pieces and cast out of the village. From that time onward, the cholera epidemic subsided and the people of the village were happy. I was very pleased to know all this, but at the same time, my curiosity was aroused. I began to ask myself, “What earthly connection was there between wheat flour and cholera? What was the causal relation between the two, and how could one reconcile them?” The incident seemed inexplicable. I thought perhaps I should write something about this and sing Baba’s sweet leelas to my heart’s content. Thus, thinking this way, my heart was filled with joy and I was inspired to write Baba’s life - the *Shri Sai Satcharita* - and as we know, with Baba’s grace and blessings, this work was successfully accomplished.

### **Philosophical Significance of Grinding**

Apart from the meaning which the people of Shirdi attributed to this incident of grinding wheat, there is a philosophical significance too. Sai Baba lived in Shirdi for about sixty years and during this long period, He did the business of grinding almost every day - not, however, the wheat alone, but the sins, the mental and physical afflictions, and the miseries of His innumerable devotees. The two stones of His mill consisted of karma and bhakti, the former being the lower stone, and the latter, the upper one. The handle with which Baba worked the mill consisted of jnana. It was the firm conviction of Baba that knowledge of Self-realization is not possible unless there is the prior act of grinding all our impulses, desires, sins and the three gunas, viz. sattva, raja, and tamas, and the ahamkara, which is so subtle, and therefore so difficult to be rid of. This reminds us of a similar story of Kabir, who, seeing a woman grinding corn, said to his guru Nipathiranjana, “I am weeping because I feel the agony of being crushed in this wheel of worldly existence like the corn in the hand-mill.” Nipathiranjana replied, “**Do not be afraid. Hold fast to the handle of knowledge of this mill, as I do, and do not wander far away from the same, but turn inward to the center, and you are sure to be saved.**”

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**





## Chapter II

# Shri Sai Satcharita

**Object of Writing the Work - Incapacity and Boldness in the Undertaking –  
Hot Discussion - Conferring Significant and Prophetic Title of Hemadpant -  
Necessity of a Guru**

### **Object of writing the work**

In the first chapter I described Sai Baba's miracle of checking and destroying the epidemic of cholera by grinding wheat and throwing the flour on the outskirts of the village. I heard other miracles of Sai Baba to my great delight and this enthusiasm burst forth in this poetic work. I also thought that the description of these grand miracles of Sai Baba would be interesting and instructive to His devotees and would remove their sins, so I began to write the sacred life and teachings of Sai Baba. The life of a saint is neither logic nor dialectic. It shows us the true and great path.

### **Incapacity and boldness in undertaking the work**

Hemadpant thought he was not fit to undertake the work. He said, "As I do not know the life of my intimate friend, nor do I know my own mind, how then can I write about the life of a saint or describe the nature of incarnations which even the Vedas were unable to do? One must be a saint himself before he can know other saints. How can I describe their glory? To write about the life of a saint is most difficult. One may as well measure the depth of the water in the seven seas or enclose the sky with cloth trappings. I know this will be a most venturesome undertaking which might expose me to ridicule. I, therefore, must always invoke Sai Baba's grace."

The premier poet-saint of Maharashtra, Shri Janeshwar Maharaj, stated that the

Lord loves those who write about the lives of saints, and the saints have their own peculiar method of having the service, which the devotees long for, successfully accomplished. The saints inspire the work. The devotee becomes only an indirect cause, or instrument, to achieve the end. For instance, in shaka year 1700, the poet Mahipati aspired to write about the lives of the saints. The saints inspired him to get the work done, and he wrote four works: *Bhakta Vijaya*, *Santa Vijaya*, *Bhakta Leelamrit* and *Santa Leelamrit*. Then later, in shaka year 1800, Das Ganu's service was accepted. He wrote two books, *Bhakta Leelamrit* and *Santa Kathamarit*, in which the lives of modern saints are described. In chapters 31, 32, and 33 of *Bhakta Leelamrit* and in chapter 57 of *Santa Kathamarit*, the sweet life and teachings of Sai Baba are very well depicted. These have been separately published in 'Sai Leela' Magazine, Nos. 11 and 12, in Volume 17. The readers are advised to read these chapters. Sai Baba's wonderful leelas are also described in a small spiritual book named *Shri Sainath Bhajana Mala* by Mrs. Savitribai Raghunath Tendulkar of Bandra. Various sweet poems on Sai Baba composed by Das Ganu Maharaj, and also some by a devotee named Amidhas Bhavani Mehta, have been published in 'Gujarati'. 'Sainath Prabha', a magazine published by Dakshina Bhiksha Sauntha of Shirdi, has published Sai's leelas as well. The question then arises that while so many works regarding Sai Baba are extant, why should this *Shri Sai Satcharita* be written and what is its necessity?

The answer is quite simple. The life of Sai Baba is as wide and deep as the infinite ocean, and all can dive deep in and take out precious gems (of knowledge and bhakti) and distribute them to the aspiring public. The stories, parables, and teachings of Sai Baba are all quite wonderful and bestow knowledge and wisdom, both in worldly and spiritual domains.

They give peace and happiness to people who are heavily afflicted with sorrows and the miseries of worldly existence. If these teachings of Sai Baba, which are as interesting and instructive as Vedic lore, are listened to and meditated upon, the devotees will get what they long for, viz., **union with Brahma**, mastery in eight fold yoga, bliss in meditation etc.

I thought, therefore, that I should cull these stories together - which would be my best upasana. The collection would be most delightful to those souls whose eyes were not blessed with Sai Baba's darshan. I then set about collecting Sai Baba's teachings and expressions - the outcome of His boundless and natural Self-realization. It was Sai Baba who inspired me in this matter; in fact, I surrendered my ego at His feet and felt my path was clear.

Since I personally could not ask Sai Baba to give me permission for the work, I requested Madhavrao Deshpande, alias Shama, Baba's most intimate devotee, to speak for me. He pleaded my cause and said to Sai Baba, "This Annasaheb wishes to write about your life. Don't say You are a poor begging fakir and there is no necessity to write of Your life, but if You agree and help him, he will write, or rather Your grace, will accomplish the work. Without Your consent and blessing, nothing can be done successfully." When Sai Baba heard this request, He was moved and blessed me by giving me His udi (sacred ashes). He then placed His boon-bestowing hand on my head and said, "Let him make a collection of stories and experiences and keep notes and memos. I will help him. He is only an outward instrument. I, Myself, will write My life and satisfy the wishes of My devotees. He should get rid of his ego. Let him surrender it at My feet. He who acts like this in life, him I help most. What of My life stories? I shall serve him in his house in all possible ways. When his ego is completely annihilated and there is no trace left, then I, Myself, shall enter into him and shall write My life's story. Hearing My stories and teachings will create faith in devotees' hearts and they will easily get Self-realization and bliss. Let there be no insistence on establishing one's own view, no attempt to refute other's opinions, and no discussion of pros and cons of any subject."

The word discussion reminded me of my promise to explain the story of my getting the title of Hemadpant, and now I will begin to relate such. I was on close friendly terms with Kakasaheb Dixit and Nanasaheb Chandorkar. They urged me to go to Shirdi and have Baba's darshan and I promised them to do so, but something in the interval turned up which prevented me from going. The son of a friend of mine at Lonavala fell ill. My friend tried all possible means, physical and spiritual, but the fever would not abate. At last he got his guru to sit by the bedside of his son, but this, too, was of no avail. Hearing this, I thought, 'What was the necessity of a guru, if he could not save my friend's son? If the guru can't do anything for us, why should I go to Shirdi at all?' Thinking this way, I postponed my Shirdi trip, but the inevitable must happen, and it happened in my case as follows: Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a Prant officer, was going on tour to Bassein. He came from Thana and arrived in Dadar and was presently waiting for a train bound for Bassein. In the meanwhile, a Bandra local train arrived. Nana boarded it, went to Bandra, and then sent for me. He took me to task for putting off my Shirdi trip. Nana's argument for my Shirdi trip was convincing and inspiring, and so I decided to start for Shirdi the same night. I packed my luggage and started for Shirdi. I planned to go to Dadar to catch the train for Manmad there, so I booked myself for Dadar and got in the train.

Just as the train was about to start, a Mohammedan came hastily into my compartment and, seeing all my paraphernalia, asked me where I was bound. I told him

my plan. He suggested that I go straight to Boribunder and not stop at Dadar because the Manmad Mail did not stop at Dadar at all. If this little miracle or leela had not happened, I would not have reached Shirdi the next day and many doubts would have assailed me. But that was not to be.

As fortune favored me, I reached Shirdi the next day before 9 or 10 a.m. and met Mr. Bausaheb (Kaka) Dixit who was awaiting my arrival. (This was in 1910, when there was only one place viz. Sathe's Wada for lodging pilgrim devotees.) After alighting from the tonga, I was anxious to have darshan, when Tatyasaheb Noolkar, a great devotee of Baba who was returning from the masjid said, "Sai Baba is at the corner of the wada. First, get the preliminary darshan, and then after your bath, see Him at your leisure." Hearing this, I ran and prostrated before Baba and then my joy knew no bounds. I felt more than what Nana Chandorkar had described. All my senses were satisfied and I forgot thirst and hunger. The moment I touched Sai Baba's feet, **I began a new lease on life.** I felt myself much obliged to those who spurred and helped me to get the darshan and I considered them as my real relatives. I cannot repay their debt. I only remember them and prostrate (mentally) before them. The peculiarity of Sai Baba's darshan, as I found it, is that **by His darshan our thoughts are changed, the force of previous actions is abated, and gradually, non-attachment or dispassion towards worldly objects develops.** It is by merit of actions in many past births that such darshan is received, and if you see Sai Baba, all the world becomes or assumes the form of Sai Baba.

## Hot Discussion

On the first day of my arrival in Shirdi, there was a discussion between me and Balasaheb Bhate regarding the necessity of a guru. I contended, "Why should we lose our freedom and submit to others?" When we have to do our duty, why is a guru necessary? One must try his best and save himself. What can the guru do to a man who does nothing but sleeps indolently?"

Thus, I pleaded freewill, while Mr. Bhate took up the other side, viz. destiny, and said, "Whatever is bound to happen must happen; even great men have failed. Man proposes one way, but God disposes the other (contrary) way. Brush aside your cleverness. Pride or egoism won't help you." This discussion, with all its pros and cons went on for an hour or so and, as usual, no decision was arrived at. We had ultimately to stop the discussion as we were exhausted. The net result of this was that I lost peace of mind and realized that if there were no strong body consciousness and egoism, there would be no discussion.

Then, when we went to the masjid with others, Baba asked Kakasaheb Dixit the following:

“What was going on in Sathe’s Wada? What was the discussion about?” and staring at me, Baba further added, “what did this Hemadpant say?”

Hearing these words, I was quite surprised. The masjid was at a considerable distance from Sathe’s Wada where I was staying and where the discussion was going on. How could Baba know our discussion unless He be omniscient and Inner Ruler of us all?

### **Significant and Prophetic Title**

I began to think why Sai Baba should call me by the name Hemadpant. This word is a corrupt form of Hemadripant. This Hemadripant was a well known minister of the kings Mahadev and Ramadev of Devgiri of the Yadav dynasty. He was very learned, good-natured, and the author of good works, such as *Chaturvarga Chintamani* (dealing with spiritual subjects) and *Rajprashasti*. He invented and started new methods of accounts and was the originator of the Modi (Marathi shorthand) script. But as I was quite the opposite, an ignoramus, and of dull, mediocre intellect, I could not understand why the name or title was conferred upon me. Thinking seriously about it, however, I thought the title was a dart to destroy my ego, so that I should always remain meek and humble. It was also a compliment paid to me for my cleverness in the discussion.

In retrospect, we think that Baba’s word (calling Mr. Dabholkar as Hemadpant) was significant and prophetic, as we find that he looked after the management of Sai Sansthan very intelligently, kept all the accounts nicely, and was the author of the fine work, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, which deals with such important and spiritual subjects as jnana, bhakti dispassion, self-surrender and Self-realization.

### **About the necessity of a guru**

Hemadpant has left no note or memo about what Baba said regarding this subject, but Kakasaheb Dixit has published his notes regarding this matter. The next day after Hemadpant’s meeting with Sai Baba, Kakasaheb went to Baba and asked whether he should leave Shirdi. Baba said yes. Then someone asked, “Baba, where should one go?” Baba said, “High up.” Then the man said, “Which way?” Baba said, “There are many ways leading there. There is also one way from here (Shirdi). The way is difficult. There are

tigers and wolves in the jungles on the way.”

Kakasaheb asked, “But Baba, what if we take a guide with us?” Baba answered, “Then there is no difficulty. The guide will take you straight to your destination, avoiding wolves, tigers and ditches etc. on the way. If there be no guide, there is the danger of your being lost in the jungles or falling into ditches.” Mr. Dabholkar (Hemadpant) was present on this occasion and he considered this Baba’s answer to the question regarding whether a guru was a necessity. (vide ‘Sai Leela’ vol.I, no.5, page 47). Hemadpant thereupon took the hint that no discussion of the problem, whether man is free or bound, is of any use in spiritual matters, but on the contrary, real paramartha is possible only as the result of the teachings of the guru. This is illustrated in the chapter of the original work describing great avatars, like Rama and Krishna, who had to submit themselves to their gurus, Vasistha and Sandipani respectively, to achieve Self-realization. The only virtues necessary for such progress are **faith and patience**. (nishta and saburi) - (vide *Sai Satcharita*, ch. II pp.191-192.)

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Chapter III

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**Sai Baba's Sanction and Promise - Assignment of Work to Devotees - Baba's Stories as Beacon Light - His Motherly Love - Rohilla's Story - His Sweet and Nectar-like Words**

#### **Sai Baba's Sanction and Promise**

As described in the previous chapter, Sai Baba gave His complete consent to the writing of the *Satcharita* and said, "I fully agree with you regarding the writing of the *Shri Sai Satcharita*. You do your duty. Don't be afraid in the least, steady your mind and have faith in My words. If My leelas are written, avidya (nescience) will vanish, and if they are attentively and devoutly listened to, consciousness of worldly existence will abate and strong waves of devotion and love will rise up. If one dives deep into My leelas, he will get precious jewels of knowledge."

Hearing this, the author was very pleased and immediately felt fearless and confident and thought the work was bound to be a success. Then, turning to Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande), Sai Baba said:

**"If a man utters My name with love, I shall fulfill all his wishes and increase his devotion. If he earnestly sings My life and My deeds, him I shall beset in front and back and on all sides. Those devotees who are attached to Me heart and soul, will naturally feel happiness when they hear these stories. Believe Me, if anyone sings My leelas, I will give him infinite joy and everlasting contentment. It is My special characteristic to free any person who surrenders completely to Me, worships Me faithfully, and who remembers and meditates on Me constantly. How can they, who**

**utter My name, worship Me, think of My stories and My life and who thus always remember Me, be conscious of worldly objects and sensations? I shall draw My devotees out of the jaws of death. If My stories are listened to, diseases will be cured. So, hear My stories with respect and think and meditate on them. Assimilate them. This is the way to happiness and contentment. The pride and egoism of My devotees will vanish, and when the mind of the hearers will be set at rest with wholehearted and complete faith, oneness with Supreme Consciousness will be attained. The simple remembrance of My name as ‘Sai Sai’ will do away with sins of speech and hearing.”**

### **Different works assigned to Devotees**

The Lord entrusts different works to different devotees. Some are given the work of building temples and maths, or ghats (flights of steps) on rivers; some are made to sing the glories of God; some are sent on pilgrimages, but to me was allotted the work of writing the *Satcharita*. Being a jack of all trades, but master of none, I was quite unqualified for this job. Why then should I undertake such a difficult job? Who can describe the true life of Sai Baba? Sai Baba's grace alone can enable one to accomplish this difficult work. So, when I picked up my pen, Sai Baba took away my egoism and wrote His stories Himself. The credit of relating these stories, therefore, goes to Him and not to me. Though Brahmin by birth, I lacked the two eyes (i.e. the sight or vision) of shruti and smriti and, therefore, was not at all capable of writing the *Satcharita*, but the grace of the Lord makes a dumb man talk and enables a lame man to cross a mountain. He alone knows the knack of getting things done as He likes. Neither the flute nor the harmonium know how the sounds are produced. This is the concern of the player. The oozing of the chandrakant jewel and the surging of the sea are not due to the jewel and the sea, but to the rise of the moon.

### **Baba's stories as beacon light**

Light houses are constructed at various places in the sea to enable boatmen to avoid rocks and dangers, thus allowing safe sailing. Sai Baba's stories serve a similar purpose in the ocean of worldly existence. They surpass nectar in sweetness and make our worldly path smooth and easy to traverse. Blessed are the stories of the saints, for when they enter our hearts, our body consciousness, or egoism, and the sense of duality vanishes. When these leelas are stored in our heart, doubts disappear, pride of the body falls away, and we are filled with wisdom.

The description of Baba's pure fame and the hearing of such with love and pure



faith, destroys sins. This is, therefore, the best and most simple sadhana for attaining salvation. The sadhana for Krita Age was sham-dama (tranquility of mind and body), for Treta Age was sacrifice, for Dwapara, worship, and for Kali (present) Age, it is the singing of the name and glory of the Lord. This last sadhana is open to all people. The other sadhanas, viz. yoga, yaga (sacrifice), dhyana (meditation) and dharana (concentration) are very difficult to practice, but singing and hearing the stories of the glory of the Lord (Sai Baba) is very easy. We have only to turn our attention towards them.

**The listening and singing of the stories (leelas) will remove the attachment to the senses and their objects and will make the devotees dispassionate, ultimately leading them to Self-realization.** With this end in view, Sai Baba made me, or helped me, to write His stories, Sat Charitamrita. The devotees may now easily read and hear these stories of Sai Baba and while doing so, meditate on Him, His form, and thus attain devotion to guru and God (Sai Baba). They will develop detachment and attain Self-realization. In the preparation and writing of this work, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, it is Sai Baba's grace which has accomplished everything, making use of me as a mere instrument.

### **Motherly Love of Sai Baba**

Everybody knows how a cow loves her infant calf. Her udder is always full and when the calf wants milk and dashes at the udder, out comes the milk in an unceasing flow. Similarly, a human mother knows the wants of her child beforehand, and feeds it at her breast just at the right time. In the dressing and grooming of the child, the mother takes particular care to see this is well done. The child knows or cares nothing about this, but the mother's joy knows no bounds when she sees her child beautifully dressed and adorned. The love of a mother is peculiar, extraordinary, protective, and has no parallel. Satgurus feel this motherly love towards their disciples.

Sai Baba had this same love towards me and I give an instance of it below:

In 1916, I retired from government service. The pension amount settled in my case was not sufficient to maintain my family decently. On Guru Pournima day (15<sup>th</sup> of Ashada) of that year, I went to Shirdi with other devotees. There, Mr. Anna Chinchankar, of his own accord, prayed to Baba for me as follows: "Please look kindly on him. The pension he receives is quite insufficient and his family is growing. Please give him some other appointment, remove his anxiety, and make him happy." Baba replied, "He will get another job, but right now he should serve Me and be happy. His dishes will be ever full

and never empty. **He should turn all his attention toward Me and avoid the company of atheists and irreligious and wicked people. He should be meek and humble toward all and worship Me heart and soul. If he does this, he will get eternal happiness.**”

### **Rohilla’s Story**

The story of the Rohilla illustrates Sai Baba’s all embracing love. A Rohilla, tall and well built, strong as a he-buffalo, came to Shirdi wearing a long kafni (robe) and, being enamoured of Sai, stayed there. Day and night he used to recite Kalma (verses from the Holy Koran) in a loud, harsh tone and shout, “ALLAH HO AKBAR” (God is Great). Most of the people of Shirdi were working in their fields by day, and when they returned to their homes at night, were welcomed with the Rohilla’s harsh cries and shouts. They could get no sleep and felt much trouble and inconvenience. They suffered in silence with this nuisance for several days and when they could stand it no longer, they approached Baba and requested him to check the Rohilla and stop the nuisance. Baba did not attend to their complaint. On the contrary, Baba took the villagers to task and asked them to mind their own business and not that of the Rohilla. He told them the Rohilla had a very bad wife, a zantippi, who tried to come in and trouble the Rohilla and Himself, but upon hearing the Rohilla’s prayers, she dared not enter, and so they were at peace and happy. In fact, the Rohilla had no wife, and by his wife, Baba meant durbuddhi, i.e., bad thoughts. **As Baba liked prayers and cries to God better than anything else**, He took the side of the Rohilla and asked the villagers to wait and suffer the nuisance, which would abate in due course.

### **Baba’s Sweet and Nectar-like Words**

One day at noon after the arati, devotees were returning to their lodgings when Baba gave the following beautiful advice:

**“Be wherever you like; do whatever you choose. Remember this well: all that you do is known to Me. I am the Inner Ruler of all and seated in their hearts. I envelope all creatures in the movable and immovable world. I am the Controller - the wire puller of the show of this universe. I am the mother - the origin of all beings - the harmony of the three gunas - the propeller of all the senses - the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. Nothing will harm he who turns his attention towards Me, but maya will lash or whip he who forgets Me. All the insects, animals, the visible, movable and immovable world, is My body or form.”**

Hearing these beautiful and precious words, I immediately decided in my mind to serve no man henceforth but my guru, but the reply of Baba to Anna Chinchanikar's query (which was really mine - that I would get some job), caused me to ponder. I began to wonder whether it would actually happen. As future events showed, Baba's words came true and I did get a government job, but it was of short duration. I then became free and solely devoted myself to the service of my guru - Sai Baba.

Before concluding this chapter, I request the readers to ignore the various hindrances, viz. indolence, sleep, wandering of mind, attachment to senses, etc. and turn their whole and undivided attention to these stories of Sai Baba. Let their love be natural. Let them know the secret of devotion. Let them not exhaust themselves with other sadhanas. Let them stick to this one simple remedy, i.e. listening to Sai Baba's stories. This will destroy their ignorance and will secure for them salvation. A miser may stay at various places, but he always thinks of his buried treasure. So let Sai Baba be enthroned in the hearts of all.

In the next chapter, I shall speak of Sai Baba's advent in Shirdi.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter IV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Mission of the Saints - Shirdi a Holy Tirth - Personality of Sai Baba - Dictum of Goulibuva - Appearance of Vitthal - Kshirasagar's Story - Das Ganu's Bath in Prayag - Immaculate Conception of Sai Baba and His First Advent in Shirdi - Three Wadas**

In the last chapter, I described the circumstances which led me to write *Shri Sai Satcharita*. Let me now describe the first advent of Sai Baba in Shirdi.

### **Mission of the Saints**

Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter IV, 7-8), “Whenever there is a decay of dharma (righteousness) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness, I manifest Myself; and for the protection of the virtuous, the destruction of the vicious and the establishment of righteousness, I manifest Myself in age after age.” This is the mission of the Lord, and of the sages and saints who are His representatives who appear here at proper times to help in their own way to fulfill that mission. The following are some examples necessitating the appearance of saints who must try to set matters right by their words and actions:

1. when spiritual preceptors are not respected, but humiliated.
2. when nobody cares for religious instruction.
3. when everyone thinks themselves very learned.
4. when people begin to partake of forbidden foods and intoxicating drinks.
5. when, under the cloak of religion, people indulge in malpractices.
6. when people belonging to different sects fight amongst themselves.

7. and lastly, when people begin to think that wealth, progeny, and wife are their sole concern, and thus turn away from the true path of salvation.

Thus, it is for many reasons that saints and avatars manifest to show the right path that leads to truth and light. They serve as beacon lights, showing us the right way to follow which leads to liberation. In this way, many saints, viz. Nivriddhi, Jnanadev, Muktabai, Namdev, Gora, Gonayi, Ekanath, Tukaram, Narahari, Narsi Bhai, Sajan Kasai, Sawata, Ramdas and a number of others appeared at various times to show the way of salvation to the people. As such, Shri Sai Baba came to Shirdi.

### **Shirdi - a Holy Tirth**

The banks of the Godavari River in the Ahmednagar District are very fortunate for they gave birth and refuge to many a saint, prominent amongst them being Janeshwar. Shirdi also falls in the Kopergaon Taluka of the Ahmednagar District. After crossing the Godavari River at Kopergaon, one is nearing Shirdi. If one continues three koss (9 miles), one arrives at Nimgaon, at which point Shirdi is visible. Shirdi is as famous and well known as other holy places, like Ganagapur, Narsinhwadi, and Audumbar on the banks of the Krishna River. As the devotee Damaji flourished in, and blessed Mangalvedha (near Pandharpur), as Samarth Ramadas at Sajjangad, as Shri Narsinha Saraswati at Narsobachiwadi, so Sainath flourished at Shirdi and blessed it.

### **Personality of Sai Baba**

It is on account of Sai Baba that Shirdi grew into importance. Let us see what sort of being Sai Baba was. He conquered this samsar (worldly existence), which is very difficult and hard to cross. Peace, or mental calm, was His ornament and He was the repository of wisdom. He was the home of Vaishnava devotees, most liberal (like Karna) amongst liberals, and the quintessence of all essences. He had no love for perishable things and was always engrossed in Self-realization, which was His sole concern. He felt no pleasure in the things of the world, or of the world beyond. His antarang (heart) was as clear as a mirror and His speech always rained nectar. Rich and poor people were the same to Him. He did not know, or care for, honor or dishonor. He was the Lord of all beings. He spoke freely and mixed with all people, saw the acting and dances of Nautch-girls, and heard Gajjal songs. Still, He swerved not an inch from samadhi (mental equilibrium). The name of Allah was always on His lips. While the world awoke, He slept, and while the world slept, He was vigilant. His abdomen (inside) was as calm as the deep sea. His ashram could not be determined, nor could His actions be definitely understood. Though He sat

(lived) in one place, He knew all the transactions of the world. His darbar was imposing. He told hundreds of stories daily, but swerved not an inch from His vow of silence. He always leaned against the wall in the masjid, or walked morning, noon and evening towards Lendi (nala) and the Chavadi, but still, He abided in the Self at all times. Though a siddha, He acted like a sadhaka. He was meek, humble and egoless, and pleased all. Such was Shri Sai Baba, and as the soil of Shirdi was trodden by Sai Baba's feet, it attained extraordinary importance. Just as Janeshwar elevated Alandi, Ekanath, and Paithan, so Sai Baba raised Shirdi. Blessed are the grass blades and stones of Shirdi, for they could easily kiss the holy feet of Sai Baba. Shirdi became to Baba's devotees, another Pandharpur, Jagannath, Dwarka, Banaras (Kashi) and Rameshwar, Badrikedar, Nasik and Tryambakeshwar, Ujjain, Maha Kaleshwar and Mahabaleshwar Gokarn. Contact with Sai Baba in Shirdi was veda and tantra. It quieted samsara (world consciousness) and rendered Self-realization easy. The darshan of Shri Sai was yoga-sadhana, and talk with Him removed sins. Shampooing His legs was a bath in Triveni Prayag, and drinking the holy water of His feet destroyed desires. His command was vedas, and accepting (eating) His udi (sacred ashes) and prasad, was all purifying. He was our Shri Krishna and Shri Rama who gave us solace. He was our para Brahma (Absolute Reality). Sai Baba was beyond the pair of dwandwas (opposites), never dejected nor elated. He was always engrossed in His Self as Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Shirdi was His center, but His field of action extended far and wide, to Punjab, Calcutta, North India, Gujarat, Deccan and Canara. Thus, the fame of Sai Baba was pervasive, and people from all parts came to take His darshan and be blessed. By His mere darshan, the minds of people, whether pure or impure, would at once become quiet. They received the same sort of unparalleled joy from Baba that devotees get at Pandharpur by seeing Vithal Rakhumai. This is not an exaggeration. Consider what a devotee says in this respect.

### **Dictum of Goulibuva**

A devotee named Goulibuva, who was about 95 years old, was a Varkari of Pandhari. He stayed for eight months at Pandharpur and for four months - Ashada to Kartik (July - November) - on the banks of the Ganges. He had a donkey with him for carrying his luggage and a disciple as his companion. Every year he made his vari (trip) to Pandharpur and came to Shirdi to see Sai Baba, whom he loved most. He used to stare at Baba and say, "This is Pandharinath Vitthal incarnate, the merciful Lord of the poor and helpless." This Goulibuva was an old devotee of Vithoba and had made many a trip to Pandhari. He testified that Sai Baba was real Pandharinath.

## **Vitthal Himself Appeared**

Sai Baba was very fond of remembering and singing God's name. He always uttered Allah Malik (God is Lord) and made others sing God's name in His presence continuously day and night for seven days. This is called namasaptaha. Once, Sai Baba asked Das Ganu Maharaj to do the namasaptaha. He replied that he would do it, provided he was assured that Vitthal would appear at the end of the seventh day. In response, Baba placed His hand on Das Ganu's chest, assuring him that certainly Vitthal would appear, but that the devotee must be 'earnest and devout'. The Dankapuri (Dakore) of Dakurnath, the Pandhari of Vitthal, and the Dwarka of Ranchhod (Krishna) is here (Shirdi).

After the saptaha was over, Vitthal manifested Himself in the following manner. Kakasaheb Dixit was, as usual, sitting in meditation after his bath and saw Vitthal in a vision. When he went for Baba's darshan at noon, Baba asked him point blank, "Did Vitthal Patil come? Did you see him? He is a very truant fellow. Catch Him firmly, otherwise, if you be a little inattentive, He will escape." This happened in the morning, and at noon, there was another Vitthal darshan. A hawker from outside came to sell 25 or 30 pictures of Vithoba. This picture tallied exactly with the figure that appeared in Kakasaheb's vision. Seeing this and remembering Baba's words, Kakasaheb Dixit

The place where doors are open for all people of the four classes (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) for accomplishing the four Puru-sharthas, viz. dharma, artha, kama, and moksha, is called Dwarka by wise philosophers. Baba's masjid in Shirdi was not only open to the four classes, but to the lepers, like Bhagoji Shinde, the untouchables etc. and, therefore, is a very appropriately styled Dwarka was very surprised and elated. He bought a picture of Vithoba and placed it in his shrine for worship.

## **Bhagwantrao Kshirasagar's Story**

Baba's fondness for Vitthal worship is illustrated by Bhagwantrao Kshirasagar's story. The father of Bhagwantrao was a devotee of Vithoba and used to make varis (annual trips) to Pandharpur. He had an image of Vithoba at home, which he worshiped. After his death, the son stopped everything - the vari, the worship and shraddha ceremony etc. When Bhagwantrao came to Shirdi, Baba, remembering his father, immediately said, "His father was my friend, so I dragged him (the son) here. He never offered naivedya (offering of food), and so he starved Vitthal and Me. I brought him here now and shall demonstrate and teach him how to worship."

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\*Mr. B.V. Deo, retired mamlatdar of Thana, has proved by his research that Shirdi is within the limits of Panharpur which was the southern most center of Dwarka and therefore, Shirdi was Dwarka itself. (vide 'Sai



Leela' vol.14, nos.1-2-3). I have come across another definition of Dwarka, quoted from Skanda-Puran by N. Narayan Aiyar in his *Permanent History of Bharatvarsha*, vol. 2, part 1., page 90 which runs thus: (Sanskrit)

### **Das Ganu's Bath in Prayag**

The Hindus think that a bath in the holy tirth of Prayag, where the Ganga and Yamuna meet, is very meritorious and thousands of pilgrims go there at periodic times to have the sacred bath. Once, Das Ganu thought that he should go to Prayag for a bath and came to Baba to get His permission for doing so. Baba replied to him, "It is not necessary to travel so far. Our Prayag is here, believe me." Then, wonder of wonders! When Das Ganu placed his head on Baba's feet, out came (flowed) streams of Ganga and Yamuna water from the large toe of each of Baba's feet. Seeing this miracle, Das Ganu was overwhelmed with feelings of love and adoration and was full of tears. Inwardly, he felt inspired and his speech burst forth into a song in praise of Baba and His leelas.

### **Immaculate Conception of Sai Baba and His First Advent in Shirdi**

Nobody knew the parents, birth or birth place of Sai Baba. Many inquiries were made, many questions were put to Baba and others regarding these items, but no satisfactory answer or information could be obtained. Practically nothing is known about these matters.

Namadev and Kabir were not born like ordinary mortals. They were found as infants in mother-of-pearls, Namadev being found in the Bhimrathi River by Gonayee, and Kabir in the Bhagirathi River by Tamal. The case with Sai Baba is similar. He first manifested Himself as a young lad of sixteen under a neem tree in Shirdi for the sake of His bhaktas. Even then, He seemed to be full of knowledge of Brahman. He had no desire for worldly objects, even in dreams. He kicked out maya. Mukti (deliverance) was serving at His feet. An old woman in Shirdi, the mother of Nana Chopdar, described Him thus: 'This young lad, fair, smart and very handsome, was first seen under the neem tree seated in an asan. The people of the village were wonder struck to see such a young lad practicing such hard penance, not minding heat and cold. By day, He associated with none, by night, He was afraid of no one. People were wondering and asking from whence came this young chap. His form and features were so handsome that a mere look endeared Him to all. He went to nobody's door and always sat near the neem tree. As ashwattha and audumbar trees are held sacred, Baba regarded this neem tree equally sacred and loved it most.

Outwardly, Baba looked very young, but by His actions, He was really a great soul. He was the embodiment of dispassion and was an enigma to all. One day, it so happened

that God Khandoba possessed the body of a devotee and people began to ask him, "Deva (God), would you please inquire what blessed father's son is this lad and from whence did He come?" God Khandoba asked them to bring a pickax and dig in a particular place. When it was dug, bricks were found, and underneath, a flat stone. When the stone was removed, a corridor was seen in which four samayis (lights) were burning. The corridor led to a cellar where cow-mouth shaped structures, wooden boards, and necklaces were seen. Khandoba said, "This lad practiced penance here for twelve years." The people then began to question the lad about the same. He put them off the scent by telling them it was His guru's place, His holy watan, and requested them to guard it well. The people then closed the corridor as before. Mhalasapati and other Shirdi devotees regard this site as the resting place (samadhi-sthana) of Baba's guru and would prostrate before it.

### **Three Wadas**

(1) The site with the neem tree and surrounding space was bought by Hari Vinayak Sathe and on that site, Sathe's Wada was erected. This wada was the sole resting place for pilgrims who flocked to Shirdi. A par (platform) was built around the neem tree and lofts with steps were constructed. Under the steps is a niche facing south, and devotees would sit on the par (platform) facing north. It is believed that he who burns incense there on Thursday and Friday evenings will, by God's grace, be happy. This wada was old and dilapidated and needed repairs. The necessary repairs, additions and alterations were made by the Sansthan.

(2) After some years, another wada, Dixit's Wada, was constructed. Kakasaheb Dixit, a solicitor from Bombay, had gone to England and had injured his leg in an accident there. The injury could not be healed by any means. Nanasaheb Chandorkar advised him to try Sai Baba, so Dixit saw Baba in 1909 and requested Him to cure the lameness of his mind, rather than that of his leg. He was so pleased with the darshan of Sai Baba, he decided to reside in Shirdi and built a wada for himself and other devotees. The foundation of this building was laid on December 10, 1910. On this day, two other important events took place. (1) Mr. Dadasaheb Kharpade was given permission to return home, and (2) the night arati in the Chavadi was commenced. Dixit's wada was completed and was inhabited on Rama-Navami day in 1911 with due rites and formalities.

(3) Still another wada (palatial mansion) was put up by the famous millionaire, Shriman Booty of Nagpur. A large amount of money was spent on this building, but the entire amount was well utilized as Sai Baba's body is resting in this wada, which is now

called the Samadhi Mandir. The site of this mandir formerly had a garden, which was watered and looked after by Baba. Three wadas thus sprung up where there were formerly none. Of these, Sathe's Wada was most useful to all in the early days.

The story of the garden attended to by Sai Baba with the help of Vaman Tatya, the temporary absence of Sai Baba from Shirdi, Baba's coming again to Shirdi with the marriage party of Chand Patil, the company of Devidas, Jankidas and Gangagir, Baba's wrestling match with Mohidden Tamboi, Baba's residence in the masjid, His love of Mr. Dengale and other devotees, and other incidents will be described in the next chapter.

**Bow to Shri Sai    -    Peace be to all**



# Chapter V

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Baba's Return with Chand Patil's Wedding Party - Welcomed and Addressed as "Sai" - Contact with Other Saints - His Dress and Routine - The Story of the Padukas - Wrestling Bout with Mohidden and Change in Life - Turning Water into Oil - The Pseudo-Guru Javhar Ali**

### **Return with Chand Patil's Wedding Party**

As hinted in the last chapter, I shall now describe how Sai Baba returned to Shirdi after His disappearance.

There lived in the Aurangabad District (Nizam State) in a village called Dhoop, a well to do Mohammedan gentleman, Chand Patil. While he was making a trip to Aurangabad, he lost a mare. For two long months, he made a diligent search, but could get no trace of the lost mare. Being disappointed, he was returning from Aurangabad with the saddle on his back. After traveling four and a half koss, he came to a mango tree, at the foot of which, sat a ratna (queer fellow). He had a cap on His head, wore a kafni (long robe) and had a "satka" (short stick) under His arm pit. He was preparing to smoke a chilim (clay pipe). Seeing Chand Patil passing by, He called out to him and asked him to have a smoke and rest a little. The queer fellow (or fakir) asked him about the saddle. Chand Patil replied that it was for his mare which was lost. The fakir asked him to make a search in the nala close by. He obeyed and, wonder of wonders, he found the mare! Patil thought this fakir was not an ordinary man, but an avalia (a great saint) and returned to the fakir with the mare.

The chilim was ready for being smoked, but two things were missing: (1) fire to light

the pipe, and (2) water to wet the chhapi (piece of cloth through which smoke is sucked). The fakir took His prong, thrust it forcibly into the ground, and out came a live coal, which He put on the pipe. Then He dashed the satka on the ground and water began to ooze. The chhapi was then wet with that water, wrung out, and wrapped around the pipe. Thus, everything being complete, the fakir smoked the chilim and gave a smoke to Chand Patil. Seeing all that, Chand Patil was wonderstruck. He requested the fakir to come to his home and accept his hospitality. The next day, the fakir went to Chand Patil's house and stayed there for some time. Patil was a village officer of Dhoop. His wife's brother's son was to be married and the bride selected was from Shirdi, so Patil made preparations to travel to Shirdi for the marriage. The fakir accompanied the marriage party. The marriage concluded nicely and the wedding party returned to Dhoop, but the fakir alone remained in Shirdi and remained there forever.

### **How the Fakir Got the Name Sai**

When the marriage party came to Shirdi, it alighted at the foot of a banyan tree in Bhagat Mhalasapati's field near Khandoba's temple. The members of the party descended one by one, as well as the fakir. Bhagat Mhalasapati saw the young fakir getting down and accosted him, "Ya Sai" (Welcome Sai). Others also addressed Him as Sai and hence forth He became known as Sai Baba.

### **Contact with other Saints**

Sai Baba began to stay in a masjid. A saint named Devidas was living in Shirdi for many years before Baba came there. Baba liked his company and sometimes stayed with him in the Maruti temple, and at other times in the Chavadi, although sometimes Baba chose to be alone. Then, another saint arrived in Shirdi by the name of Jankidas, and Baba spent much of His time talking with him. Sometime later, a Vaishya householder saint from Puntambe, named Gangagir, came to visit from time to time. When he first saw Sai Baba carrying pitchers of water in both hands for watering the garden, he was amazed and said openly, "Blessed is Shirdi, that it has this precious jewel. This man is carrying water today, but He is not an ordinary fellow. As this land (Shirdi) is lucky and meritorious, it secured this jewel."

Still another famous saint, Anandnath or Yewala Math, a disciple of Akkalkot Maharaj, came to Shirdi. When he saw Sai Baba before him, he said openly, "In reality,

this is a precious diamond. Though He looks like an ordinary man, He is not a 'gar' (ordinary stone), but a diamond. You will realize this in the near future." Saying this, he returned to Yewala. All this was said while Sai Baba was a youngster.

### **Baba's Dress and Daily Routine**

In His youth, Sai Baba grew hair on His head; He never had His head shaved. He dressed like an athlete. When he went to Rahata (3 koss from Shirdi), He brought with Him small plants of zendu, jai and jui, and, cleaning and scoring the dry land, He planted and watered them. A devotee named Vaman Tatya supplied Him daily with two earthen pitchers. With these, Baba Himself used to water the plants. He drew water from the well and carried the pitchers on His shoulders. In the evening, the pitchers, which were made of raw earth and not baked, were placed at the foot of the neem tree and were immediately broken. Then, the next day, Tatya would supply two fresh pitchers. This course went on for three years and with Sai Baba's toil and labor, a flower garden grew. On this site at present stands a big mansion - the Samadhi Mandir of Baba - which is now frequented and used by many devotees.

**The Story of Padukas under the Neem Tree.** (Padukas - impressions or footprints of a saint's feet)

A devotee of Akkalkotkar Maharaj named Bhai Krishnaji Alibagkar worshiped the photo of Akkalkotkar (Sholapur District), taking darshan from the padukas (footprints) of the Maharaj and offering his sincere worship. Alibagkar decided to go to Akkalkot, but before he left, he had a vision of Akkalkotkar Maharaj who appeared in his dream and said, "Now Shirdi is my resting place. Go there and offer your worship." So Bhai changed his plan and came to Shirdi, worshiped Baba, stayed there for six months, and was happy. As a reminiscence of this vision, etc. he prepared the padukas and had them installed with due ceremonies and formalities conducted by Dada Kelkar and Upasani under the neem tree on an auspicious day in Shravan, shaka 1834 (1912 A.D.) Govind Dixit was appointed to lead the worship and the management was entrusted to the devotee Sagun Meru Naik.

### **Complete Version of this Story**

Mr. B.V. Deo of Thana, retired mamlatdar, and a great devotee of Sai Baba, made inquiries about this matter of Sagun Meru Naik and Govind Kamlakar Dixit and has published a full version of the padukas in 'Sai Leela' Vol. II, No. I, page 25. It runs as

follows:

Once, in 1834 shaka (1912 A.D.), Doctor Ramarao Kothare of Bombay came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan. His compounder and his friend, Bhai Krishnaji Alibagkar, accompanied him. The compounder and Bhai became quite friendly with Sagun Meru Naik and G.K. Dixit. While discussing things, they thought there should be some memoir of Sai Baba's first coming to Shirdi and sitting under the holy neem tree. They thought of installing Baba's padukas there and were going to make them of rough stone. Then Bhai's friend, the compounder, suggested that if the matter be made known to his master, Dr. Ramarao Kothare, he would prepare nice padukas for that purpose. All liked the proposal, and Dr. Kothare was informed. He came to Shirdi, drew a plan for the padukas, then went to Upasani Maharaj in Khandoba's temple, and showed him his plan. The latter made many improvements, drew lotuses, flowers, conch, disc. etc. and suggested that the following shloka (verse) regarding the neem tree's greatness and Baba's yogic powers be inscribed. The verse was as follows:

Sada nimbavrikshasya mooladhiwasat  
Sudhasravinam tiktamapi-apriyam tam.  
Tarum Kalpavrikshadhikam sadhayantam  
Namameeshwaram Sadgurum Sai Natham.

Upasani's suggestions were accepted and carried out. The padukas were made in Bombay and sent to Shirdi with the compounder. Baba said they should be installed on the Pournima (15<sup>th</sup>) of Shravan. On that day at 11 a.m., G.K. Dixit carried them on his head from Khandoba's temple to the Dwarkamai (masjid) in a procession. Baba touched the padukas, saying those were the feet of the Lord, and asked the people to install them at the foot of the neem tree.

A day before, a Parsi devotee from Bombay named Pastha Shet sent Rs. 25/ by money order which Baba used toward the installation of the padukas. The total expense of installation came to Rs. 100/, out of which Rs. 75/ were collected by subscriptions.

For the first five years, G.K. Dixit worshiped the padukas daily, and later this was done by Laxman Kacheshwar Jakhadi. In the first five years, Dr. Kothare sent Rs. 2/ per month for lighting. He also sent the railing from the station to Shirdi (Rs. 7-8-0). The roofing was paid by Sagun Meru



## Wrestling Bout with Mohidden Tamboli and Change in Life

To return to other stories of Baba. There was a wrestler in Shirdi named Mohidden Tamboli. Baba and he did not agree on certain issues. Tamboli challenged Baba to a fight in which Baba allowed Tamboli to win. Thenceforth, Baba changed His dress and mode of living. He donned a kafni, wore a langot (waist band) and covered His head with a piece of cloth. He took a piece of sack-cloth for His seat, sack-cloth for His bed and was content with wearing torn and worn out rags. He always said, "Poverty is better than kingship, far better than lordship. The Lord is always brother (befriender) of the poor."

Gangagir, the Vaishya householder saint Baba befriended, was also very fond of wrestling. Once, while he was wrestling, a similar feeling of dispassion came over him, and at the proper time, he heard the voice of an adept saying that he should wear out his body plying with God. So he, too, gave up samsara and turned towards God-realization. He established a math on the banks of the river near Puntambe and lived there with disciples.

Sai Baba did not mix and speak with the people. **He gave answers only when He was questioned.** By day, He always sat under the neem tree. Occasionally, He rested under the shade of a branch of a babul tree near the stream at the outskirts of the village. In the afternoon, He used to walk randomly and go at times to Nimgaon. There, He frequented the house of Trimbakji Dengale. Shri Sai Baba loved Mr. Babasaheb Dengale. His younger brother, Nanasaheb, had no son, though he married a second wife. Babasaheb sent Nanasaheb to take darshan of Sai Baba, and after some time, with Baba's grace, Nanasaheb's wife had a son. From that time, people began to come in numbers to see Sai Baba. His fame began to spread and reached Ahmednagar, where Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Keshav Chitambar and many others lived, who then began to come to Shirdi. Baba was surrounded by His devotees during the day.

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Translation:

I bow to the Lord Sai Nath, who by His constant stay at the foot of the neem tree, made it ooze nectar (the oozing of this tree is called amrit, i.e., nectar, on account of its healing properties) and although it formerly was bitter and unpleasant, Baba's presence made this nectar sweet, thus causing it to become better than the kalpa-vriksha (wish fulfilling tree). Naik. Jakhadi (Nana Pujari) now does the worship and Sagun Meru Naik offers the naivedya and lights the evening lamps.

Bhai Krishnaji was originally a devotee of Akkalkotkar Maharaj. He had come to Shirdi for the installation of the padukas in shaka 1834 (1912) on his way to Akkalkot. He wanted to go to Akkalkot after the installation of the padukas and, after taking Baba's darshan, take his leave. He asked Baba's permission for that. Baba said, "Oh, what is there in Akkalkot? Why are you going there?" Hearing this, Bhai did not go to Akkalkot and would come instead to Shirdi from time to time.

At night, He slept in an old dilapidated masjid. Baba's paraphernalia at that time consisted of a chilim, tobacco, a "tumrel" (tin pot), a long flowing kafni, a piece of cloth round His head, and a satka (short stick) which He always kept with Him. The piece of white cloth on His head was twisted like matted hair and flowed down from His left ear onto His back. This was not washed for weeks. He wore no shoes or sandals. A piece of sack-cloth was His seat for most of the day. He wore a coupon (waist-cloth band) and, for warding off the cold, He always sat in front of a dhuni (sacred fire) facing south, with His left hand resting on the wooden railing. In that dhuni, He offered as oblation, egoism, desires, and all thoughts. He always uttered **Allah Malik (God is the sole owner)**. The masjid in which He sat, and where all devotees came and saw Him, was only about eight feet long. After 1912, there was a change. The old masjid was repaired and a pavement was constructed. Before Baba came to live in this masjid, He lived for a long time in a place meant for fakirs to stay, where, with ghunghur (small, hollow, sounding bells) on his legs, Baba danced attractively to the rhythm of a hand drum and sang with tender love.

### **Turning Water into Oil**

Sai Baba was very fond of lights. He used to borrow oil from shop keepers and keep earthen dishes with wicks burning the whole night in the masjid and temple. This went on for some time. The banias who supplied oil gratis once met together and decided not to give Baba oil. When, as usual, Baba went to ask for oil, they all gave a distinct "No". Unperturbed, Baba returned to the masjid. He kept the dry wicks in earthen dishes. The banias were watching with curiosity. Baba took the tumrel (tin pot) which contained only a few drops of oil, poured water in it, and drank it. After consecrating the draught in this way, He again took water in the tin pot, filled all the earthen dishes with it, and then lit the wicks. To the surprise and dismay of the watching banias, the wicks in the earthen dishes began to burn and kept burning the whole night. The banias repented and apologized. Baba forgave them and asked them to be more truthful in the future.

### **The Pseudo-guru Javhar Ali**

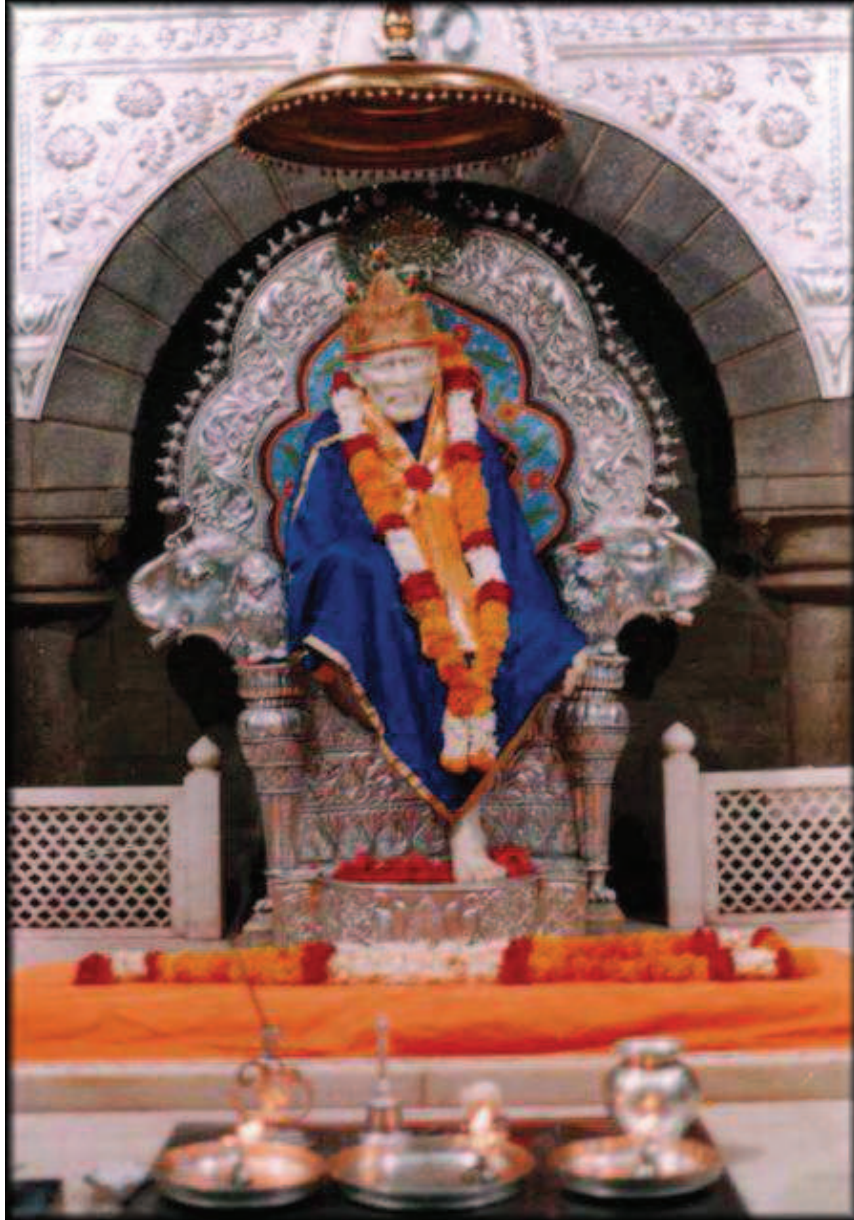
Five years after the wrestling bout mentioned above, a fakir from Ahmednagar named Javhar Ali came to Rahata with his disciple and stayed in a bakhali (open space) near the Virabhadra temple. The fakir was learned, could repeat the whole Koran, and had a sweet tongue. Many religious and devout people of the village came to him and began to respect him. With the help of the people, he started to build an idga (a wall before which Mohammedans pray on Idga day) near the Virabhadra temple. There was a quarrel about

this affair, on account of which, Javhar Ali had to leave Rahata. He then came to Shirdi and lived in the masjid with Baba. People were captured by his sweet talk. He also bewitched Baba and began to call Him his disciple. Baba did not object and consented to be his chela. Then, both guru and chela decided to return to Rahata and live there. The guru never knew his disciple's worth, but the disciple knew the defects of the guru, still, He never disrespected him, observing carefully His duties. He served the master in various ways. They used to come to Shirdi occasionally, but their main stay was in Rahata. The loving devotees in Shirdi did not like Baba being away from them in Rahata, so they went in a deputation to take Baba back to Shirdi. When they met Baba near the idga and told Him the purpose for which they came, Baba said that the fakir was an ill tempered fellow. He would not leave him and they had better return to Shirdi without Him before the fakir returned. While they were thus talking, the fakir turned up and was very angry with them for trying to take away his disciple. A discussion ensued and it was finally decided that both the guru and chela should return to Shirdi, and so Javhar Ali and Baba returned and lived in Shirdi. But after a few days, the guru was tested by Devidas and found wanting. (Twelve years before Baba arrived in Shirdi with the Chand Patil marriage party, this Devidas, aged about ten or twelve years, came to Shirdi and lived in the Maruti temple. Devidas had fine features and brilliant eyes. He was dispassion incarnate, and a jnani. Many persons, namely Tatya Kote, Kashinath and others regarded him as their guru.) They brought Javhar Ali into Devidas's presence and in the discussion that followed, Javhar was worsted and fled from Shirdi. He left and stayed in Vaijapur and returned many years later to Shirdi, whereby he prostrated himself before Sai Baba. The delusion that he was the guru and Sai Baba his chela was cleared away, and as he repented, Sai Baba treated him with respect. In this case, Sai Baba showed by actual conduct, how one should get rid of egoism and do the duties of a disciple to attain the highest end, viz. Self-realization. This story is told here according to the version given by Mhalasapati (a great devotee of Baba).

The next chapter will describe the Rama Navami Festival, the masjid, its former condition and later improvement etc.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Samadhi Mandir Shirdi



# Chapter VI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **RAMA NAVAMI FESTIVAL AND MASJID REPAIRS - Efficacy of the Touch of the Guru's Hand - The Rama Navami Festival - Its Origin, Transformation etc. Repairs to the Masjid**

Before describing the Rama Navami Festival and masjid repairs, the author makes some preliminary remarks about the satguru as follows:

#### **Efficacy of the Touch of the Guru's Hand**

When the satguru is our true helmsman, we are carried safely and easily beyond the worldly ocean. The word satguru brings to mind Sai Baba. He appears to me as if standing before me, applying udi (sacred ash) on my forehead with His hand placed on my head in blessing. Then, joy fills my heart and love beams through my eyes with the power of the wonderful touch of the guru's hand. **The subtle body (consisting of thoughts and desires) which cannot be burnt by the world dissolving fire, is destroyed by the mere touch of the guru's hand and the sins of many past births are cleansed and washed away.** Even the speech of those who feel annoyed when they hear religious and godly talk attains calmness. Just seeing Sai Baba's handsome form overwhelms the heart with emotion and floods the eyes with tears. It awakens in us, 'I am He (Brahma)' consciousness, and manifests the joy of Self-realization. Dissolving the distinction of I and Thou, the satguru makes us one with the supreme One reality.

Whenever I read the scriptures, I am reminded constantly of my satguru, Sai Baba, who assumes the form of Rama or Krishna and makes me listen to stories of His life. For

instance, when I sit and listen to *Bhagwat*, Sai becomes Krishna and I think it is He who sings the *Bhagwat* or *Uddhava Gita* (song of Lord Shri Krishna's teachings to his disciple, Uddhava) for the welfare of the devotees. When I begin to chitchat, I am at once reminded of Sai's stories which enable me to give suitable illustrations. When I personally start to write anything, I cannot compose even a few words or sentences, but when Baba, of His own accord, makes me write, I go on writing and writing with ease.

When the disciple's egoism pops up, He presses it down with His hand. The bhakta then acknowledges it is God alone who is the creator and doer. If anyone prostrates before Sai and surrenders heart and soul to Him, then, unsolicited, all the chief objects of life, viz. dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (deliverance) are easily attained. The four paths of karma, jnana, yoga and bhakti respectively lead us separately to God. Of these, **the path of bhakti is thorny and full of pits and ditches and thus, difficult to traverse. But if one, relying on the satguru, walks straight, the destination (God) will surely be reached. So says Sai Baba.**

After philosophising about the Self-Existent Brahma, His power (maya) to create, sustain and dissolve this world and universe, and stating that all these three are ultimately one and the same, the author quotes Sai Baba's words guaranteeing the welfare of the bhaktas:

**"There will never be any dearth or scarcity regarding food and clothes in My devotees' home. It is My special characteristic that I always look to, and provide for, the welfare of those devotees who worship Me wholeheartedly with their minds ever fixed on Me. Lord Krishna has also said the same in the Gita. Therefore, do not strive too much for food and clothes. If you want anything, beg of the Lord. Leave worldly honor. Do not be deluded by it. Try to get the Lord's grace and blessings and be honored in His court. The form of the deity should be firmly fixed in the mind. Let all the senses and mind be ever devoted to the worship of the Lord. Let there be no attraction for anything else. Fix the mind in remembering Me always, so that it will not wander elsewhere, towards body, wealth and home. Then it will be calm, peaceful and carefree. This is the sign of the mind being well engaged in good company. If the mind be vagrant, it cannot be called well merged."**

After quoting these words, the author goes on to relate the story of the Rama Navami Festival in Shirdi. As Rama Navami is the greatest festival celebrated in Shirdi, another more detailed account, as published in 'Sai Leela' magazine, 1925, page 197, is also



referred to and a summary of the festival as related in both these accounts is attempted here.

## Origin

Mr. Gopalrao Gund, a Circle Inspector at Kopergaon, was a great devotee of Baba. He had no issue. With Sai Baba's blessings, a son was born to him. In the joy that he felt regarding this event, an idea of celebrating a fair or 'urus' occurred to him. In the year 1897, he placed it for consideration before other Shirdi devotees, viz. Tatya Patil, Dada Kote Patil and Madhavarao Deshpande. They all approved of the idea and got Sai Baba's permission and blessings. Then, an application for getting the collector's sanction for celebrating the urus was made. The village kulkarni, however, reported against holding the fair, and the sanction was refused, but as Sai Baba had blessed the idea, they tried again and ultimately succeeded in getting the collector's sanction. After consultation with Baba, the day for the 'urus' was set for the Rama Navami Day. It seems Baba had some end in view in this, viz. the unification of the two fairs or festivals, (the Urus and the Rama Navami), as well as the unification of the two communities - the Hindus and the Mohammedans. As seen in future events, this end or object was achieved.

Permission was obtained, but other difficulties cropped up. Shirdi was a village and there was a scarcity of water. There were two wells in the village. The one which had been in use, dried up and the water of the other, was brackish. This brackish water was turned into sweet water by Sai Baba throwing flowers into it. The water of this well, however, was insufficient, so Tatya Patil had to arrange to get water from another well at a considerable distance by fixing moats (leather sacks) thereupon.

Various arrangements had to be made in preparation for the festival. Temporary shops had to be constructed and wrestling bouts were arranged. Gopalrao Gund had a friend named Damu Anna Kasar of Ahmednagar. He, too, had been similarly unhappy in the matter of progeny, though he had married two wives. He, too, was blessed by Sai Baba with sons and Mr. Gund prevailed upon him to prepare and supply a simple flag for the procession of the fair. He also succeeded in inducing Mr. Nanasaheb Nimonkar to supply an embroidered flag. Both these flags were taken in procession through the village and finally placed at the two ends (or corners) of the masjid, which was called Dwarkamai by Sai Baba.

## **The 'Sandal' Procession**

There was another procession started in this fair. This idea of 'sandal' procession originated with Amir Shakkar Dalal, a Mohammedan bhakta of Korahla. The sandal procession is held in honor of great moslem saints. Sandal, i.e. chandan paste and scrappings, are put in thali (flat dishes), which are carried in procession through the village to the accompaniment of band and music and burning incense. Then, after the return to the masjid, the contents of the dishes are thrown on the 'nimbar' (nitche) and walls of the masjid by hand. This ceremony was performed by Amir Shakkar for the first three years and thereafter, by his wife.

Thus, on the same day, the procession of the 'Flags' by the Hindus and that of 'Sandal' by the Moslems, went on simultaneously and has been carried out peacefully each year thereafter, and it is still going on without any hitch.

## **Arrangement**

This festival was very dear and sacred to the devotees of Sai Baba. Most of them turned out for the occasion and took a leading part in the management of the fair. Tatya Kote Patil handled all external affairs, while the internal management was left entirely to Radha Krishna Mai, a female devotee of Baba. Her home was full of guests for the occasion and she had to look after their needs, as well as arrange all the paraphernalia for the fair. Another task which she willingly performed, was to clean and white wash the entire masjid, its walls and floor, which were blackened and full of soot on account of the ever burning dhuni (sacred fire) of Sai Baba. She did this work the previous night when Sai Baba went to sleep in the Chavadi. (Sai Baba alternated nights, sleeping one night in the masjid, and the next in the Chavadi, and so forth.) Radha Krishna Mai had to take out all the things from the masjid, including the dhuni, and after thorough cleaning and whitewashing, she had to replace everything as it was before.

Feeding the poor, which was so dear to Sai Baba, was also a great item in this fair. For this purpose, cooking on a grand scale and preparing various sweet dishes, was done in Radha Krishna Mai's house. Various wealthy devotees took a leading part in this work.



## **Transformation of the Urus into the Rama Navami Festival**

The celebrations continued in this way and the fair was gradually increasing in importance until 1912, when a change took place. That year, a devotee by the name of Krishnarao Jageshwar Bhishma, (the author of the pamphlet “Sai Sagunopasana”), came to the fair with Dadasaheb Khaparde of Amraoti and was staying in the Dixit Wada. While relaxing out on the verandah, Bhishma saw Laxmanrao, alias Kaka Mahajani, carrying puja materials to the masjid and an idea arose in his mind. He thus called out to Kaka, “There is some providential arrangement in the fact that the urus, or fair, is celebrated in Shirdi on the Rama Navami Day. This day is very dear to all the Hindus. Why, then, not begin the Rama Navami Festival - the celebration of the birth of Shri Rama - here on this day?” Kaka Mahajani liked the idea and it was arranged to get Baba’s permission in this matter. The main difficulty was how to secure a haridas who would perform kirtan (sing the glories of the Lord on the occasion). But Bhishma solved the difficulty, saying that his Rama Akhyam (composition on Rama’s birth) was ready and he would do the kirtan himself, while Kaka Mahajani would play the harmonium. It was also arranged that Radha Krishna Mai would prepare the sunthavada (ginger powder mixed with sugar) for the prasad. Having made all the arrangements, they immediately went to the masjid to get Baba’s permission. Baba, who knew all things and what was transpiring there, asked Kaka Mahajani as to what was going on in the wada. Being rather perturbed, Mahajani could not catch the purport of the question and remained silent. Then Baba asked Bhishma what he had to say. He explained the idea of celebrating the Rama Navami Festival and asked Baba’s permission for such, which Baba gladly gave. All rejoiced and made preparations for the Jayanti Festival. The next day, the masjid was decorated with buntings etc. A cradle in honor of the birth of Lord Rama was supplied by Radha Krishna Mai and was placed in front of Baba’s seat. The proceedings began and Bhishma stood up to sing the kirtan and Mahajani played the harmonium. Then Baba took a garland from the nimbar (nitche) and placed it around Kaka Mahajani’s neck and sent another garland for Bhishma. The kirtan then commenced. When it came to a close, cries of “Victory to Rama” rang out everywhere and gulal (red powder) was thrown all around in the air amidst band and music.

Everyone was overjoyed, when suddenly, a roar was heard. The red powder thrown freely all around somehow entered into Baba’s eyes. Baba became wild and began to

scold and abuse loudly. Those intimate devotees who knew Baba well took these scoldings of Baba as blessings in disguise.

They thought that in honor of when Rama was born, it was proper for Baba to get wild and enraged, to kill Ravana and his demons in the form of egoism and wicked thoughts etc. Besides, they knew when something new was undertaken at Shirdi, it was quite usual for Baba to get wild and angry, and so they kept quiet. Radha Krishna Mai was rather afraid and thought Baba might break her cradle, so she asked Mahajani to get the cradle back. When he went to loosen and unfasten the cradle, Baba went over to him and told him not to remove it. Then, after some time, Baba became calm and the day's program, including mahapuja and arati, was finished. Later, Mahajani asked Baba's permission to remove the cradle. Baba again refused, saying that the festival was not yet finished.

The next day, another kirtan and Gopal-Kala ceremony were performed whereby an earthen pot containing parched rice mixed with curds was hung, then broken after the kirtan, and the contents thereof distributed to all (as was done by Lord Krishna amongst his cowherd friends).

Afterward, Baba allowed the cradle to be removed. While the Rama Navami Festival was thus going on, the procession of the two flags by day, and that of the 'sandal' by night, went on with the usual pomp and eclat. From that time onward, the 'Urus of Baba' was transformed into the Rama Navami Festival.

In the next year (1913), the items in the program of Rama Navami began to increase. Radha Krishna Mai started a 'Nama Saptaha' (singing the glory of God's name continuously day and night for seven days) on the first day of Chaitra. In this program, all devotees took part by turns and sometimes Radha Krishna Mai joined them early in the morning.

As the Rama Navami Festival is celebrated in many places all over the country, the difficulty of getting a haridas again arose, but five or six days before the festival, Mahajani accidentally met Balabuva Mali, who was known as a modern Tukaram, and requested him to perform the kirtan that year.

In the following year, (1914) Balabuva Satarkar of Birhadsiddha Kavathe, District Satara, could not act as a haridas in his own place as cholera was prevailing in his town, so

Kakasaheb Dixit arranged for him to come to Shirdi (with Baba's permission). He did the kirtan and was sufficiently recompensed for his labor. The difficulty of getting a new haridas every year was finally solved by Sai Baba, who entrusted this function to Das Ganu Maharaj permanently. After Das Ganu Maharaj expired, this function became entrusted to an employee of the Shirdi Sansthan.

Since 1912, this festival began to grow gradually year by year. From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of Chaitra, Shirdi looked like a bee hive of men. Shops began to increase. Celebrated wrestlers took part in wrestling bouts. Feeding of the poor was done on a large scale and the exertions of Radha Krishna Mai turned Shirdi into a Sansthan (State). Paraphernalia increased. A beautiful horse, a palanquin, chariot, and many silver utensils, pots, buckets, pictures, mirrors, etc. were presented. Elephants were also sent for the procession. Though all this paraphernalia increased enormously, Sai Baba ignored all these things and maintained His simplicity as before. It is to be noted that the Hindus and the Mohammedans have worked in unison in both processions, as well as during the entire festival, with no quarrel between them. At first, about 5,000 to 7,000 people used to congregate, but the figure increased to 75,000 in later years. Still, there was no outbreak of any epidemic or any riots of note during these many past years.

### **Repairs to the Masjid**

Another important idea occurred to Gopal Gund. Just as he started the 'urus' or fair, he thought he should have the masjid put in order. At first, Baba was unwilling to allow them to have these repairs done, but with the intervention of Mhalasapati, a local devotee of Baba, His permission was secured. In order to carry out the repairs, Gopal Gund collected stones and had them prepared. Then, Nanasaheb Chandorkar set to work to do the stonework restoration. The pavement work was assigned to Kakasaheb Dixit. The pavement in the masjid was completed in one night and Baba took a small gadi for His seat, discarding the usual piece of sack cloth used before. In 1911, the sabha-mandap (courtyard) was also put in order with great labor and exertion. The open space in front of the masjid was very small and inconvenient. Kakasaheb Dixit wanted to extend it and put a roof over it. At great expense, he had iron posts, pillars and trusses hauled in and started the work. During the night, all the devotees worked hard and fixed the posts, but Baba, when He left the Chavadi the next morning, uprooted them all and threw them out. Once, it so happened that Baba got very excited, caught a pole with one hand, began to shake and uproot it, and with the other hand, caught Tatya Patil's neck. He forcibly took

Tatya's pheta, struck a match, set it on fire and threw it in a pit. At that time, Baba's eyes flashed like burning embers. None dared look at him. Everyone became terribly frightened. Baba then took out a rupee from His pocket and threw it on the fire, as if it were an offering on an auspicious occasion. Tatya was very frightened. None knew what was going to happen to Tatya and none dared to interfere. Bhagoji Shinde, the leper devotee of Baba, boldly advanced a little, but he, too, was thrust aside by Baba. Madhavarao (Shama) was also similarly treated, he being pelted with brick pieces. So all those who went to intercede, were dealt with similarly. But after some time, Baba's anger cooled down. He sent for a shopkeeper, from whom He got a jari embroidered pheta, and tied it on Tatya's head Himself, as if it was a special honor. All the people were wonderstruck to see this strange behavior of Baba. They were at a loss to know what enraged Baba so suddenly, what led Him to assault Tatya Patil, and why His anger cooled down the very next moment. Baba was sometimes very calm and quiet and talked affectionately, but soon after, with or without any pretext, He would become enraged. Many such incidents may be related, but I do not know which to choose and which to omit. I, therefore, refer to them as they occur to me.

In the next chapter, the question as to whether Baba was a Hindu or a Mohammedan will be taken up. His yogic practices and powers and other matters will be described.

**Bow to Shri Sai Baba - Peace be to all**

# Chapter VII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Wonderful Incarnation - Behavior of Sai Baba - His Yogic Practices  
- His All Pervasiveness - Leper Devotee's Service - Master  
Khaparde's Plague Case - Going to Pandharpur - Wonderful  
Incarnation**

Sai Baba knew all the yogic practices. He was well versed in the six processes, including dhauti (stomach cleaning by a moistened piece of linen 3 inches wide and 22 ½ feet in length), khanda yoga (separating His limbs and joining them again) and samadhi etc. If you think He was a Hindu, He looked like a Yavan. If you think Him to be a Yavan, He looked like a pious Hindu. No one knew definitely whether He was a Hindu or a Mohammedan. He celebrated the Hindu festival of Rama Navami with all due formalities, and at the same time, permitted the 'Sandal' procession of the Mohammedans. He encouraged wrestling bouts in those festivals and gave good prizes to winners. When the Gokul Ashtami came, He had the Gopal Kala ceremony duly performed and on Id festivals, He allowed the Mohammedans to chant their prayers (nimaj) in His masjid. Once, in the Mohurum festival, some Mohammedans proposed to construct a tajiya or tabut in the masjid, keep it there for a few days, and then take it in procession through the village. Sai Baba allowed them to keep the tabut for four days, and on the fifth day, He removed it from the masjid without the least compunction. If we say he was a Mohammedan, His ears were pierced (i.e. had holes according to Hindu custom). If you think He was a Hindu, He advocated the practice of circumcision (though according to Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who observed Him closely, He was not Himself circumcised. Vide article in 'Sai Leela' on "Baba Hindu ki Yavan" by B.V. Deo, page 562.) If you call Him Hindu, He always lived in the masjid; if Mohammedan, He always had the dhuni (sacred fire). He also allowed the

following Hindu practices which are contrary to the Mohammedan religion, i.e. grinding on the hand-mill, blowing the conch, ringing bells, oblation in fire, bhajan, giving of food, and worshiping Baba's holy feet by means of arghya (water). If you think He was a Mohammedan, the best of Brahmins and Agnihotris, leaving aside their orthodox ways, fell prostrate at His feet. Those who made inquiries about his nationality, were dumbfounded and were captured by His darshan, so none could definitely decide whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or a Mohammedan.\* This is no wonder, for he who completely surrenders himself to the Lord by getting rid of his egoism and body consciousness and thus, becomes one with Him, has nothing to do with any questions of caste or nationality. Sai Baba was such a saint. He saw no difference between the various castes or even between beings and beings. He took meat and fish with fakirs, but did not grumble when dogs touched the dishes with their mouths.

Such a unique and wonderful incarnation was Sai Baba! On account of the merits in my past birth, I had the good fortune to sit at His feet and enjoy His blessed company. The joy and delight I derived therefrom was incomparable. In fact, Sai Baba was pure ananda and consciousness. I cannot sufficiently describe Him, His greatness and uniqueness. He was established in His own Self and we took delight at His feet. Many sannyasis, sadhakas and all sorts of men aspiring for salvation came to Sai Baba. He always walked, talked and laughed with them and always uttered the words '**Allah Malik' (God is the sole owner)**'. He never liked discussions or arguments. He was always calm and controlled. Though irritable at times, He always preached full vedanta and nobody knew until the last, who Baba was. Princes and poor people were

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\* Note - (1) Mhalasapati, an intimate Shirdi devotee of Baba, who always slept with Him in the masjid and Chavadi, said that Sai Baba told him that He was a Brahmin of Pathri and was handed over to a fakir in His infancy. When He said this, some men from Pathri had come and Baba was inquiring about various men from that place. (vide 'Sai Leela' 1924, pg. 179) (2) Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar, the famous learned woman of Poona says in experience No. 8, published on page 79, 'Sai Leela' vol. 14, 1934, "On hearing of Baba's miracles, we were discussing according to our theosophic convention and fashion whether Sai Baba belonged to the Black or White Lodge. Once, when I went to Shirdi, I was thinking seriously about this. As soon as I approached the steps of the masjid, Baba came to the front, and pointing to His chest and staring at me, spoke rather vehemently, "This is a Brahmin, pure Brahmin. He has nothing to do with black things. No black practitioner can dare step in here. He dare not." Again, pointing to His chest, "This Brahmin can bring lacs of men on the white path and take them to their destination. This is a Brahmin's masjid and I won't allow any black practitioner to cast his shadow here."

treated alike by Him. He knew the innermost secrets of all, and when He gave expression to them, all were surprised. He was a treasure of knowledge, still, He feigned ignorance. He also disliked honor. Such were the characteristics of Sai Baba. Though He had a human body, His deeds were godly. All people considered Him as the Lord God in Shirdi.

### **Behavior of Sai Baba**

Frail that I am, I cannot describe Baba's miracles. He had all the temples in Shirdi repaired. Through Tatya Patil, the temples of Shani, Ganapati, Shankar-Parvati, Village deity and Maruti were put in order. His charity was also remarkable. The money He used to collect as dakshina was freely distributed. He used to give Rs.10/ to Rs. 50/ to any one at His sweet will.

People were immensely benefitted by having a darshan of Baba. Some became hale and hearty. Wicked people were changed into good ones, and many people had their desires fulfilled. In some cases, kushta (leprosy) was cured. Without any herbal juice or medicine being put into the eyes, some blind men got back their sight, and some lame ones were able to walk again. No one could comprehend the extent of His extraordinary greatness. His fame spread far and wide and pilgrims from all over flocked to Shirdi.

Baba always sat near the dhuni and eased himself there, and always sat in meditation, sometimes with, and at other times, without a bath. In the early days, He wore a white turban, a clean dhoti and a shirt. He started practicing medicine in the village, examined patients and gave them medicine. He was always successful and He became famous as a hakim (doctor). A curious case may be narrated here. One devotee's eyeballs were quite red and swollen. A doctor was not available in Shirdi, so some devotees took him to Baba. Other doctors would use ointments, anjans, cow's milk, camphorated drugs, etc. in such type cases. Baba's remedy was quite unique. He pounded some 'beebe' (carpus ana cardium - i.e. marking nut), made two balls, thrust them in each eye of the patient, and bandaged the eyes. The next day, the bandage was removed and a stream of water was poured over the eyes. The inflammation subsided and the pupils became clear as before. Although the eye is a very delicate organ, still, the beebe caused no smarting, and removed the disease from the poor man's eyes. Many such cases were cured by Sai Baba.



## **Baba's Yoga Practices**

Baba knew all the processes and practices of yoga. Two of them are described here:

(1) **Dhauti or cleaning process:** Baba used to go to the well near a banyan tree at a considerable distance from the masjid, wash his mouth and have a bath. On one occasion, He was seen to vomit out His intestines, clean them inside and outside, and place them on a jamb tree for drying. There are people in Shirdi who have actually seen this and who have testified to this fact. Ordinary dhauti is done by a moistened piece of linen, three inches wide and 22 ½ feet long. This piece is gulped down the throat and allowed to remain in the stomach for about half an hour where it is then reacted upon. It is then taken out. But Baba's dhauti was quite unique and extraordinary. (2) **Khanda yoga:** In this practice Baba severed the various limbs from His body and strew them separately at different places in the masjid. Once, a gentleman went to the masjid and saw the limbs of Baba lying here and there. He was very terrified. He immediately thought of running to the village officers to inform them about Baba having been hacked to pieces and murdered, but then realized he would be held responsible, as he was the first informant and knew something of the affair, so he decided to keep quiet. The next day when he went to the masjid, he was very much surprised to see Baba hale and hearty, just as sound as before. He thought the horror he had seen the previous day was only a dream.

Baba practiced yoga since his infancy and nobody knew or could guess the proficiency He attained. He charged no fees for His cures and became famous by virtue of His merits. He restored health to many a poor and suffering person. This famous doctor of doctors did not care for His own interests, but rather, always worked for the good and welfare of others, suffering Himself unbearable and terrible pain many a time in the process.

One such example, showing the all pervasive and most merciful character of Sai Baba, will now be described.

## **Baba's All Pervasiveness and Mercy**

In the year 1910 during the holiday of Divali, Baba was sitting near the dhuni



warming Himself. He was pushing fire wood into the dhuni which was burning brightly. A little later, instead of pushing logs of wood, Baba shoved His arm into the dhuni. His arm was scorched and burnt immediately. This was noticed by the servant Madhava and also by Madhavarao Deshpande. They ran over to Baba at once. Madhavarao clasped Baba by His waist from behind and dragged Him forcibly backward and asked, "Deva, why have you done this?" Baba then came to His senses and replied, "The wife of a blacksmith in a distant place was working the bellows of a furnace when her husband called her. Forgetting that her child was borne on her waist, she ran hastily, and the child slipped into the furnace. I immediately thrust My hand into the furnace and saved the child. I do not mind My arm being burnt, because I am glad that the life of the child was saved."

### **Leper Devotee's Service**

On hearing the news from Madhavarao Deshpande of Baba's hand and arm being burnt, Nanasaheb Chandorkar, accompanied by the famous Doctor Parmanand of Bombay with his medical supplies consisting of ointments, lint and bandages etc., rushed to Shirdi and requested Baba to allow Dr. Parmanand to examine the hand and arm and dress the wound caused by the burn. This offer was refused. Ever since the burn occurred, the wound was dressed by the leper devotee, Bhagoji Shinde. His treatment consisted of massaging the burnt part with ghee and then placing a leaf over it and bandaging it tightly with pattis. Nanasaheb Chandorkar solicited Baba many a time to unfasten the pattis and get the wound examined, dressed and treated by Dr. Parmanand, the object being that the wound would heal quickly. Dr. Parmanand, himself, made many requests, but Baba postponed the help and would not allow His wound to be examined, saying that Allah was His doctor. Dr. Parmanand's medicines were not exposed to the air of Shirdi, as they remained unopened, but he had the good fortune of getting the darshan of Sai Baba. Bhagoji was allowed to treat the wound daily. After a few days, the wound healed and all were happy. Still, we do not know if any trace of pain was left or not. Every morning Bhagoji went through his procedure of loosening the pattis, massaging the arm with ghee, and tightly bandaging it again. This went on until Baba's samadhi. Sai Baba, the perfect siddha that He was, did not really want this treatment, but out of love for His devotee, He allowed the 'upasana' service of Bhagoji to go on and on, uninterrupted.

Bhagoji was greatly blessed by Baba. When Baba would start out for Lendi, Bhagoji would hold an umbrella over Him and accompany Him. Every morning when Baba sat near the post close to the dhuni, Bhagoji was present and started his service. Bhagoji was a sinner in his past birth. He was suffering from leprosy, his fingers had shrunk, his body

was full of pus and stunk badly. Though outwardly he seemed so unfortunate, he was really very lucky and happy, for he was the premier servant of Baba and had the benefit of His company.

### **Master Kharparde's Plague Case**

I shall now relate another instance of Baba's wonderful leelas. Mrs. Khaparde, the wife of Dadasaheb Kharparde of Amraoti, was staying at Shirdi with her young son. The son developed a high fever which then developed into bubonic plague. The mother was frightened and felt most uneasy. She thought of leaving Shirdi for Amraoti and went to ask Baba during His evening rounds (while He was approaching the wada, i.e. the present Samadhi Mandir) for His permission. She informed Him in a trembling tone that her dear young son was down with plague. Baba spoke kindly and softly to her, saying that the sky was beset with clouds, but they would melt and pass off. Everything would be smooth and clear. So saying, He lifted up His kafni to the waist and showed to all present, four fully developed bubos, as big as eggs, and added, "See how I have to suffer for My devotees? Their difficulties are mine." Seeing this unique and extraordinary deed (leela), the people were convinced as to how the saints suffer pains for their devotees. The minds of saints are full of compassion. They love their devotees without any idea of gain, and regard them as their true relatives.

### **Going to Pandharpur and Staying There**

I shall now close this chapter after relating a story illustrating how Sai Baba loved his devotees and anticipated their wishes and movements. Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was a great devotee of Baba, was mamlatdar at Nandurbar in Khandesh. His devotion to Sai Baba bore fruit as he received an order of transfer to go and stay at Pandharpur, which is regarded as 'bhuvai-kuntha' - heaven on earth. Nanasaheb had to take charge immediately, so he left Nandurbar for Pandharpur right away, without writing or informing anybody at Shirdi. He wanted to make a surprise visit to Shirdi - his Pandharpur, see and salute his Vithoba (Baba), and then proceed. Nobody dreamt of Nanasaheb's departure for Shirdi, but Sai Baba knew all about this, as His eyes were everywhere (omniscient). As soon as Nanasaheb approached Neemgaon, a few miles from Shirdi, there was a stir in Baba's masjid. Sai Baba was sitting and talking with Mhalasapati, Appa Shinde, and Kashiram, when He suddenly said, "Let's all four of us do some bhajan. The doors of Pandhari are open. Let us sing merrily." They then began to sing in chorus, the theme of

the song being, 'I have to go to Pandharpur and I must stay on there, for it is the house of my Lord.'

Baba sang and the devotees followed Him. In a short time, Nanasaheb arrived with his family, prostrated before Baba, and requested Him to accompany them to Pandharpur and stay with them

there. This solicitation was not necessary, as the devotees told Nanasaheb that Baba was already

in the mood to go to Pandharpur and stay there. Hearing that, Nanasaheb was moved and fell at Baba's feet. Then, getting Baba's permission, udi (sacred ashes) and blessings, Nanasaheb left for Pandharpur.

There is no end to Baba's stories, but let me now make a halt here, reserving for the next chapter other topics, such as the importance of human life, Baba's living on alms, Bayajabai's service and other stories.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter VIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Importance of Human Birth - Sai Baba Begging Food - Bayajabai's Service - Sai Baba's Dormitory - His Affection for Khushalchand**

Hemadpant begins this chapter with his remarks on the importance of human birth and then proceeds to relate how Sai Baba begged His food, how Bayajabai served Him, how Baba slept in the masjid with Taty Kote Patil and Mhalasapati, and how Baba loved Khushalchand of Rahata. **Importance of Human Birth**

In this wonderful universe, God has created billions (84 lacs according to Hindu shastra calculation) of creatures or beings (including gods, demigods, insects, beasts and men) that inhabit the heavens, hell, earth, ocean, sky and other intermediate regions. Of these, those creatures or souls whose merits preponderate, go to heaven and live there and enjoy the fruit of their actions, and when this is done, they are cast down, while those souls whose sins or demerits preponderate, go down to hell and suffer the consequences of their misdeeds for so long a time as they deserve. When their merits and demerits balance each other, they are born on earth as human beings and are given a chance to work out their salvation. Ultimately, when they are completely rid of their merits and demerits, they get their deliverance and become free. To be brief, souls get their births, or transmigrations, according to their deeds and intelligence (development of their minds).

### **Special Value of the Human Body**

As we all know, four desires are common to all creatures, viz. food, sleep, fear and sexual union. In the case of man, he is endowed with a special faculty, viz. knowledge,

with the help of which he can attain God vision, which is impossible in any other type of birth. It is for this reason human beings are fortunate, for they have the opportunity to be born as men on earth, so as to get their final deliverance.

Some say there is nothing worse than the human body which is full of filth, mucus, phlegm and dirt, and which is subject to decay, disease and death. This is no doubt true to a certain extent, but in spite of these drawbacks and defects, the special value of the human body is - that man has the capacity to acquire knowledge. It is only due to the human mind's use of attained knowledge that one can think of the perishable and transitory nature of the body and of the world itself and thus, develop a disgust for sense enjoyments. By discriminating between the unreal and the real, God vision is attained. So, if we reject or neglect the body because it is filthy, we lose the chance of God vision, and if we fondle it and run after sense enjoyments, we live in darkness. The proper course, therefore, is to pursue the following: the body should neither be neglected nor fondled, but should be properly cared for, just as a traveler on horseback takes care of his pony on the way until he reaches his destination and returns home. Thus, the body should ever be used or engaged to attain God vision or Self-realization, the supreme goal of life.

It is said that though God created various sorts of creatures, He was not satisfied, for none of them was able to know and appreciate His work, so He had to create a special being - man - and endow him with a special faculty, viz. intelligence. When God was able to see that man was capable of appreciating His leela (marvelous work and intelligence), He was highly pleased and satisfied. (vide *Bhagawat* 11-9-28). Therefore, it is good fortune to get a human body, and better still, to get an opportunity of having recourse at Sai Baba's feet and surrendering to Him.

### **Man's Endeavor**

Realizing how precious human life is, and knowing that death is certain and may snatch us at any time, we should be ever alert to achieve the object of our life - God realization. We should not make the least delay, but make haste to gain our object. So with all earnestness and determination, we should strive to attain our end, i.e. Self-realization. Casting aside sloth and laziness, and warding off drowsiness, we should meditate on the Self day and night. If we fail to do this, we reduce ourselves to the level of beasts.

### **How to Proceed ?**

The most effective and direct way to gain Self-realization is to approach a worthy saint or

sage - satguru - who has himself attained God vision. What cannot be achieved by hearing religious lectures and the study of religious works, is easily obtained in the company of such worthy souls. Just as the sun alone gives light which all the stars put together cannot give, so the satguru alone imparts spiritual wisdom which all the sacred books and sermons cannot infuse. His actions and words provide hidden teachings. The virtues of forgiveness, serenity, disinterestedness, charity, benevolence, control of mind and body, egolessness etc. are observed by the disciples as they are being practiced by such pure and holy company. This enlightens the disciples' minds and lifts them up spiritually. Sai Baba was such a sage or satguru. Though He acted as a fakir (mendicant), He was always engrossed in the Self. He saw God or divinity in all beings and loved all equally. He was not elated by pleasures, nor depressed by misfortunes. A king and a pauper were the same to Him. He, whose glance would turn a beggar into a king, used to beg His food from door to door in Shirdi. Let us now see how He did it.

### **Baba Begging Food**

Blessed are the people of Shirdi in front of whose houses Baba stood as a beggar and called out, "Oh Lassie, give Me a piece of bread" with His hand stretched out to receive the same. In one hand, He carried a timrel (tin pot), and in the other, a zoli or choupadari, i.e. a rectangular piece of cloth. He daily visited certain houses and went from door to door. Liquid, or semi liquid things, such as soup, vegetables, milk or buttermilk were received in the tin pot, while cooked rice, bread and solid things were taken in the zoli. Baba's tongue knew no taste, as He had acquired control over it. So how could He care for the taste of the different things collected together? Whatever things He got in His zoli and tin pot were mixed together and partaken by Baba to His heart's content. Whether particular things were tasty or otherwise was never noticed by Baba, as if His tongue were devoid of the sense of taste altogether. Baba begged till noon, but His begging was very irregular. Some days He went a few rounds, on other days, up to twelve noon. The food thus collected was thrown in a kundi, i.e. earthen pot. Dogs, cats and crows freely ate from it and Baba never drove them away. The woman who swept the floor of the masjid took some 10 or 12 pieces of bread to her house and nobody prevented her from doing so. How could He, who even in dreams never warded off cats and dogs by harsh words and signs, refuse food to poor helpless people? Blessed indeed is the life of such a noble person! In the beginning, the people of Shirdi took Him for a mad fakir. He was known in the village by that name. How could one who lived on alms by begging a few crumbs of bread, be revered and respected? But this fakir was very liberal of heart and hand, disinterested and charitable. Though He appeared fickle and restless outwardly, He was firm and steady inside. His way was inscrutable. Still, even in that small village, there were a few kind and blessed people who recognized and regarded Him as a great soul. One

such incident is given below:

### **Bayajabai's Brilliant Service**

Tatya Kote's mother, Bayajabai, used to go to the woods every noon with a basket on her head containing bread and vegetables. She would roam in the jungles koss (about 3 miles) after koss, trampling over bushes and shrubs in search of the mad fakir, and after hunting Him out, she would fall at His feet. The fakir would sit calm and motionless in meditation while she placed a leaf before Him, spread the bread and vegetables thereupon, and fed him forcibly. How wonderful was her faith and service! Every day at noon, she would roam in the jungles and force Baba to partake lunch. Her service, upasana, penance, or by whatever name given it, was never forgotten by Baba right up until His mahasamadhi. Remembering fully what service she had rendered, Baba benefitted her son magnificently. Both the son and the mother had great faith in the fakir, who was their God.

Baba often said to them that "fakiri" (mendicancy) was the real Lordship, as it was everlasting. Wealth was evanescent.

After some years, Baba no longer went into the woods. He lived only in the village and took His food in the masjid. From that time on, Bayajabai's troubles of roaming in the jungles ended.

### **Dormitory of the Trio**

Blessed are the saints in whose hearts Vasudeo dwells, and fortunate indeed are the devotees who get the benefit of the company of such saints. Two such fortunate fellows, Tatya Kote Patil and Bhagat Mhalasapati, shared the company of Sai Baba. Baba loved them equally. These three individuals slept in the masjid with their heads facing east, west and north and with their feet touching one another's at the center. Stretching their beds, they lay on them chitchatting and gossiping about many things until late past midnight. If any one of them showed any signs of sleep, the others would wake him up. For instance, if Tatya began to snore, Baba would get up and shake him from side to side and press his head. If Mhalasapati became drowsy and ready to fall asleep, Baba would hug him close, stroke his legs and knead his back. In this way, for a full fourteen years, Tatya, having left his parents' home, slept in the masjid on account of his love for Baba. How happy and never to be forgotten were those days! How to measure that love and how to value the grace of Baba? After the passing away of his father, Tatya took charge of the household affairs and began to sleep at home.



## **Khushalchand of Rahata**

Baba loved Ganpat Kote Patil of Shirdi. He equally loved Chandrabhanshet Marwadi of Rahata. After the demise of that shet, Baba loved his nephew Khushalchand equally, or even perhaps more, and watched over his welfare day and night. Sometimes in a bullock cart, at other times in a tanga along with intimate friends, Baba went to Rahata. People of that village came out with band and music and received Baba at the ves or gate of the village and prostrated before Him. He then was taken into the village with great pomp and ceremony. Khushalchand took Baba to his house, seated Him on a comfortable seat and gave Him a good lunch. They would talk freely and merrily for some time, after which Baba returned to Shirdi, giving delight and blessings to all.

Shirdi is midway between, and equidistant from, Rahata (on the south side) and Nimgaon (on the north side). Baba never went beyond these places in His lifetime. He never saw any railway trains, nor traveled by one. Still, He knew exactly the schedule of arrival and departure of all the trains. Devotees who acted according to Baba's instructions (re: their departure), which were given by Him at the time of their taking His leave, fared well, while those who disregarded them, suffered many a mishap and accident. More about this and other matters will be told in the next chapter.

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Note: An incident given in the footnote at the end of this chapter showing Baba's love for Khushalchand, how He asked Kakasaheb Dixit one afternoon to go to Rahata and bring Khushalchand to Him, and how at the very same time, He appeared in Khushalchand's dream during his noon nap, asking him to come to Shirdi, is not given here as it is described in *Shri Sai Satcharita* (chapter 30).

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter IX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Effect of Compliance and Non-compliance with Baba's Orders at the Time of Taking Leave - (a few instances) - Mendicancy and Its Necessity - Devotees' Experiences (Tarkhad family's experiences) - Baba Fed Sumptuously - How?**

The end of the last chapter briefly indicated that the bhaktas who obeyed Baba's orders at the time of taking leave fared well and those who disobeyed them, suffered many a mishap. This statement will be amplified and illustrated with a few striking instances as well as by other matters dealt with in this chapter.

### **Characteristic of Shirdi Pilgrimage**

One peculiarity of Shirdi pilgrims was this: none could leave Shirdi without Baba's permission, and if one did leave, he invited untold sufferings. However, if anyone was asked to leave Shirdi, he could not stay any longer. Baba gave certain suggestions or hints when bhaktas went to bid Him goodbye and take His leave. These suggestions had to be followed. If they were not followed exactly, or were disregarded, accidents were sure to befall those who acted contrary to Baba's directions. Here are a few instances:

#### **Tatya Kote Patil**

Tatya Kote was once going in a tanga to Kopargaon bazar. He came in haste to the masjid, greeted Baba, and said that he would go to Kopargaon bazar. Baba said, "Don't make haste. Stop a little. Forego the bazar! Don't go out of the village." Seeing his anxiety to go, Baba asked him at the very least, to take Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande) with him. Disregarding this advice, Tatya Kote immediately got in his tanga and drove off. Of the two horses, one, which cost Rs. 300/, was very active and restless. After passing Sawul well, it began to run rashly, got a sprain in its waist, and fell down. Tatya was not

hurt much, but was reminded of Sai Baba's direction. On another occasion, while proceeding to Kolhar village, he disregarded Baba's instruction, and drove a tanga which met with a similar accident.

### **European Gentleman**

A European gentleman, with a specific object in mind, once came to Shirdi from Bombay with an introductory note from Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He was comfortably accommodated in a tent. The gentleman wanted to kneel before Baba and kiss His hand, so he tried thrice to step into the masjid, but Baba prevented him from doing so. He was asked to sit in the open courtyard below and take Baba's darshan from there. Not pleased with this reception, the man decided to leave Shirdi at once and came to bid Baba goodbye. Baba asked him to go the next day and not to hurry and many people urged the gentleman to abide by Baba's direction. Not listening to all of this, he left Shirdi in a tanga. At first, the horses ran alright, but when Sawul well was passed, a bicycle darted in front of the horses and frightened them, causing them to run fast. The tanga was turned topsy-turvy and the gentleman fell down and was dragged some distance. He was immediately released from the tanga, but had to go to Kopargaon hospital for treatment of the injuries he received.

Because of such experiences, everyone learnt the lesson that those who disobeyed Baba's instructions met with accidents in one way or the other, and those who obeyed them, were safe and happy.

### **The Necessity of Mendicancy**

Now to return to the question of mendicancy. A question may arise in the minds of some that if Baba was such a great being, God in fact, why should He have recourse to the begging bowl all His life? This question may be considered and replied to from two standpoints: (1) Who is fit to live by the begging bowl? Our Shastras state that those individuals who have become free from the three main desires, viz. (1) for progeny (2) for wealth and (3) for fame, and who accept sannyas, are those fit to live by begging alms. They cannot make cooking arrangements and dine at home. The duty of feeding them rests on the shoulders of the householders. Sai Baba was neither a householder nor a vanaprastha. He was a celibate sannyasi, i.e. sannyasi from boyhood. His firm conviction was that the universe was His home. He was the Lord Vasudeo - supporter of the universe and the imperishable Brahma. He, therefore, had the full right to have recourse to the begging bowl.

Now another standpoint will be taken regarding pancha soona - the five sins and their atonement. We all know that in order to prepare food stuffs and meals, householders have to go through five actions or processes, viz. (1) kandani - pounding (2) peshani - grinding, cleaning (3) udakumbhi - washing pots (4) marjani - sweeping and cleaning and (5) chulli - lighting hearths. These processes involve the destruction of many small insects and creatures, and thus the householders incur sin. In order to atone for this sin, our Shastras prescribe five kinds of sacrifices, viz. (1) Brahmavajna or (2) Vedadhyayan - offerings to Brahman or the study of the Vedas (3) Pitra-yajna - offerings to the ancestors (4) Deva yajna - offerings to the gods (5) Bhoota yajna - offerings to the great beings (6) Manushya-atithi yajna - offerings to men or uninvited guests. If these sacrifices enjoined by the Shastras are duly performed, the mind becomes purified and this helps to gain knowledge and Self-realization. Baba, in going from house to house, reminded those who dwelled therein of their sacred duty, and fortunate were the people who received the lesson in their homes from Baba.

### **Devotees's Experiences**

Another interesting subject will now be examined. Lord Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (9-26) "Whosoever devoutly offers to me a leaf, a flower, a piece of fruit or water, from that pure hearted man, I accept that pious offering." In the case of Sai Baba, if a devotee really longed to offer anything to Him, and if he forgot to offer such, Baba would remind him or his friend about the offering and make him present it to Him. Baba would then accept the offering and bless the devotee. A few instances of this type are given below.

### **Tarkhad Family (father and son)**

Ramachandra Atmaram, alias Babasaheb Tarkhad, formerly a Prarthana-Samajist, became a staunch devotee of Sai Baba. His wife and son loved Baba equally, or perhaps even more, than he. It was once proposed that Master Tarkhad should go with his mother to Shirdi and spend his May vacation there, but the son was unwilling to go. He was concerned that if he left his home at Bandra, the worship of Sai Baba in their house would not be properly performed, as his father, at that time, was a Prarthana-Samajist and would not care to worship Baba's portrait. When, however, the father gave an assurance on oath that he would perform the worship in the exact manner as did the son, the mother and son left for Shirdi that very Friday night.

The next day, Saturday, Mr. Tarkhad got up early, took his bath, and before proceeding with the puja, prostrated himself before the shrine and said, "Baba, I am going to perform the puja exactly as my son has been doing, but please let it not be a formal drill." After the father performed the puja, he offered a few pieces of lump sugar as naivedya (offering) which were then distributed at lunch time.

That evening, and also on Sunday, everything went well. The following Monday was a working day and the puja continued to be performed properly. Mr. Tarkhad, who had never performed puja like that in his life, felt great confidence within himself, as everything was going quite satisfactorily, according to the promise given to his son.

On Tuesday, he performed the morning puja as usual and left for work. Coming home at noon, he found there was no prasada (sugar) to partake when the meal was served. He asked the servant cook who told him no offering was made that morning and that he had completely forgotten to perform that part of the puja (offering naivedya). Hearing this, Mr. Tarkhad arose quickly from his seat and prostrated himself before the shrine, expressing his regret and, at the same time, chiding Baba for the want of guidance in making the whole affair a matter of mere drill. He then wrote a letter to his son stating the facts, requesting him to lay it before Baba's feet and to ask His pardon for his neglect.

This happened in Bandra on Tuesday at noon. At about the same time on that same Tuesday in Shirdi, when the noon arati was just about to commence, Baba said to Mrs. Tarkhad, "Mother, I have been to your house in Bandra with a view to have something to eat. I found the door locked. I gained entrance inside and found to my regret that bhau (Mr. Tarkhad) left nothing for me to eat, so I have returned from there without eating anything." The lady could not understand what Baba meant, but the son, who was close by, understood that there was something wrong with the puja at Bandra and so he requested Baba to permit him to go home. Baba refused permission, but allowed the son to perform the puja there. The son then wrote a letter to his father stating all that took place at Shirdi and implored his father not to neglect the puja at home.

It is astonishing that both these letters crossed each other and were delivered to the respective parties the very same next day.

### **Mrs. Tarkhad**

Let us now describe the case of Mrs. Tarkhad herself.

She offered three things viz. (1) roasted brinjal mixed with curds and spice), (2) slices of brinjal fried in ghee, and (3) sweet meat balls. The following story illustrates how Baba accepted them.

Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare of Bandra, a great devotee of Baba, was preparing to leave for Shirdi with his wife and family. Mrs. Tarkhad went to see Mrs. Purandare and gave her two brinjals, requesting she prepare bharit of one brinjal and kacharya of the other, and then serve them to Baba. Upon reaching Shirdi, Mrs. Purandare took her dish of bharit, which she had prepared from one of Mrs. Tarkhad's brinjals, to the masjid just as Baba was about to start His meal. Baba found the bharit very tasty, so He distributed it to all and said that He now wanted kacharyas. Word was sent to Radha Krishna Mai that Baba wanted kacharyas. She was in a fix as it was not the season for brinjals. How to get brinjals was the question! When an inquiry was made as to who brought the bharit, it was found that Mrs. Purandare had not only brought the bharit, but was also entrusted by Mrs. Tarkhad with the duty of preparing and serving kacharyas. Everyone then came to know the significance of Baba's inquiry regarding kacharyas and were wonderstruck at Baba's all pervasive knowledge.

Another incident regarding Mrs. Tarkhad took place in December, 1915 when Govind Balaram Mankar wanted to go to Shirdi to perform the obsequies of his father. Before he left Bombay, he came to see Mr. and Mrs. Tarkhad. Mrs. Tarkhad wanted to send something with Govind to Baba. She searched through the whole house, but found nothing except a pedha, which had already been offered as naivedya. Still, out of great devotion to Baba, she sent the pedha with Govind, hoping that Baba would accept it and eat it.

Govind went to Shirdi and saw Baba, but forgot, as he was in mourning, to take the pedha with him. Baba simply waited, saying nothing.

Then later, when Govind went to Baba in the afternoon, he again went empty handed without the pedha. Baba could wait no longer and therefore asked him straight out, "What did you bring Me?" "Nothing" was the reply. Baba asked him again. The same reply came forth again. Then Baba asked him a leading question, "Did not the mother (Mrs. Tarkhad) give some sweet meat to you for Me when you were ready to leave?" The boy then remembered the whole thing. He felt abashed. He asked Baba's pardon, ran to his lodging, brought the pedha, and gave it to Baba. As soon as Baba had it in His hand, He put it in His mouth and gulped it down. Thus, the devotion of Mrs. Tarkhad was recognized and accepted.

“As men believe in Me, so do I accept them.” (Gita 4-11) was proved in this case.

### **Baba Fed Sumptuously - How?**

Once Mrs. Tarkhad was staying in a certain house in Shirdi. At noon, when meals were ready and dishes were being served, a hungry dog turned up and began to whimper. Mrs. Tarkhad got up at once and threw it a piece of bread which the dog gulped with great relish. In the afternoon when she went to the masjid and was sitting at some distance, Sai Baba called out to her, “Mother, you have fed me sumptuously up to my throat. My afflicted pranas (life forces) have been satisfied. **Always act like this, and this will stand you in good stead.** Sitting in this masjid, I shall never, never speak untruth. Take pity on Me like this. **First give bread to the hungry, and then eat yourself. Note this well.**”

At first, Mrs. Tarkhad could not understand the meaning of what Baba said, so she replied, “Baba, how could I feed You? I am dependent on others and must take my food from them on payment.” Then Baba replied, “Eating that lovely bread, I am heartily contented and I am still belching. The dog which you saw before the meal and to whom you gave the piece of bread is one with Me. So too, all other creatures (cats, pigs, fleas, cows etc.) are one with Me. I am roaming in their forms. **He who sees Me in all these creatures is My beloved.** So abandon the sense of duality and distinction and serve Me as you did today.” Hearing these nectar like words, she was so moved, her eyes were filled with tears, her throat was choked, and her joy knew no bounds.

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### **Moral**

“See God in all beings” is the moral of this chapter. The *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhagwat* all exhort us to perceive God or Divinity in all creatures. By the instance given at the end of this chapter, and others too numerous to mention, Sai Baba has practically demonstrated to us how to put the Upanishadic teachings into practice. In this way, Sai Baba stands as the best exponent or teacher of the Upanishadic doctrines.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter X

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Sai Baba's Mode of Life - His Sleeping Board - His Stay in Shirdi - His Teachings - His Humility - The Easiest Path**

Remember Sai Baba always, with love, for He was engrossed in doing good to all and always abided in His Self. To remember Sai Baba only, is to solve the riddle of life and death. This is the best and easiest of sadhanas, as it involves no expenditure. A little exertion brings great rewards. So as long as our senses are sound, we should, minute by minute, practice this sadhana. All other gods are illusory; the satguru is one with God. If we believe in the satguru's holy feet, He can change our fortune for the better. If we serve Him well, we will get rid of our samsar. We need not study any philosophy, like the Nyaya and the Mimansa. If we make Him our helmsman, we can easily cross the sea of all our pains and sorrows. As we trust the helmsman in crossing rivers and seas, so we have to trust our satguru in crossing the ocean of worldly existence. The satguru looks to the intense feeling and devotion of his devotees and endows them with knowledge and eternal bliss.

The last chapter described Baba's mendicancy and the devotees' experiences. This chapter will depict where and how Baba lived, how He slept and how He taught etc.

#### **Baba's Wonderful Bedstead**

Let us first see where and how Baba slept. Mr. Nanasaheb Dengale brought a wooden plank for Sai Baba about 4 cubits in length and only a span in breadth to be used for sleeping. Instead of keeping the plank on the floor and then sleeping on it, Baba tied it like a swing to the rafters of the masjid with old shreds of rags and commenced to sleep

upon it. The rags were so thin and worn out, it was astonishing how they could support the weight of the plank itself, let alone the weight of Baba. But somehow, it was Baba's sheer leela that the worn out rags sustained the plank, as well as the weight of Baba. On the four corners of this plank, Baba lit panatis (earthen lamps), one at each corner, and kept them burning the whole night. It was a sight to see - Baba sitting or sleeping on this plank! It was a wonder to all how Baba was able to get up and down on this plank! Baba had all the eight siddhis (powers) at His command, but He never practiced nor craved them. They came to Him naturally, as a result of His perfection. Out of curiosity, many observers kept a watch over the process of mounting and dismounting the plank, but none succeeded in actually observing this astonishing feat. Crowds began to increase to try to view this unusual act, so finally, one day, Baba broke the plank into pieces and threw it away.

### **Sagun Manifestation of Brahma**

Sai Baba may have looked like a man, three cubits and a half in length, but He dwelt in the hearts of all. Inwardly, He was unattached, indifferent and disinterested, but outwardly, He looked after the public welfare and He appeared full of desires for the sake of His devotees. His inner state was an abode of peace, yet outwardly, He appeared restless. Inwardly, He existed in the state of Brahma and loved adwaita (union or monism), but outwardly, He appeared entangled with the world and could even act, at times, like a devil. Sometimes He looked upon everyone with affection, and at other times, He threw stones at them. Sometimes He scolded them, while at other times, He embraced them and was calm, composed, tolerant and well balanced. He abided, and was ever engrossed in the Self, and was well disposed towards His bhaktas. He always sat in one asan and never traveled. His 'dand' was a small stick which He always carried in His hand. He was calm, being thought free. He never cared for wealth and fame, and lived on begging. Such was the life He led. He always uttered 'Allah Malik' (God is the real owner). Complete and never ending was His love for the bhaktas. He was a store house for Self-knowledge and was full of divine bliss. Such was the divine form of Sai Baba, boundless, endless and undifferentiated. The sole principle which envelopes the whole universe (from a stone pillar to Brahma) was incarnated in Sai Baba. Fortunate and meritorious people received this treasure in their hands, while those people who, not knowing the real worth of Sai Baba, taking Him to be a man, a mere human being, were miserable indeed.

### **His Stay in Shirdi and Probable Birth Date**

None knew or know the parents and exact birth date of Sai Baba, but it can be approximately determined by His stay in Shirdi. Baba first came to Shirdi when he was a

young lad of sixteen and stayed there for three years. Then He suddenly disappeared, and after some time, appeared in the state of Nizam near Aurangabad when, at the age of twenty, He returned to Shirdi with the marriage party of Chand Patil.

Since then, He stayed in Shirdi continuously for a period of sixty years, after which, Baba took His mahasamadhi in the year 1918. From this we can say that the year of Baba's birth is approximately 1838 A.D.

### **Baba's Mission and Advice**

Saint Ramadas (1608-1681) flourished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and fulfilled, to a great extent, his mission of protecting cows and Brahmins from the tortures of the Yavanas (Mohammedans), but within the next two centuries, the split between the two communities - Hindus and Mohammedans - widened again and Sai Baba came to bridge the gulf. His constant advice to all was to this effect. "Rama (the God of the Hindus) and Rahim (the God of the Mohammedans) are one and the same. There was not the slightest difference between them. Why, then, should their devotees quarrel among themselves? Let all the people, both ignorant and wise, as well as children, join hands and bring both these communities together. May they act sanely and thus create national unity. As it is not good to dispute and argue, may everyone live harmoniously together, never emulating bad actions, but rather, practicing consideration for the welfare of all. The Lord will bestow His divine protection. Yoga, sacrifice, penance, and knowledge are the means to attain God. If you do not succeed in this by any of these means, vain is your birth. **If anyone does any evil unto you, DO NOT RETALIATE.** If you can do anything, **DO SOME GOOD UNTO OTHERS.**" This, in short, was Sai Baba's advice to all and this will stand in good stead both in material and spiritual matters.

### **Sai Baba as Satguru**

There are gurus and gurus. There are many so called gurus who go about from house to house with symbols and veena in their hands, making a show of their spirituality. They blow mantras into the ears of their disciples and extract money from them. They profess to teach piety and religion to their disciples, but are themselves impious and irreligious. Sai Baba never thought of making the least show of his worth (piety). Body consciousness He had none, but He had great love for the disciples. There are two kinds of gurus (1) 'niyat' (appointed or fixed) and (2) 'aniyat' (unappointed or general). The aniyat guru's advice develops good qualities in us, purifies our hearts and sets us on the path of salvation, but contact with a **niyat guru**, dispels our sense of difference and establishes us in unity by making us realize "Thou are that". There are various gurus who

impart to us various kinds of worldly knowledge, but he who fixes us in our true nature (Self) and carries us beyond the ocean of worldly existence, is the satguru. **Sai Baba was such a satguru.** His greatness is indescribable. If anyone went to take His darshan, He, without being asked, would give every detail of that person's past, present and future life. Baba saw divinity in all beings. Friends and foes were alike to Him. Disinterested and equal balanced, He obliged the evil doers. He was the same in prosperity and adversity. No doubt ever touched Him. Though He possessed a human body, He was not in the least attached to His body. Though He looked embodied, He was really disembodied, i.e. free in this very life.

Blessed are the people of Shirdi who worshiped Sai as their God. While eating, drinking, working in their backyards and fields, and doing various household work, they always remembered Sai and sang His glory. They knew no other God but Sai. How to speak of the love, and the sweetness of the love, of the women of Shirdi? They were quite ignorant, but their pure love inspired them to compose poems or songs in their simple language. Letters or learning - had they none, still, one can discern real poetry in their simple songs. It is not intelligence, but LOVE that inspires real poetry as such. Real poetry is the manifestation of true love, and this can be seen and appreciated by sensitive, intelligent listeners.

### **Baba's Humility**

The Lord, or Bhagavan, is said to have six qualities, viz. 1) fame, 2) wealth, 3) non-attachment, 4) knowledge, 5) grandeur, and 6) generosity. Baba had all these in Him. He incarnated in flesh for the sake of bhaktas. How wonderful was His grace and kindness! He drew the devotees to Him, for how else could one have known Him! For the sake of His bhaktas, Baba spoke such words as the Goddess of Speech dare not utter. Here is an example. Baba spoke very humbly as follows, "Slaves of slaves, I am your debtor. I am satisfied at your darshan. It is a great favor that I saw your feet. I am an insect in your excreta. I consider myself blessed thereby." What humility is this? If anyone would think that by publishing this, any disrespect is shown to Sai, we beg His pardon and to atone for such, we sing and chant Baba's name.

Though Baba seemed outwardly to enjoy sense objects, He had not the least interest in them, nor even the consciousness of enjoying them. Though He ate, He had no reaction to taste, and though He had sight, He never felt any interest in what He saw. Regarding passion, He was as perfect a celibate as Hanuman. He was not attached to anything. He was pure consciousness. In short, He was disinterested, free and perfect. A

striking instance may be cited in illustration of this statement.

### **Nanavalli**

There was in Shirdi, a very quaint and queer fellow named Nanavalli. He looked after Baba's work and affairs. He once approached Baba, who was seated on His gadi (seat) and asked Him to get up, as he wanted to occupy the same. Baba at once got up and left the seat which He had occupied. After sitting there awhile, Nanavalli got up and asked Baba to take back His seat. Baba then took back His seat and Nanavalli fell at His feet and then went away. Baba did not show the slightest displeasure in being dictated to and ousted.

This Nanavalli loved Baba so much that he breathed his last on the thirteenth day of Baba's mahasamadhi.

### **The Easiest Path: Hearing the Stories of the Saints and Being in Their Company**

Though Sai Baba acted outwardly like an ordinary man, His actions showed extraordinary intelligence and skill. Whatever He did, was done for the good of His devotees. He never prescribed any asan, regulation of breathing, or any rites to His bhaktas, nor did He blow any mantra into their ears. He told them to leave off all cleverness and always remember "Sai" "Sai". "If you did that," He said, "all your shackles would be removed and you would be free." Sitting between five fires, sacrifices, chantings, and eight fold yoga are possible for Brahmins only. They are of no use to other classes.

The function of the mind is to think; it cannot remain without thinking for even a minute. If you give it a sense object, it will think about the sense object.

**If you give it guru, it will think about guru.**

As one listens attentively to the leelas revealing the greatness and grandeur of Sai, it becomes quite natural to remember Sai and perform worship and kirtan. Hearing the stories of the saints is not as difficult as the other sadhanas mentioned above. These stories remove all fear of this samsar (worldly existence) and take us on the spiritual path. **So listen to these stories, meditate on them, and assimilate them. If this is done, one will become pure and holy. You may attend to your worldly duties, but give your mind to Sai and His stories, and then He is sure to bless you. This is the easiest path, but why don't all take it? The reason is that without God's grace we do not get the desire to listen to the stories of saints. With God's grace, everything is smooth**

**and easy, so pray to be given that grace.**

Hearing the stories of the saints is, in a way, keeping their company. The importance of the company of saints is indeed very great. It removes our body consciousness and egoism, destroys completely the chain of our birth and death, cuts asunder all the knots of the heart, and takes us to God, who is pure consciousness. It certainly increases our non-attachment to sense objects and makes us quite indifferent to pleasure and pain, and leads us on the spiritual path. If you have no other sadhana, such as chanting God's name, worship or devotion, etc., but if you take refuge in the saints wholeheartedly, they will carry you safely across the ocean of worldly existence. It is for this reason that saints manifest themselves in this world. Even sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri etc. which wash away the sins of the world, desire the saints to purify them by coming to them for a bath. Such is the grandeur of the saints. It is on account of the store of merits in past births that we have attained the feet of Sai Baba.

We conclude this chapter with meditation on Sai's form. He, the beautiful and handsome Sai, standing on the edge of the masjid and distributing udi to all the bhaktas for their welfare, thinks the world as naught. He is ever engrossed in supreme bliss. Before Him, we humbly prostrate ourselves.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Sai as Sagun Brahman - Dr. Pandit's Worship - Haji Sidik Falke - Control over the Elements**

This chapter describes the manifested (sagun) Brahman, Sai, how He was worshiped and how He controlled the elements.

#### **Sai as Sagun Brahma**

There are two aspects of God or Brahman: (1) The unmanifested (nirgun) and (2) the manifested (sagun). The nirgun is formless, while the sagun is with form, though both denote the same Brahman. Some prefer to worship the former, some the latter. As stated in the *Bhagavad Gita* (chapter XII), the worship of the latter is easy and preferable. As man has a form (body, senses etc.), it is natural and easy for him to worship God as form. Our love and devotion do not develop unless we worship sagun Brahman for a certain period of time, and, as we advance, it leads us to the worship (meditation) of nirgun Brahman. So let us start with sagun worship. Image, altar, fire, light, sun, water, and Brahman are the seven objects of worship, but the satguru is better than these. Let us now bring to mind the form of Sai, who was non-attachment incarnate and who was a resting place for His wholehearted devotees. Our faith in His words is the seat, or asan, and our sankalpa (determination to start and finish the puja) is the abandonment of all our desires. Some say that Sai was a Bhagwat-bhakta (devotee of the Lord), others say He was a maha-Bhagwat (a great devotee), but to us, Sai Baba was God incarnate. He was extremely forgiving, straight, soft, tolerant and content beyond comparison. Though He looked embodied (as having form), He was really disembodied, emotionless, unattached and internally free.



The Ganges, on its way to the sea, cools and refreshes creatures affected by the heat, gives life to crops and trees, and quenches the thirst of many. Similarly, saints (souls) like Sai, while they live their own life, give solace and comfort to all. Lord Krishna has said that the saint is My soul, My living image - 'I am He or He is My pure form (being).' This indescribable shakti or power of God, known as pure existence, knowledge and bliss, incarnated in the form of Sai Baba in Shirdi. The Shruti (Taittiriya Upanishad) describes Brahman as bliss. One can read this in books, or hear it, but the devout people of Shirdi experienced this Brahman or bliss directly through Sai Baba. Baba, the support of all, required no prop or support (asan) from anyone. He always used a piece of sack cloth for His seat, which was covered with a small, beautiful cushion placed there by His bhaktas. A bolster was placed as a rest for His back as well. Baba respected the feelings of His devotees and allowed them to worship Him as they liked. Some waved chamara or fans before Him, some played musical instruments, some washed His hands and feet, others applied scent and chandan, still others gave betelnut with leaves or offered naivedya. Though Baba appeared to be living in Shirdi, He was present everywhere. His all pervasiveness was experienced daily by His devotees. Let us bow in humble prostration to this all pervasive satguru.

### **Dr. Pandit's Worship**

Dr. Pandit, a friend of Tatyasaheb Noolkar, once came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan. After honoring Baba, he stayed in the masjid for some time. Baba then asked him to go visit Dadabhat Kelkar. Dr. Pandit obeyed and went to see Dadabhat, by whom he was well received. After a while, both men left the house to do puja.

Dadabhat worshiped Baba, but he, like the other devotees, dared not apply sandal paste to Baba's forehead (only Mhalasapati could apply it to Baba's throat). However, this simple hearted, devout Dr. Pandit took Dadabhat's dish containing puja materials and, taking out some sandal paste, drew a tripundra (i.e. three horizontal lines) on Baba's forehead. To the surprise of all, Baba kept silent without uttering a single word. That evening, Dadabhat asked Baba, "How is it that though you usually object to sandal paste being applied to Your forehead, you allowed Dr. Pandit to do so?" Baba replied that Dr. Pandit believed Him to be his guru, Raghunath Maharaj of Dhopeswar, known as Kaka Puranik, and so he applied the paste to Baba's forehead as he did to his guru. Baba could therefore not object. On inquiry, Dr. Pandit told Dadabhat that he took Baba as his guru Kaka Puranik and so he marked the tripundra on Baba's forehead just as he did on his guru's head.



Although Sai Baba allowed the devotees to worship Him as they pleased, still, sometimes He acted in a strange way. At times, He threw away the puja dish and was wrath incarnate, and then who could approach Him? Sometimes He scolded the devotees. At other times, He looked softer than wax, a statue of peace and forgiveness. Though Baba seemed to shake with anger and His red eyes rolled round and round, yet, He was internally a stream of affection and unconditional love. Immediately after He appeared to be angry, He would call to His devotees and say He never knew that He was ever angry with His devotees, for just as the sea cannot turn back the rivers, He could not neglect the devotees' welfare. He, the slave of His devotees, always stood by them and responded to them whenever they called upon Him and He always longed for their love.

### **Haji Sidik Falke**

It was not known when Baba would accept a devotee, that depended on His sweet will. An example of this point is Sidik Falke's story. A Mohammedan gentleman named Sidik Falke of Kalyan, after having made a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, came to Shirdi. He lived in the Chavadi facing north and sat in the open courtyard of the masjid. For nine months Baba ignored him and did not allow him to step into the masjid. Falke felt very disconsolate and did not know what to do. Somebody advised him not to be disappointed, but to try to approach Baba through Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande), a close and intimate devotee of Baba. He told him that as they approach the God Shiva through His servant and devotee, Nandi, so Baba should be approached through Shama. Falke liked the idea and implored Shama to intercede for him. Shama agreed and on a convenient occasion he spoke to Baba about him thus: "Baba, why don't You let the old haji step into the masjid? So many people come and go freely after taking Your darshan, why not bless him once?" Baba replied, "Shama, you are too young to understand things. If the fakir (Allah) does not allow this, what can I do? Without His grace, who can enter the masjid? Well, go to him and ask him whether he will come to the narrow footpath near the Barvi well." Shama went and returned with an affirmative answer. Again Baba said to Shama, "Ask him whether he is willing to pay Me the sum of Rs. 40,000 in four installments." Shama went and returned with the answer that he was willing to pay even forty lacs. Again Baba said to Shama, "We are going to butcher a goat in the masjid, so ask him whether he would like to have mutton, haunch or the testicles of the goat." Shama returned with the answer that the haji would be happy to receive a small crumb from Baba's kolamba (mudpot). Hearing that, Baba got excited and threw away the earthen jars and kolamba and straightaway advanced to the haji, whereby He lifted His kafni up with His hands and said, "Why do you brag and fancy yourself great and pose yourself as an old haji? Do you read the Koran like this? You are proud of your pilgrimage

to Mecca, but you do not know Me.” Being scolded thus, the haji was confounded. Baba then went back to the masjid, purchased a few baskets of mangoes and sent them to the haji. From that time on, Baba loved the haji, invited him for meals and, thereafter, allowed the haji to come into the masjid whenever he liked. At times, Baba gave him some rupees and thus, the haji was enlisted in Baba’s darbar.

### **Baba’s Control over the Elements**

We shall close this chapter after describing two incidents showing Baba’s control over the elements. (1) Once, in the evening, there was a terrible storm in Shirdi. The sky was overcast with thick black clouds. The wind began to blow forcibly. The clouds roared, lightning began to flash, and the rains began to descend in torrents. In a short time, the whole place was flooded with water. All the creatures - birds, beasts and men became terribly frightened and flocked to the masjid for shelter. There are many local deities in Shirdi, but none of them came to their help. So they all prayed to Baba - their God, who was fond of their devotion, and asked Him to intercede and quell the storm. Baba was much moved. He came out and, standing at the edge of the masjid, addressed the storm in a loud and thunderous voice, “Stop, stop your fury and be calm.” In a few minutes the rains subsided, the winds ceased to blow, and the storm stopped. The moon rose in the sky and the people then went home well pleased. (2) On another occasion, at noon, the fire in the dhuni began to burn brightly. Its flames were seen to be reaching the rafters above. The people who were sitting in the masjid did not know what to do. They dared not ask Baba to pour water or do anything to quench the flames, but Baba soon came to realize what was happening. He took up His satka (short stick) and dashed it against a pillar up front saying, “Get down! Be calm!”. At each stroke of the satka, the flames began to lower and slow down and in a few minutes the dhuni became calm and normal.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is our Sai, an incarnation of God. He will bless anyone who will prostrate and surrender himself to Him. He, who will read the stories of this chapter daily with faith and devotion, will soon be free from all calamities, not only this, but being always attached and devoted to Sai, he will get God-vision very soon. All his desires will be fulfilled and being ultimately desireless, he will attain the Supreme. Amen!

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**

## Chapter XII

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**Sai Leelas - Experience of: (1) Kaka Mahajani - (2) Dhumal Pleader - (3) Mrs.Nimonkar (4) Moolay Shastri - (5) A Doctor**

Now let us see in this chapter how devotees were received and treated by Baba.

#### **Saints' Mission**

We have seen previously, that the purpose or object of a divine incarnation is to protect the good and destroy the wicked, but the mission of the saints is quite different. To them, the good and the wicked are alike. First, they feel for the evil doers and set them on the right path. They are like the Agasti to the bhava sagar (the ocean of worldly existence) or like the sun to the darkness of ignorance. The Lord (God) dwells in the saints. In fact, they are not different from Him. Our Sai is one of these who incarnated for the welfare of the devotees. Supreme in knowledge and surrounded with divine luster, He loved all beings equally. He was unattached. Foes and friends, kings and paupers, were the same to him. For the sake of His devotees, He was ever alert to help them, but the devotees could never approach Him unless He meant to receive them. If their turn did not come, Baba would not acknowledge them, and His leelas could not reach their ears. How, then, could they think of seeing Him? Some men desired to see Baba, but they did not get an opportunity to take His darshan until His mahasamadhi. There are many such individuals whose desire for Baba's darshan was not thus satisfied. If, however, these persons, believing in Him, would listen to His leelas, their quest for Baba's darshan would be, to a great extent, satisfied by hearing His leelas. If some people went to Shirdi by sheer luck and took Baba's darshan, were they able to stay there longer? No! Nobody could go there of his own accord, and nobody could stay there longer if he so wished. They could stay there only so long as Baba permitted them to stay, and had to leave when asked to do so

by Baba, **so everything depended on Baba's will.**

### **Kaka Mahajani**

Once Kaka Mahajani went from Bombay to Shirdi. He wanted to stay there for one week and enjoy the Gokul Ashtami festival. As soon as he took Baba's darshan, Baba asked him, "When are you returning home?" He was rather surprised at this question, but he had to give an answer so he said he would go home when Baba ordered him to do so. Then Baba said, "Go tomorrow." Baba's word was law and had to be obeyed. Kaka Mahajani, therefore, left Shirdi immediately. When he arrived at his office in Bombay, he found that his employer was anxiously waiting for him. His munim had suddenly fallen ill, hence, Kaka's presence was absolutely necessary.

### **Bhausahab Dhumal**

Once Bhausahab Dhumal, a pleader, was going to Niphad for a case. On the way, he stopped at Shirdi, took Baba's darshan and then wanted to proceed immediately to Niphad. Sai Baba, however, did not permit him to do so. He made him stay in Shirdi for a week or more. Mean- while, the magistrate at Niphad was suffering intensely from pain in his abdomen and the case was adjourned. Mr. Dhumal was then allowed to go and attend to his case. The case went on for several months and was tried by four magistrates. Ultimately, Mr. Dhumal won the case and his client was acquitted.

### **Mrs. Nimonkar**

Mr. Nanasaheb Nimonkar, Watandar of Nimon and Honorary Magistrate, was staying at Shirdi with his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Nimonkar were spending most of their time in the masjid with Baba and were serving Him. It so happened that their son fell ill at Belapur and the mother decided, with Baba's consent, to go to Belapur, see her son and other relatives for a few days, and then return to Shirdi, but Mr. Nimonkar asked her to return the next day. The lady was in a fix and did not know what to do, but her God Sai came to her aid. While leaving Shirdi, she went to see Baba, who was standing in front of Sathe's wada with Mr. Nanasaheb Nimonkar and some others. She prostrated at His feet and asked His permission to go. Baba said to her, "Go quickly. Stay calm and be unperturbed. Remain in Belapur comfortably for four days, see all your relatives, and then return to Shirdi." How opportune were Baba's words! Nanasaheb Nimonkar's proposal was overruled by Baba's decree.

## **Moolay Shastri of Nasik**

An orthodox Agnihotri Brahmin of Nasik named Moolay Shastri, who had studied the six shastras and was well versed in astrology and palmistry, once came to Shirdi to see Mr. Bapusaheb Booty, the famous millionaire of Nagpur. After seeing him, Shastri and others went to see Baba in the masjid. Baba bought various fruits and other things from vendors with His own money and distributed them to the people present in the masjid. Baba used to press the mango on all sides so skillfully that one could suck it and get all the pulp in his mouth at once and then merely throw away the pit and the skin forthwith. Plantains were peeled by Baba and the kernel was distributed to the devotees while the skins were retained by Sai Baba for Himself. Moolay Shastri, a palmist, wanted to read Baba's palm and requested Him to extend His hand, but Baba ignored his request and gave him four plantains. They all then returned to the wada and Moolay Shastri bathed, put on sacred clothes, and started his routine duties, viz. agnihotra etc.

Later, Baba, as usual, started for Lendi and said, "Take some geru (i.e. red miry substance to dye clothes in saffron color). Today we shall don saffron colored cloth. None understood what Baba meant. Then, after some time, Baba returned and preparations for the noon arati began. Bapusaheb Jog asked Moolay Shastri if he would like to accompany him for the arati, to which he replied, he would see Sai Baba in the afternoon.

A short while later, Baba sat on His asan (seat), was worshiped by His devotees, and the arati commenced. Then Baba said, "Get some dakshina from the new (Nasik) Brahmin." Booty himself went to get the dakshina. When Moolay Shastri received Baba's message, he was sorely perplexed. He thought, "I am a pure Agnihotri Brahmin. Why should I pay dakshina? Baba may be a great saint, but I am not His dependent." Since, however, a great saint like Sai Baba was asking for dakshina through a millionaire like Booty, he could not refuse. So, leaving his routine unfinished, he went with Booty to the masjid. Thinking himself holy and sacred and the masjid otherwise, he remained at a distance and, joining his hands, threw flowers at Baba. Then lo! All of a sudden, he no longer saw Baba on the seat, but rather, saw his late guru, Gholap Swami, there. He was wonder struck. 'Could this be a dream?' No, it was not, as he was wide awake, but though awake, how could his late guru Gholap be there? He was speechless for some time. He pinched himself and thought again, but could not reconcile the fact of his late guru Gholap being in the masjid. Finally, leaving all doubt, he went up, fell at his guru's feet, and then getting up, stood there with folded hands. Other people sang Baba's arati, while Moolay Shastri chanted his guru's name. Then, casting off all pride of caste and ideas about

sacredness, he fell flat at his guru's feet and closed his eyes. When he got up and opened his eyes, he saw Baba asking for dakshina. Seeing Baba's blissful form and His inconceivable power, Moolay Shastri forgot himself. He was extremely pleased and his eyes were full of tears of joy. He again saluted Baba and gave the dakshina. He said his doubt was removed and that he saw his own guru. Seeing this wonderful leela of Baba, all the people, including Moolay Shastri, were quite moved and they realized the meaning of Baba's words, "Bring geru, we shall don saffron colored garments." Such is the wonderful leela of Sai Baba.

### **A Doctor**

Once a mamlatdar came to Shirdi with a doctor friend of his. The doctor said his deity was Rama and that he would not bow before a Mohammedan, therefore he was unwilling to go to Shirdi. The mamlatdar replied that nobody would press him to bow, nor would he ask him to do so, so he should therefore come to Baba's and give the pleasure of his company. Accordingly, they came to Shirdi and went to the masjid for Baba's darshan. All were wonder struck to see the doctor going ahead and saluting Baba. They asked him how he forgot his resolve and bowed before Baba. The doctor replied he saw his beloved deity, Rama, on the seat, and so therefore, he prostrated before Him. Then, as he was saying this, he saw Sai Baba reappear on the seat. Being dismayed, he said, "Is this a dream? How could he be a Mohammedan? He is a great yogasampanna (full of yoga) avatar."

The next day the doctor made a vow and began to fast. He absented himself from the masjid, resolving not to go there until Baba blessed him. Three days passed, and on the fourth day, a close friend of his from Khandesh arrived in Shirdi and the doctor went with him to the masjid for Baba's darshan. After the salutation, Baba asked him whether anyone had gone to call him so that he had come. Hearing this vital question, the doctor was moved. The same night he was blessed by Baba, he experienced bliss supreme in his sleep. He then left for his home town where he experienced the same state for a fortnight. Thus, his devotion to Sai Baba increased manifold.

The moral of all the stories mentioned above, especially that of Moolay Shastri, is that we should have firm faith in our guru and nowhere else.

More leelas of Sai Baba will be described in the next chapter.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Chapter XIII

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**More Sai Leelas - Diseases Cured - (1) Bhimaji Patil - (2) Bala Shimpi - (3) Bapusaheb - (4) Alandi Swami - (5) Kaka Mahajani - (6) Dattopant of Harda**

#### **The Inscrutable Power of Maya**

Baba's words were always short, pithy, deep, full of meaning, efficient and well balanced. He was ever content and never cared for anything. He said, "As I have become a fakir, I have no house or wife. I have stayed in one place, and though leaving off all cares, the inevitable maya teases Me often. Though I forgot myself, I cannot forget her. She always envelops Me. This maya (illusive power) of the Lord (Shri Hari) teases God Brahma and others, so what can be said of a poor fakir like Me? *Those who take refuge in the Lord will be freed from Her clutches with His grace.*"

Baba spoke in such terms about the power of maya. Lord Shri Krishna has said to Uddhava in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the saints are His living forms. This is what Baba said for the welfare of His devotees, "Those who are fortunate and whose demerits have vanished, take you over the seven seas. Believe in these words and you will certainly be benefitted. I do not need any paraphernalia for worship - either eight-fold or sixteen-fold. *I rest where there is full devotion.*"

The following describes what Sai Baba, the friend of those who surrendered themselves to Him, did for their welfare.



## Bhimaji Patil

In 1909, Bhimaji Patil of Narayangaon, Taluka Junnar, District Poona, suffered from a severe and chronic chest disease which ultimately developed into tuberculosis. He tried all sorts of remedies, but to no effect. Losing all hope, he fervently prayed to God, "Oh Lord Narayan, help me now." It is a well known fact that when our circumstances are well off, we do not remember God, but when calamities and adversities overtake us, we are reminded of Him. In this manner, Bhimaji now turned to God. It occurred to him to consult Nanasaheb Chandorkar, a great devotee of Baba. He wrote him a letter, giving all the details of his malady and asked for his opinion.

In reply, Nanasaheb wrote him there was only one remedy left, which was to have recourse to Baba's feet. Relying on Nanasaheb's advice, Bhimaji made preparations for going to Shirdi. Upon his arrival, he was taken to the masjid and seated before Baba. Nanasaheb and Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande) were both present. Baba pointed out that Bhimaji Patil's disease was due to previous evil karma and He was not disposed to interfere, but the patient cried out in despair that he was helpless and sought refuge in Baba as He was his last hope. As Bhimaji prayed for mercy, Baba's heart melted and He said, **"Stay, cast off your anxiety. Your sufferings have come to an end. However oppressed and troubled one may be, as soon as he steps in the masjid, he is on the pathway to happiness. The fakir here is very kind and He will cure the disease and protect all with love and kindness."** The patient had vomited blood every five minutes, but there was no vomiting in the presence of Baba. From the time Baba uttered the words of hope and mercy, the malady took a favorable turn.

Baba asked Bhimaji to stay in Bhimabai's house, which was neither a convenient nor healthy place, but Baba's order had to be obeyed. While he was staying there, Baba cured him through two dreams. In the first dream, Bhimaji saw himself as a boy suffering the severe pain of flogging which he received for not reciting his 'Sawai poetry' lesson before his class master. In the second dream, someone caused him intense pain and torture by rolling a stone up and down his chest. Having suffered the awful pain in his dream, Bhimaji Patil's cure was complete and he went home. He then came to Shirdi often and, gratefully remembering what Baba did for him, prostrated before Him.

Baba did not expect anything from His devotees but grateful remembrance, unchanging faith, and devotion. People in the Maharashtra always celebrate Satya Narayana Puja in their homes every fortnight or month, but it was Bhimaji Patil who started



a new Sai Satya Vrata Puja instead of Satya Narayana Vrata Puja in his house when he returned to his village.

### **Bala Ganpat Shimpi**

Another devotee of Baba, Bala Ganpat Shimpi, greatly suffered from a malignant type of malaria. He tried all sorts of medicines and decoctions, but all were in vain. The fever did not abate a jot, so he ran to Shirdi and fell at Baba's feet. Baba gave him a strange recipe in this case as follows: "Give a black dog some morsels of rice mixed with curds in front of the Laxmi temple." Bala did not know how to execute this recipe, but no sooner had he gone home than he found rice and curds. He mixed the rice and curds together and brought the mixture with him on his way to the Laxmi temple. Near the temple he found a black dog waving its tail. He placed the curds and rice before the dog who ate it and, strange to say, Bala got rid of his malaria.

### **Bapusaheb Booty**

Shriman Bapusaheb Booty once suffered from dysentery and vomiting. His cupboard was full of patent drugs and medicines, but none of them had any effect. Bapusaheb got very weak due to the purging and vomiting and was unable to go to the masjid for Baba's darshan. Baba then sent for him and made him sit before Him and said, "Now take care. You will not purge any more," and waving His index finger declared, "The vomiting must also stop." Now look at the force of Baba's words. Both the maladies disappeared and Booty felt well.

On another occasion, Booty had an attack of cholera and suffered from severe thirst. Dr. Pillay tried all sorts of remedies, but could give him no relief. Bapusaheb then went to Baba and consulted Him as to which drink would allay his thirst and cure the disease. Baba prescribed an infusion of almonds, walnuts, and pistachios (a kind of dry fruit) boiled in sugared milk. This would be considered by any other physician to cause a fatal aggravation of the disease, but in implicit obedience to Baba's order, the infusion was administered. Strange to say, the disease was cured.

### **Alandi Swami**

A swami from Alandi wishing to take Baba's darshan came to Shirdi. He suffered from severe pain in his ear which prevented him from getting sleep. He was operated on, but the pain continued. The pain was severe and he did not know what to do. In preparing

to leave Shirdi, the swami came to take Baba's leave, when Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande) requested that Baba do something for the pain in the swami's ear. Baba comforted him saying:

"Allah achha karega" God will do good. The swami then returned to Poona. A week later, he sent a letter to Shirdi stating the pain in his ear had subsided, though there was still some swelling. In order to have the swelling removed, he went to Bombay for an operation, but the surgeon, on examining the ear, said no operation was necessary. Such was the wonderful effect of Baba's words.

### **Kaka Mahajani**

Another devotee named Kaka Mahajani once suffered from diarrhea. In order that there should be no interruption in his services to Baba, Kaka kept a tambya (pot) with water in a corner of the masjid and whenever there was a call, he would go out. As Sai Baba knew everything, Kaka did not inform Him of his disease, thinking that Baba would cure it soon.

The work of constructing the pavement in front of the masjid was permitted by Baba, but when the actual work began, Baba became wild and shouted loudly. Everyone ran away and as Kaka was doing the same, Baba caught hold of him and made him sit there. In the confusion that followed, somebody left a small bag of ground nuts. Baba took a handful of these nuts, rubbed them in His hands, blew away the skins and gave the clean nuts to Kaka to eat. The scolding went along simultaneously with the cleaning of the nuts and making Kaka eat them. Baba Himself ate some of them. Then, when the bag was empty, Baba asked him to fetch some water as He felt thirsty. Kaka brought a pitcher full of water. Baba then drank some of the water and made Kaka drink it also. Baba then said, "Now your diarrhea has stopped and you may attend to the work on the pavement." In the meanwhile, the other people who had run away, returned and started to work, and Kaka, whose motions had stopped, joined them too. Are ground nuts medicine for diarrhea? According to current medical opinion, ground nuts would aggravate the disease, not cure it. **The true medicine in this case, as in other cases as well, was Baba's word.**

### **Dattopant of Harda**

Dattopant, a gentleman from Harda, suffered from stomach aches for fourteen years. None of the remedies gave him any relief. Then, hearing of Baba's fame, that He cures diseases by sight, Dattopant ran to Shirdi and fell at Baba's feet. Baba looked at him kindly and gave him blessings. When Baba placed His hand on Dattopant's head and

gave him udi with blessings, he felt relieved and there was no further trouble about the malady.

Towards the end of this chapter, three cases are cited in footnotes:

1. Madhavarao Deshpande suffered from piles. Baba gave him a decoction of sonamukhi (senna pods) which relieved him. Then, after two years, the trouble again recurred and Madhavarao took the same decoction, *without* consulting Baba. The result was that the disease worsened, but later, it was cured by Baba's grace.

2. Kaka Mahajani's elder brother, Gangadharpant, suffered for many years from stomach pain. Hearing of Baba's fame, he came to Shirdi and requested Baba to cure him. Baba touched his belly and said, "God will cure." From that time on, there was no stomach pain and he was completely cured.

3. Nanasaheb Chandorkar also suffered from intense stomach pain at one time. He was restless the whole day and night. Doctors administered medication in syringes which produced no effect. Then Nanasaheb approached Baba, who told him to eat burfi (a kind of sweet meat) mixed with ghee. This recipe gave him complete relief.

**All these stories show that the real medicine that cured the various diseases permanently was Baba's word and grace and not any medicines or drugs.**

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Prominent Devotees of Sai Baba



Abdul Baba



Adkar Madhava  
Rao Vamanrao



Atmaram K.  
Kulkarni



B.V. Dev  
Belasahab



Baijabai Kothre



Bhagoji Shinde



Bhote,  
Belasahab



Butti-Gopal-Mukund



Chotu-Bhalyya-  
Porulekar

# Chapter XIV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Ruttonji Wadia of Nanded - Saint Moulisaheb - Dakshina - Mimansa

In the last chapter, we described how Baba's word and grace cured many incurable diseases. Now we shall describe how Baba blessed Mr. Ruttonji Wadia with an issue.

The life of Sai Baba is thoroughly sweet. His various actions, eating, walking and His words are completely pure. His life is bliss incarnate. Sai Baba bestowed these blessings as a means for His devotees to remember Him. He gave them various stories of duty and action, which ultimately led them to true religion. Baba thought people should live happily in this world, **but more importantly**, they should be ever cautious and **gain the object of their life, viz. Self-realization**. We get a human body as a result of merits in past births and it is worthwhile that with its aid, we should attain devotion and liberation in this life. We should, therefore, never be lazy, but always be on the alert to gain our end and aim of life.

If you hear the leelas (stories) of Sai daily, you will always see Him. Day and night you will remember Him in your mind. When you assimilate Sai in this way, your mind will lose its fickleness and if you go on in this manner, it will finally be merged in pure consciousness.

### Ruttonji of Nanded

Now let us come to the main story of this chapter. At Nanded, in the Nizam state, there lived a Parsi businessman by the name of Ruttonji Shapurji Wadia. He had amassed

a large amount of money and acquired fields and lands. He had cattle, horses and conveyances and was very prosperous. To all outward appearances, he looked very happy and contented, but inwardly, he was not so. Providential dispensation is such that no one in this world is completely happy and rich. Ruttonji was no exception to this. He was liberal and charitable, gave food and clothing to the poor, and helped all in various ways. The people took him to be a good and happy man, but Ruttonji thought himself miserable, as he had no issue, male or female. As kirtan (singing glories of the Lord) without love or devotion, pilgrimage without repentance, or proficiency in all arts without common sense are useless, so, too, Ruttonji thought that his life would be incomplete without a son. Ruttonji always brooded on this matter and mentally asked, "Would God ever be pleased to grant me a son?" He looked morose and had no relish for his food. Day and night he was enveloped with anxiety as to whether he would ever be blessed with a son.

Ruttonji had a great regard for Das Ganu Maharaj. He met him and opened his heart to him. Das Ganu advised him to go to Shirdi, take Baba's darshan, fall at His feet, seek His blessing, and pray for an issue. Ruttonji liked the idea and decided to go to Shirdi. In a few days he went to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan and fell at His feet. Then, opening a basket, he took out a beautiful garland of flowers and placed it around Baba's neck and offered Him a basket of fruit. With great respect, he then sat near Baba, and prayed to Him saying, "Many people who find themselves in difficult situations come to You and You relieve them immediately. Hearing this, I have anxiously sought Your feet. Please do not disappoint me." Sai Baba then asked him for dakshina of Rs. 5/ which Ruttonji intended to give, but Sai Baba then added that He had already received Rs. 3-14-0 from him and so he should pay the balance only. Hearing this, Ruttonji was rather puzzled. He could not make out what Baba meant. He thought to himself, since this was the first time he went to Shirdi, how was it Baba said He had already received Rs. 3-14-0 from him? He could not solve the riddle, but sat at Baba's feet and gave the balance of the dakshina asked for. He explained fully to Baba why he came to seek His help, and prayed Baba would bless him with a son. Baba was moved and told him not to be worried, because from this point on, **his bad days had come to an end**. Baba then gave him udi, placed His hand on his head and blessed him, saying that Allah (God) would satisfy his heart's desire.

Taking Baba's leave, Ruttonji returned to Nanded and told Das Ganu all that took place in Shirdi. He said everything went well there, that he received Baba's darshan and blessing

with prasad, but there was one thing which he could not understand. Baba had said to him He had previously received Rs. 3-14-0 from him. Ruttonji then asked Das Ganu what Baba meant by this remark. He said to Das Ganu, "I never went to Shirdi before, so how could I give Baba the sum to which He referred?" This puzzled Das Ganu as well, so he pondered the matter seriously for a long time. After a while, it struck him that some days ago, Ruttonji had received a Mohammedan saint in his home by the name of Moulisaheb and had spent some money for his reception. This Moulisaheb was a cooly saint well known to the people of Nanded. Just when Ruttonji decided to go to Shirdi, this Moulisaheb accidentally came to his house. Ruttonji knew him and loved him, so he gave a small party in his honor. Das Ganu got from Ruttonji the yadi (or memo of expenses) of that reception and everybody was wonderstruck to see the expenses amounted to exactly Rs. 3-14-0, nothing more, nothing less. Thus, everyone came to know Baba was omniscient. Although Baba lived only in Shirdi, He knew the past, present and future and could identify Himself heart and soul with anyone. In this particular instance, how could He have known about the reception given to Moulisaheb and the amount spent for such, unless He could identify Himself with him and be one with him?

Ruttonji was satisfied with this explanation and his faith in Baba was confirmed and increased. Later, in due time, he was blessed with a son and his joy knew no bounds. It is said he had in all a dozen children, out of which only four survived.

In a foot note toward the end of this chapter, it is stated Sai Baba told Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe after the death of his first wife, to remarry and that he would have a son. R.B. Sathe married a second time. The first two issues by his new wife were daughters and he, therefore, felt very despondent, but the third issue was a son. Baba's word turned out to be true and Sathe was satisfied.

## **Dakshina Minansa**

Now we shall close this chapter with a few remarks about dakshina. It is a well known fact Sai Baba always asked for dakshina from people who went to see Him. Someone may ask a question, "If Baba was a fakir and perfectly non-attached, why should He ask for dakshina and care for money?" We shall consider this question broadly now.

At first, and for a long time, Baba did not accept anything. He stored burnt matches and filled his pocket with them. He never asked anything from anyone, whether he be a devotee or otherwise. If anyone placed a pice or two before Him, He purchased oil or



tobacco. He was fond of tobacco, for He always smoked a bidi or chillim (a clay pipe). Later on, some people thought that they could not see the saint empty handed and they placed some copper coins before Baba. If a one pice coin was placed before Him, He would pocket it. If it was a two pice coin, it was returned immediately.

As Baba's fame began to spread far and wide, people began to flock to Shirdi in numbers and Baba began to ask dakshina from them. It is said in the Shruti (Veda) that puja of the gods was not complete unless a golden coin was offered. If a coin was necessary in the puja of the gods, why should it not be so in the puja of saints as well? Ultimately, **the Shastras state that when one goes to see God, king, saint or guru, he should not go empty handed. He should offer something**, preferably coins or money. In this connection we may notice the precepts recommended by the Upanishads.

The Brihadaranyak Upanishad says that the Lord Prajapati advised the gods, men and demons by one letter, "Da". The gods understood by this letter that they should practice (1) dama, i.e. self control; men, that they should practice (2) dana i.e. charity; the demons understood they should practice (3) daya i.e. compassion. To men, charity or giving, was recommended. The teacher in the Taittiriya Upanishad exhorts his pupils to practice charity and other virtues. Regarding charity, he says, "Give with faith, give with magnanimity, i.e. liberally; give with modesty, with awe and with sympathy." In order to teach the devotees the lesson of charity and to remove their attachment to money and thus purify their minds, Baba extracted dakshina from them, but with this peculiarity - Baba said He had to give back one hundred times more than what He received. There are many instances in which this has happened. To quote an example, Mr. Ganpatrao Abodas, the famous actor, says in his Marathi autobiography, that Baba had often pressed him, again and again, for dakshina, and he had emptied his money bag before Him. The result of this, as Mr. Abodas says, was that in later life he never lacked money as it came to him abundantly.

In many cases, there were secondary meanings of dakshina in which Baba did not want any pecuniary amount. To quote two instances: (1) Baba asked Rs. 15/ as dakshina from Professor G.G. Narke, who replied that he did not have even a pie. Baba then said, "I know you have no money, but you are reading *Yoga Vashistha*. Give me dakshina from that." Giving dakshina in this case meant 'deriving lessons from the book and lodging them in the heart where Baba resides'. (2) In the second case Baba asked a certain lady, Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad, to give Rs. 6/ as dakshina. The lady felt pained as she had nothing to give. Her husband then explained to her Baba wanted six inner enemies (lust, anger,



avarice etc.) to be surrendered to Him. Baba agreed with this explanation.

It is to be noted that though Baba collected a lot of money as dakshina, He would distribute the whole amount that same day, and the next morning, He would become, as usual, a poor fakir. When Baba took His mahasamadhi, after receiving thousands and thousands of rupees as dakshina for about ten years, He had only a few rupees in His possession.

In short, **Baba's main object in taking dakshina from His devotees was to teach them the lessons of renunciation and purification.**

### **Post Script**

Mr. B.V. Deo of Thana, retired mamlatdar and a great devotee of Baba, wrote an article on this subject (dakshina) in 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine, vol. VII, p. 6-26, in which he says, amongst other things, the following:

"Baba did not ask dakshina from all. If some gave dakshina without being asked, He sometimes accepted it, and at other times, refused it. He asked it from certain devotees only. He never demanded it from those devotees who thought Baba should first ask them for it and then they should pay it. If anybody offered it against their wish, He never touched it, and if He kept it there, He would ask that it be taken away. He asked for small or large amounts from devotees according to their wish, devotion and convenience. He asked dakshina even from women and children. He never asked all the rich for it, nor from all the poor."

"Baba never got angry with those from whom He asked dakshina, but who would not give any. If dakshina was sent via some friend who forgot to turn it over to Baba, He reminded the person to give Him said dakshina. On some occasions, Baba would return a portion of the dakshina and ask the donor to guard it or keep it in his shrine for worship. This procedure benefitted the donor or devotee immensely. If anyone offered more than he originally intended to give, Baba returned the extra amount. Sometimes Baba asked more dakshina from some than what they originally intended to give and, if they had no money, He would ask them to beg or borrow the amount from others. From some, Baba demanded dakshina three or four times a day."

"Out of the amount collected as dakshina, Baba spent very little for His own sake,

i.e. for buying chillim (clay pipe) and fuel for His dhuni (sacred fire). He distributed the remainder as charity in varying proportions to various individuals. All the paraphernalia of the Shirdi Sansthan was brought by various rich devotees at the insistence of Radha Krishna Mai. Baba always used to get wild and would scold those who brought expensive articles.”

Women and wealth are two difficult obstacles in the way of paramartha (spiritual life), and Baba provided two institutions for learning self-control in Shirdi, one being dakshina, the other, Radha Krishna Mai. Whenever people came to Him, He demanded dakshina from them and asked them to go to the “school” (Radha Krishna Mai’s house). If they stood these two tests well, i.e. if they showed they were free from attachment to women and wealth, their spiritual progress was rapid and assured by Baba’s grace and blessings.

Mr. Deo has also quoted passages from the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Upanishads to show that charity given in a holy place and to a holy person conduces to the donor’s welfare to a great degree - and **what is more holy than Shirdi and its presiding deity - Sai Baba!**

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Naradiya Kirtan - Paddhati - Mr. Cholkar's Sugarless Tea - Two lizards**

The readers may remember mention was made in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter regarding the Rama-Navami Festival in Shirdi, how the festival originated, and how in the early years, there were great difficulties in getting a good haridas for performing kirtan on that occasion.

It mentions how Baba entrusted that function (kirtan) to Das Ganu permanently. This chapter will describe the manner in which Das Ganu was performing the kirtan.

#### **Naradiya Kirtan-Paddhati**

Generally, the haridas, while performing the kirtan, wears a gala and full dress, including a headdress, either a pheta or a turban, a long flowing coat with a shirt inside, an uparane (short dhotar) on the shoulders and the usual long dhotar from the waist below. Dressed in this fashion for kirtan in Shirdi, Das Ganu once went to bow before Baba. Baba asked him, "Well, bridegroom, where are you going dressed so beautifully like this?" "For performing a kirtan," was the reply. Then Baba said, "Why do you want all this paraphernalia - coat, uparane and pheta etc.? Doff all that before Me. Why wear them on the body?" Das Ganu immediately took them off and placed them at Baba's feet. From that time, Das Ganu never wore these things while performing kirtan. He was always bare from his waist up, had a pair of 'chiplis' in his hand, and a garland around his neck. This is not in consonance with the practice generally followed by all the haridases, but this is the best and most pure method. The sage, Narada, from whom the Kirtan-Paddhati originated, wore nothing on his trunk and head. He carried a 'veena' in his hand and wandered from place to place singing the glory of the Lord everywhere.

## **Mr. Cholkar's Sugarless Tea**

Baba was known in Poona and in the Ahmednagar district, but His fame spread by Nanasaheb Chandorkar's personal talks and Das Ganu's splendid kirtans in the Konkan (Bombay Presidency). In fact, it was Das Ganu - may God bless him - who, by his beautiful and inimitable kirtans, made Baba available to so many people there. The audiences who come to hear the kirtans have different tastes. Some like the erudition of the haridas, some his gestures, some his singing, and some his wit and humor. Still others like his preliminary dissertation on vedanta, while some prefer his main stories. But among them there are very few, who, by hearing the kirtan, get faith and devotion or love for God or saints. The effect of hearing Das Ganu's kirtan on the minds of the audience was, however, electric. We give an example here.

Das Ganu was once performing his kirtan by singing the glory of Sai Baba in the Koupineshwar temple in Thana. There was a poor man in the audience, Mr. Cholkar, who worked as a candidate in the civil courts in Thana. He listened to Das Ganu's kirtan most attentively and was quite moved. He then mentally bowed and vowed to Baba saying, "Baba, I am a poor man unable to support my family. If, by Your grace, I pass the departmental examination and get a permanent post, I shall go to Shirdi, fall at Your feet, and distribute sugar candy in Your name." As good luck would have it, Mr. Cholkar did pass the examination and did get the permanent post and now it remained for him to fulfill his vow, the sooner the better.

Mr. Cholkar was a poor man with a large family to support and could not afford to pay for the expenses of a Shirdi trip. As is well said, one can easily cross over the Nahne ghat in the Thana District or even the Sahyadri Range, but it is very difficult for a poor man to cross umbareghat, i.e. the threshold of his home. As Mr. Cholkar was anxious to fulfill his vow as early as possible, he resolved to economize by cutting down his expenses to save money. He determined not to use sugar in his diet and began to take his tea without it. After he was able to save some money in this manner, he came to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan, fell at His feet, offered a cocoanut, and distributed sugar candy as per his vow with a clean conscience. He told Baba he was very pleased with His darshan and his desires were fulfilled that day.

Mr. Cholkar was in the masjid with his host, Bapusaheb Jog. When the host and his guest both got up and were about to leave, Baba spoke to Jog as follows: "Give him (your guest) cups of tea fully saturated with sugar." Hearing these significant words, Mr. Cholkar was

quite moved. He was wonderstruck, his eyes were bedewed with tears, and he fell at Baba's feet again. By these words, Baba had wanted to create faith and devotion in Mr. Cholkar's mind. Mr. Jog was curious about the instruction regarding the tea with extra sugar to be given to his guest. Baba hinted as it were, that He had received the sugar candy as per Mr. Cholkar's vow and that He knew full well his determination not to use sugar in his diet. Baba said, "If you spread your palms with devotion before Me, I am immediately with you day and night. Though I am here bodily, still, I know what you do beyond the seven seas. Go wherever you will over the wide world, I am with you. My abode is in your heart and I am within you. Worship Me always, who is seated in your heart, as well as in the hearts of all beings. Blessed and fortunate indeed is he who knows Me thus."

What a beautiful and important lesson was thus imparted by Baba to Mr. Cholkar.

## **Two Lizards**

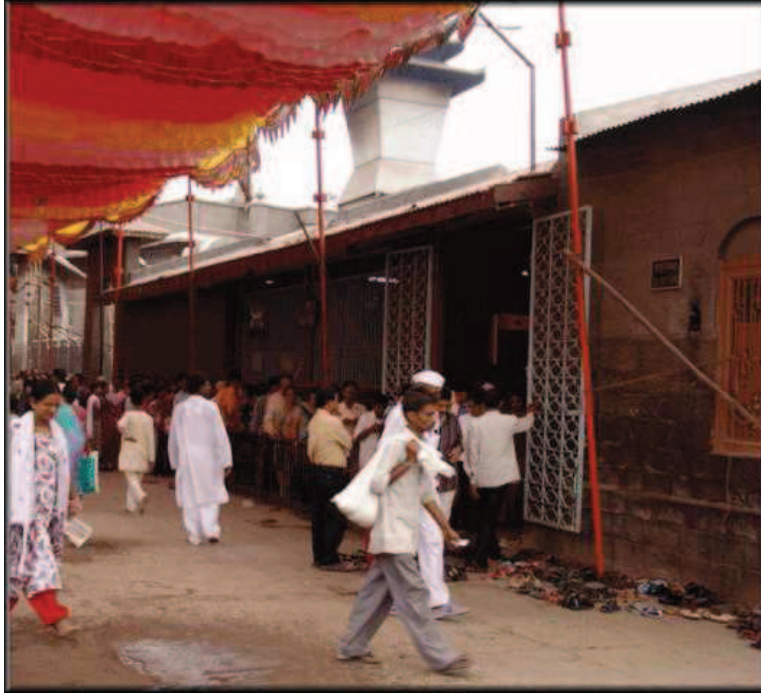
Once, Baba was sitting in the masjid and a devotee was sitting in front of Him. Suddenly, a lizard ticked-ticked. Out of curiosity, the devotee asked Baba whether this tick-ticking of the lizard signified anything; was it a good sign or a bad omen? Baba said the lizard was overjoyed, as her sister from Aurangabad was coming to see her. The devotee sat silent, not understanding the meaning of Baba's words. Just then, a gentleman from Aurangabad arrived on horseback to see Baba. He wanted to proceed further, but his horse would not go on as it was hungry and wanted grams. He took off a bag of grams from his shoulder and dashed it on the ground to remove dirt. As a lizard came out therefrom and in the presence of all, climbed up the wall, Baba told His devotee to mark her well. The little lizard immediately went strutting over to her sister. Both sisters kissed and embraced each other, whirled round and danced with love, overjoyed at seeing each other after such a long time. Where is Shirdi and where is Aurangabad? How is it the man on horseback had come to Shirdi from Aurangabad with the lizard? And how is it Baba prophesied the meeting of the two sisters? This wonderful story illustrates the omniscience of the all knowing nature of Sai Baba.

## **Post Script**

He, who respectfully reads this chapter or studies it daily, will have all his miseries removed by the grace of the satguru, Sai Baba. Hence:

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

Dwaraka Mayi



# Chapter XVI & XVII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Quick Brahma Jnana

These two chapters relate the story of a rich gentleman who sought Brahma jnana quickly from Sai Baba.

### Preliminary

The last chapter described how Mr. Cholkar's vow of an offering of sugar candy was completed and accepted. In that story, Sai Baba showed He would accept with appreciation any small offering given with love and devotion, but if the same thing was offered with pride and haughtiness, He would reject it. Being Himself full of sat-chit-ananda (existence - knowledge - bliss), He did not care much for mere outward formalities, but if an offering was made in a meek and humble spirit, it was welcome and He accepted it with pleasure and avidity. In fact, there is no person more liberal and benevolent than a satguru like Sai Baba. He cannot be compared to the Chintamani jewel (the philosopher's stone which satisfies desires), the Kalpataru (the celestial tree which fulfills our desires) or the Kamadhenu (the celestial cow which yields what we desire) for they give us only what we desire, but the satguru gives us that which is most precious, inconceivable, and inscrutable (Self-realization).

Now let us hear how Sai Baba disposed of a rich man who came to Him and implored Him to give Brahma jnana.



There was a rich gentleman (unfortunately his name and whereabouts are not mentioned) who was very prosperous in his life. He had amassed a large quantity of wealth, houses, fields and lands, and had many servants and dependents. When Baba's fame reached his ears, he said to a friend of his that he was not in want of anything and so he would go to Shirdi and ask Baba to give him Brahma jnana, which, if he got it, would certainly make him more happy. His friend dissuaded him, saying, "It is not easy to know Brahman, and especially so for an avaricious man like you who is always engrossed in wealth, wife and children. In your quest of Brahma jnana, who will satisfy you, who won't give away even a pice in charity?"

Not minding his friend's advice, the fellow engaged a return journey tanga and came to Shirdi. He went to the masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His feet and said, "Baba, hearing that You give Brahma jnana to all who come here without any delay, I have come to Shirdi all the way from my distant land. I am very tired from the journey and if I receive Brahma jnana from You, my troubles will be well paid and rewarded." Baba then replied, "Oh, my dear friend, do not be anxious, I shall give you Brahma jnana immediately. All My dealings are in cash and never on credit. So many people come to Me and ask for wealth, health, power, honor, position, cure of diseases and other temporal matters. Rare is the person who comes here to ask Me for Brahma jnana. There is no dearth of people asking for worldly things, but people interested in spiritual matters are very rare. I think this is a lucky and auspicious moment with all its accompaniments and complexities."

Saying this, Baba began to show the rich gentleman Brahman. He made him sit down and engaged him in conversation on a different subject, thus making him forget his question for the time being. Then Baba called out to a boy to go to Nandu Marwari and get a loan of Rs.5/ from him. The boy left and returned immediately saying that Nandu was absent and his house was locked. Baba then asked him to go to Bala the grocer and get the loan from him. The boy was unsuccessful this time as well. This experiment was repeated again twice or thrice with the same result.

Someone may then ask, "Why did Sai Baba, being the living, moving Brahman incarnate, want the paltry sum of five rupees and why did He try so hard to get it on loan?" Actually, Baba did not want that sum at all. He must have been fully knowing that Nandu and Bala were absent. It seems He adopted this procedure as a test for the seeker of Brahman. The gentleman had a bundle of currency notes in his pocket and, if he was really earnest, he would not have sat quiet as an onlooker while Baba was frantically trying to get the sum of Rs. 5/. He knew Baba would keep His word and repay the debt and the



sum wanted was insignificant. Still, he could not make up his mind whether to advance the sum. Such a man wanted from Baba the greatest thing in the world, i.e. Brahma jnana! Any other man, who really loved Baba, would have given the Rs. 5/ at once, instead of being a mere on looker. It was otherwise with this man. The rich gentleman advanced no money, nor did he sit silent, but rather, began to be impatient as he was in a haste to return. He implored Baba saying, "Oh Baba, please show me Brahma jnana soon." Baba replied, "Oh, my dear friend, did you not understand all the procedure I went through while sitting in this place, for enabling you to see the Brahman? It is, in short, this. For realizing Brahman, one has to give five things, i.e. surrender five things, viz. (1) the five pranas (vital forces), (2) the five senses (five of action and five of perception), (3) the mind, (4) the intellect, and (5) the ego. This path of Brahma jnana or Self-realization is as difficult as it is to tread on the edge of a razor."

Sai Baba then gave a rather long discourse on the subject, the purport of which is given below.

### **Qualifications for Brahma Jnana or Self-Realization**

Almost all people do not see or realize Brahma jnana in their lifetime. Certain qualifications are absolutely necessary.

(1) **Mumuksha** or intense desire to become free.

He who thinks that he is bound and that he should become free of bondage and who works earnestly and resolutely to that end and does not care for anything else, is qualified for the spiritual life.

(2) **Virakti** or a feeling of disgust with the things of this world and the next.

Unless a man feels disgusted with the things, emoluments and honors which his actions would bring in this world and the next, he has no right to enter into the spiritual realm.

(3) **Antarmukhata** (introversion)

Our senses have been created by God with a tendency to move outward and so man always looks outside himself and not inside. He who desires Self-realization and immortal life must turn his gaze inward and look to his inner Self.

(4) **Catharsis from (purging away of) sins.**

Unless a man has turned away from wickedness, stopped doing wrong, and has composed himself with his mind completely at rest, he cannot gain Self-realization, even by means of knowledge.

(5) **Right conduct**

Unless a man leads a life of truth, penance, insight, and celibacy, he cannot attain God

realization.

(6) **Preferring shreyas (the good) to preyas (the pleasant).** There are two sorts of things, i.e. the good and the pleasant; the former deals with spiritual affairs, the latter with mundane matters. Both these approach man for acceptance. He has to think and choose one of them. The wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the unwise, through greed and attachment, chooses the pleasant.

#### (7) **Control of the mind and senses**

The body is the chariot and the Self is its master. Intellect is the charioteer and the mind serves as the reins. The senses are the horses and the sense objects, the paths. He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained, his senses unmanageable like the vicious horses of a charioteer, does not reach his destination (Self-realization), and must continue through the round of births and deaths. However, he who has understanding and whose mind is restrained, his senses being under control like the good horses of a charioteer, reaches the state of Self-realization when he is not born again. The man who has understanding as his charioteer (guide) and is able to rein his mind, reaches the end of the journey, which is the supreme abode of the all pervading Lord Vishnu.

#### (8) **Purification of the mind**

Unless a man discharges satisfactorily and disinterestedly the duties of his station in life, his mind will not be purified, and unless his mind is purified, he cannot get Self-realization. It is only in the purified mind that **viveka** (discrimination between the unreal and the real) and **vairagya** (non-attachment to the unreal) crop up and lead on to Self-realization. Unless egoism is dropped, avarice overcome, and the mind made desireless (pure), Self-realization is not possible. The idea that "I am the body" is a great delusion and attachment to this idea is the cause of bondage. Abandon these ideas and attachments if Self-realization is to be achieved.

#### (9) **The necessity of a guru**

Knowledge of the Self is so subtle and mystic, it cannot be attained by individual effort alone. The help of a self-realized teacher (guru) is absolutely necessary for they have walked the path and can easily take the disciple step by step up the ladder of spiritual progress. (10) and lastly the **Lord's Grace** is the most essential thing.

**When the Lord is pleased with anyone, He gives him viveka and vairagya and takes him safely beyond the ocean of mundane existence.**

The Katha Upanishad states, "The Self cannot be gained by the study of Vedas, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He, who the Self chooses, by him, it is gained. To him,

the Self reveals its nature”.

After the dissertation was over, Baba turned to the gentleman and said, “Well, sir, there is in your pocket Brahman (or Mammon) in the form of fifty times five (250) rupees. Please take it out.”

The gentleman took a bundle of currency notes out of his pocket and to his great surprise found, on counting them, that there were 25 notes of 10 rupees each. Seeing this omniscience of Baba, he was moved and fell at Baba’s feet and craved His blessings. Then Baba said to him, “Roll up your bundle of Brahma, viz. currency notes. Unless you get rid of your avarice and greed completely, you will not get real Brahma jnana. How can he, whose mind is engrossed in wealth, progeny and prosperity, expect to know Brahma jnana? He must detach from all of these. The illusion of attachment and the love for money is a deep eddy (whirlpool) of pain, full of crocodiles, in the form of conceit and jealousy. He, alone, who is desireless, can cross this whirlpool. Greed and Brahma are as poles asunder; they are eternally opposed to each other. **Where there is greed, there is no room for thought or meditation of Brahma.** How then can a greedy man get dispassion and salvation? For a greedy man there is no peace, neither contentment, nor certainty (steadiness). If there be even a little trace of greed in the mind, all the sadhanas (spiritual endeavors) are of no avail. Even the knowledge of a well read man who is not free from the desire for the fruit or reward of his actions is useless and will not lead to Self-realization. **The teachings of a guru are of no use to a man who is full of egoism and who always thinks about sense objects.** Purification of mind is absolutely necessary; without it, all our spiritual endeavors are nothing but useless show and pomp. It is, therefore, better for one to take only what he can digest and assimilate. **My treasury is full and I can give anyone what he wants, but I have to see whether he is qualified to receive what I give.** If you listen to Me carefully, you will certainly be benefitted. Sitting in this masjid, I never speak any untruth.”

When a guest is invited to a house, all the members of the household and other friends and relations that happen to be present, are entertained along with the guest. So, all those that were present in the masjid at that time, could partake of the spiritual feast served by Baba for the rich gentleman. After getting Baba’s blessings, everyone, including the gentleman, left the place quite happy and contented.

### **Special Characteristic of Baba**

There are many saints who, leaving their houses, stay in a forest, or in caves or hermitages and while remaining in solitude, try to get liberation or salvation for themselves. They do not care for other people and are always self-absorbed. Sai Baba was not such a type. He had no home, no wife, no progeny, nor any relations near or distant. Still, He lived in the world (society). He begged His bread from four or five houses, always lived at the foot of the neem tree, carried on worldly dealings and taught all the people how to act and behave in this world. Rare are the sadhus and saints who, after attaining God vision, strive for the welfare of the people. Sai Baba was the foremost of these and, therefore, says Hemadpant,

“Blessed is the country, blessed is the family, and blessed are the chaste parents where this extraordinary, transcendent, precious and pure jewel (Sai Baba) was born.”

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XVIII & XIX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **How Hemadpant Was Accepted and Blessed - Stories of Mrs. Sathe and Mrs. Deshmukh - Encouraging Good Thoughts to Fruition - Variety in Upadesh - Teachings Regarding Slander and Remuneration for Labor**

In the last two chapters, Hemadpant described how a rich gentleman aspiring for quick Brahma jnana was treated by Baba, and now in these two chapters, he describes how Hemadpant himself was accepted and blessed by Baba, how Baba encouraged good thoughts and fructified them, and how He gave teachings regarding Self-improvement, slander and remuneration for labor.

#### **Preliminary**

It is a well known fact that the satguru looks first to the qualifications of his disciples and then gives them suitable instructions without unsettling their minds in the least. He then leads them on toward the goal of Self-realization. In this respect, some say that what the satguru teaches or instructs should not be divulged to others. They think their instructions become useless if they are published. This view is incorrect. The satguru is like a monsoon cloud. He pours down profusely, i.e. scatters widely his nectar-like teachings. We should enjoy these and assimilate them to our heart's content and then share them with others without any reserve. This rule should apply, not only to what the satguru teaches us in our waking state, but to the visions he gives us in our dreams. As an example, Budhakowshik Rishi composed his celebrated Ramaraksha stotra which he had seen in his dream.

Like a loving mother forcing bitter, but wholesome, medicine down the throats of her children for the sake of their health, Sai Baba imparted spiritual instructions to His devotees. His method was not veiled or secret, but quite open. The devotees who followed His instructions achieved the object of their desire. Satgurus like Sai Baba expand our intellect and fulfill our tender longings of devotion as they show us the divine beauties of the Self. When this is done, our desire for sense objects vanishes, the twin fruits of **viveka** (discrimination) and **vairagya** (dispassion or non-attachment) develop, and knowledge unfolds, even while sleeping.

We develop these qualities when we come in contact with saints (satguru), serve them, and secure their love. The Lord, who fulfils the desires of His devotees, comes to our aid, removes our troubles and sufferings, and makes us happy. This progress or development is entirely due to the help of the satguru, who is regarded as the Lord Himself. We should, therefore, always seek the satguru, hear his stories, fall at his feet and serve him. Now to our main story.

### **Mr. Sathe**

There was a gentleman named Mr. Sathe who had attained some publicity many years ago during the Crawford Regime which was deposed by Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay at that time. Sathe suffered severe losses in trade. Other adverse circumstances gave him considerable trouble and made him sad and dejected. Being restless, he thought of leaving his home and going out to a distant place. Man does not generally think of God, but when difficulties and calamities overtake him, he turns to Him and prays for relief. If his evil actions have come to an end, God arranges his meeting with a saint, who then gives him proper directions regarding his welfare. Mr. Sathe had a similar experience. His friends advised him to go to Shirdi, where so many people flock to receive Sai Baba's darshan to attain peace of mind and satisfaction of their desires. Sathe liked the idea and immediately traveled to Shirdi in 1917. Upon seeing Baba's form, which was like eternal Brahma, Self-luminous, spotless and pure, Sathe's mind lost its restlessness and became calm and composed. He thought it was the accumulated merits in his former births that brought him to the holy feet of Baba. Sathe was a man of strong will. He at once started to make a parayana (study) of *Gurucharita*. When the reading was finished in the saptaha (seven days), Baba gave him a vision that night. It was to this effect: Baba with *Gurucharita* in His hand was explaining its contents to Mr. Sathe who was sitting in front and listening carefully. When he woke up, he remembered the dream and felt very happy. He thought it was extremely kind of Baba to awaken souls like his that are snoring in

ignorance, and make them taste the nectar of *Gurucharita*. The next day, Sathe informed Kakasaheb Dixit of this vision and requested him to consult Sai Baba regarding its meaning or significance and to find out whether one saptaha (week's) reading was sufficient or whether he should begin again. Kakasaheb Dixit, when a suitable opportunity arose, asked Baba, "Deva (Oh God), what did you suggest to Mr. Sathe by this vision? Should he stop his reading of *Gurucharita* or do another saptaha? He is a simple devotee. Please fulfill his desire and explain the vision and bless him." Then Baba replied, **"He should make one more saptaha of the book; if the work be studied carefully, the devotee will become pure and will be benefitted, the Lord will be pleased and will rescue him from the bondage of this mundane existence."**

Hemadpant was present when this incident occurred. He was shampooing Baba's legs. When he heard Baba's words, he thought in his mind as follows, "What! Mr. Sathe read for only a week and got a reward. I am reading it for forty years with no result! His seven days' stay here becomes fruitful, while my seven years' stay (1910 - 1917) goes for naught. Like a chatak bird, I am ever waiting for the merciful cloud (Baba) to pour its nectar on me and bless me with His instructions." No sooner did this thought cross his mind, than Baba knew it. It was the experience of the bhaktas that Baba read and understood all their thoughts - that He suppressed evil thoughts and encouraged good ones. Reading Hemadpant's mind, Baba at once asked him to get up, go to Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande), get from him Rs. 15/ as dakshina, sit and chitchat with him for a while, and then return. Mercy dawned in Baba's mind and so he issued this order - and who could disobey Baba's order?

Hemadpant immediately left the masjid and went to Shama's house. Shama had just bathed and was wearing a dhotar. He came out and asked Hemadpant, "Why is it you are here now? It seems you have come from the masjid? Why do you look restless and dejected and why are you alone? Please sit and rest awhile. I shall just finish my worship and return, in the meanwhile, please have some pan-vida (leaves and betel nuts etc.) and then we will have a pleasant chat." Saying this, he went inside and Hemadpant sat on the front verandah. In the window, Hemadpant saw a well known Marathi book named *Nath-Bhagwat*, which is a commentary by Saint Ekanath on the eleventh skandha (chapter) of the bigger sanskrit work, *Bhagwat*.

At the suggestion or recommendation of Sai Baba, Messrs. Bapusaheb Jog and Kakasaheb Dixit would read daily from *Bhagavad Gita* with its Marathi commentary named *Bhawartha Deepika* or *Jnaneshwari* ( a dialogue between Krishna and His friend devotee Arjuna), *Nath*



*Bhagwat* (a dialogue between Krishna and His servant devotee Uddhava), and Ekanath's other extensive work, viz. *Bhawartha Ramayana*. When devotees came to Baba and asked Him certain questions, He sometimes answered them only partially and would ask them to go and listen to the readings of the above mentioned works which are the main treatises of Bhagwat Dharma. When the devotees went and listened, they received full and satisfactory replies to their questions.

Hemadpant also used to read daily some portions of the book *Nath Bhagwat*. That day he did not complete the daily portion of his reading, but left it unfinished in order to accompany certain devotees who were going to the masjid. When he picked up the book lying in Shama's window and casually opened it, he found, to his surprise, the unfinished portion turned up. He thought that Baba had sent him very kindly to Shama's house for enabling him to complete his daily reading, so he read through the unfinished portion and completed it. As soon as the reading was completed, Shama, after finishing his worship, came out and the following conversation took place between them.

Hemadpant: "I have come with a message from Baba. He has asked me to obtain Rs.15/ as dakshina from you. He also asked me to sit with you for a while and have a pleasant chitchat, then return to the masjid with you."

Shama (with surprise): "I have no money to give. Take my 15 namaskaras (bows) in lieu of rupees as dakshina to Baba."

Hemadpant: "Alright, your namaskaras are accepted. Now let us have a chitchat. Tell me some stories and leelas of Baba which will destroy our sins."

Shama: "Fine, now sit here for a while. Wonderful indeed are the leelas of this God (Baba). You already know this. I am a village rustic, while you are an enlightened citizen. You have seen even more leelas since coming here. How should I describe them to you? Very well, take these leaves, betel nut and chunam, and eat the pan-vida while I go in, dress myself and return."

In a few minutes, Shama came out and sat talking with Hemadpant. He said, "The leelas of this God (Baba) are inscrutable. There is no end to His leelas. Who can see them? Although He plays or sports with His leelas, still, He is outside of (unaffected by) them. What do we rustics know? Why doesn't Baba Himself tell His stories? Why does He send learned men like you to fools like me? His ways are inconceivable. I can only say that they are not human." After this preface, Shama added, "I now remember a story which



I shall relate to you. I know it personally. As a devotee is resolute and determined, so is Baba's immediate response. **Sometimes Baba puts the devotees to a severe test, and then gives them 'upadesh' (instructions).**"

As soon as Hemadpant heard the word 'upadesh', a flash of lightning crossed, as it were, through his mind. He immediately remembered the story of Mr. Sathe's *Gurucharita* reading and thought Baba might have sent him to Shama in order to give peace to his restless mind. Hemadpant, however, curbed this feeling and began to listen to Shama's stories which described how kind and affectionate Baba was to His devotees. Hemadpant began to feel a sort of joy while hearing them. Then Shama began to tell the following story.

### **Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh**

"There was once an old woman named Radhabai. She was the mother of Khashaba Deshmukh. Hearing of Baba's fame, she came to Shirdi with the people of Sangamner. She took Baba's darshan and was very satisfied. She loved Baba intimately and resolved in her mind that she should accept Baba as her guru and take some upadesh from Him. She would accept nothing else. She determined to fast herself unto death so long as Baba did not accept her and give her any upadesh or mantra. She stayed in her lodging and would not take any food or water for three days. I was frightened by the old woman's ordeal and interceded with Baba on her behalf. I said, "Deva, what is this you have started? You drag so many people here. You know that old lady. She is very obstinate and depends entirely on you. She has resolved to fast unto death if you don't accept and instruct her. If anything bad happens, people will blame You and say that Baba did not instruct her and consequently she met her death. So have mercy on her, bless and instruct her."

"Seeing her determination, Baba sent for her and changed the state of her mind by addressing her as follows: "Oh mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and hastening your death? You are really My mother and I am your child. Take pity on Me and hear Me through. I shall tell you My own story, which if you listen carefully, will do you good."

"I had a guru. He was a great saint and most merciful. I served him, long, very long, still, he would not recite any mantra into My ears. I had a keen desire never to leave him, to serve and stay with him at all costs and to receive instructions from him, but he had his own way.

First, he had My head shaved and asked of Me two pice as dakshina. I gave it at once. If you say, that as My guru was perfect, why should he ask for money and how should he be called desireless? I shall reply plainly that he never cared for coins. Why would he need them? His two pice were (1) firm faith and (2) patience or perseverance. I gave these two pice to him and he was pleased.”

“I resided with my guru for twelve years. He brought me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love, nay, he was love incarnate. How can I describe it? He loved Me the most. Rare is a guru like him. When I looked at him, he seemed deep in meditation and then we were both filled with bliss. Night and day I gazed at him with no thought of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other object on which to meditate, nor anything other than My guru to attend to. He was My sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him, thus, My firm faith was one pice as dakshina. **Saburi (patience or perseverance)** was the other pice. I served my guru for a very long time and waited patiently. Saburi will ferry you across the sea of this mundane existence. Saburi (patience or perseverance) removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways and casts aside all fear, ultimately creating success. Saburi is the mine of virtues, consort of good thought. **Nishtha (faith) and saburi (patience)** are like twin sisters, loving each other very intimately.”

“My guru never expected anything else from Me. He never neglected Me, but protected Me at all times. Although I lived with him, I was sometimes away from him, but still, I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected Me by his glance, just as the mother tortoise comforts her young ones by her tender gaze, whether they are near or away from her. Oh mother, my guru never taught Me any mantra, so how shall I recite a mantra in your ear? Just remember that the guru’s

\*Baba always lovingly addressed women as mothers and men as Kaka, Bapu, Bhau etc.

\* \* \* \* \*

loving glance gives us happiness. Do not try to get a mantra or upadesh from anyone. Make Me the sole object of your thoughts and actions and you will, no doubt, attain paramartha (the spiritual goal of life). Look at Me wholeheartedly, and I, in turn, will look at you similarly. Sitting in this masjid, I speak the truth, only the truth. No sadhanas, nor proficiency in the six shastras are necessary. Have faith and confidence in your guru. Believe fully that the guru is the sole actor or doer. **Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara and Brahma (Trimurti)**

**incarnate”.**

Instructed in this wise, the old lady was convinced. She bowed to Baba and gave up her fast.

Hearing this story carefully and attentively, and marking its significance and appropriateness, Hemadpant was most agreeably surprised. He was so moved that he was overflowing with joy, his throat was choked and he was unable to utter a single word. Shama, upon seeing him in that condition, asked him, “What is the matter with you? Why are you silent? How many innumerable leelas of Baba shall I describe?”

Just at that moment, the bell in the masjid began to ring, proclaiming that the noon worship and arati ceremony had begun. Shama and Hemadpant then hurried to the masjid. Bapusaheb Jog had just started the worship. The women were inside the masjid and the men were standing below in the open courtyard. All were loudly singing the arati in chorus to the accompaniment of drums. Shama went up to the front, pulling Hemadpant with him. He sat to the right and Hemadpant sat in front of Baba. Seeing them, Baba asked Hemadpant to give Him the dakshina brought from Shama. Hemadpant replied that Shama gave namaskaras in lieu of rupees and that he was here in person. Baba then said, “Alright, now let Me know whether you both had a chitchat, and if so, tell Me everything you talked about.” Not minding the sound of the bell, the drum and chorus songs, Hemadpant was eager to tell what they had talked about and started to narrate it. Baba was also anxious to hear about it and so He left His bolster and leaned forward. Hemadpant said everything he and Shama had talked about was very pleasant and the story of the old lady was quite special.

On hearing it, Hemadpant thought Sai Baba’s leela was inexplicable and that under the guise of that story, He had really blessed him. Baba then said, “The story is wonderful indeed. How were you blessed? I would like to know everything in detail from you, so tell Me all about it.” Hemadpant then related in full the story which he had heard a little while before and which had made a lasting impression on his mind. Hearing this, Baba was very pleased and asked him, “Did the story strike you and did you catch its significance?” Hemadpant replied, “Yes, Baba, the restlessness of my mind has vanished and I feel truly at peace and have now come to know the true path.”

Then Baba spoke as follows: “My method is quite unique. Remember well this one story and it will be very useful. To get knowledge of the Self (realization), dhyana (meditation) is necessary. If you practice it continuously, the vrittis (thoughts) will be

pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord, who is in all creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Always meditate on My formless nature which is knowledge incarnate, consciousness and bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate night and day on My form as you see it here. As you go on doing this, your vrittis will concentrate at one point and the distinction between the dhyata (meditator), dhyana (act of meditation), dhyeya (thing meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with Brahma consciousness. The mother tortoise is on one bank of the river and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk nor warmth to them, but her mere glance gives them sustenance. The young ones do nothing but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is to the young ones a downpour of nectar, their only source of sustenance and happiness. Similar to this is the relation between the guru and the disciple.”

When Baba uttered these last words, the chorus of the arati songs stopped and all cried out loudly in one voice: “Victory be to our satguru Sai Maharaj, who is existence, knowledge and bliss.”

Dear readers, let us imagine we are now standing amongst the crowd in the masjid and let us join them in this jayajayakar.

After the arati ceremony was finished, prasad was distributed. Bapusaheb Jog came forward as usual and, after saluting Baba, put a handful of sugar candy in Baba’s hand which Baba then pushed into the hands of Hemadpant, saying to him, “If you take this story to heart and remember it well, your state will be sweet as this sugar candy, all your desires will be fulfilled, and you will be happy.” Hemadpant bowed before Baba and implored, “Please always favor me like this, bless me, and ever protect me.” Baba replied, “Hear this story, meditate on it, and assimilate its spirit. Then you will always remember and meditate on the Lord who will manifest Himself to you.”

Dear readers! Hemadpant got prasad of sugar candy from Baba and we now get the prasad of sugar candy or nectar from this story. Let us drink it to our heart’s content, meditate on it and assimilate it. Let us be strong and happy by Baba’s grace. Amen!

### **Baba’s Advice Regarding Our Behavior**

The following words of Baba are general and invaluable. If they are kept in mind and acted upon, they will always do us good. “Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not

discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will certainly be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the needy and hospitality to strangers. If anyone wants any money from you and you are not inclined to give, then do not give, but do not be discourteous. Let anyone speak hundreds of words against you; do not be resentful and give a bitter reply. If you always tolerate such things, you will certainly be happy. Let the world spin topsy-turvy, you remain at peace where you are. Standing or staying in your own place, look on calmly at the show of all things passing before you. Demolish the wall of difference that separates you from Me, and then the road for our meeting will be clear and open. The sense of differentiation, as I and Thou, is the barrier that keeps the disciple away from his master, and unless that is destroyed, the state of union or atonement is not possible.

**“Allah Malik”, i.e. God is the sole proprietor, nobody else is our protector.**

His method of work is extraordinary, invaluable and inscrutable. His will shall be done and He will show us the way and satisfy our heart's desires. It is on account of inanubandh (former relationship) that we have come together. Let us love and serve each other and be happy. He who attains the supreme goal of life is immortal and happy; all others merely exist, i.e. live so long as they breathe.

### **Encouraging Good Thoughts to Fruition**

It is interesting to note how Sai Baba encouraged good thoughts. One must surrender completely to Him with love and devotion, and then one sees how He helps at various times in so many things. A saint once said that when you have a good thought immediately upon awakening from sleep and if you develop the same afterward during the day, your intellect will be concentrated and your mind will attain calmness. Hemadpant wanted to try this. One Wednesday night before going to bed he thought, “Tomorrow is Thursday, an auspicious day and as this place, Shirdi, is very holy, let me pass the whole day in remembering and chanting the Rama-nama”. He then went to sleep. The next morning when he got up, he remembered without any effort the name of Rama and was very pleased. He then, after finishing his morning duties, went to see Baba and brought flowers. As he left Dixit's Wada and was just passing Booty's Wada (present samadhi mandir), he heard a beautiful song that was being nicely sung by Aurangabadkar in the masjid before Baba. The song was “Guru kripa payo mere bhair” etc. by Ekanath in which he says that he got collyrium in the form of his guru's grace which opened his vision and made him see Rama everywhere - in sleep, in dreams, and in his waking state. There are so many songs. Why was this particular song chosen by Aurangabadkar, a devotee of

Baba? This was not just a coincidence. It was arranged by Baba to encourage Hemadpant's determination to sing unceasingly Rama-nama during the day.

**All the saints agree and emphasize the importance and efficacy of uttering Rama's (God's) name which purifies bhaktas and protects and saves them from all calamities.**

### **Variety in Upadesh - Slanderer Condemned**

Sai Baba required no special place, nor any special time for giving instructions. Whenever any occasion demanded such, He gave them freely. Once it so happened, a bhakta of Baba reviled another behind his back before other people. Leaving aside the merits of his brother, the slanderer dwelt on his faults and spoke so sarcastically that the hearers were disgusted. Generally, people who have a tendency to scandalize others unnecessarily cause hatred and ill will. Saints see scandal in another light. They say there are various ways of cleansing or removing dirt, viz. by means of earth, water and soap, etc., but a scandal monger has a way of his own. He removes the dirt (faults) of others with his tongue, so in a way, he obliges the person whom he reviles and for this he is to be thanked. Sai Baba had his own method of correcting this scandal monger. He knew by His omniscience what the slanderer had done and when he met him at noon near the Lendi, Baba pointed to a pig that was eating filth near the fence and said to the slanderer, "Behold, how with what relish it is gorging dung. Your conduct is similar! You have reviled your own brethren to your heart's content. After performing many deeds of merit, you were born a man, yet, when you act like this, will Shirdi help you in any way?" Needless to say, the bhakta took the lesson to heart and repented.

In this way, Baba went on giving instructions whenever necessary. If these are borne in mind and acted upon, the spiritual goal of Self-realization is not far off. There is a proverb which says, "If there be my Hari (Lord), He will feed me on my cot." This proverb is only true in respect to food and clothing, but if anyone trusting in this, merely sits back and does nothing in spiritual matters, he will be ruined.

**One has to exert himself to his utmost for attaining Self-realization.  
The more he endeavors, the better for him.**

Baba said that He was omnipresent, occupying land, air, sea, world, light and heaven, and that He was not limited to His body - three cubits and a half in length. He incarnated in this form

to save His devotees.

**If any devotee meditated on Sai Baba day and night with complete self surrender, he would experience complete union (without any difference) with Him, like waves and the sea.**

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He, who wants to be rid of the cycles of birth and death, should lead a righteous life with his mind calm and composed. He should not speak cuttingly to anyone, so as to hurt him to the quick. He should always engage himself in good actions, do his duties, and surrender himself heart and soul to the Lord. He then need not be afraid of anything. He, who trusts Him entirely, hears and expounds His leelas, and does not think of anything else, is sure to attain Self-realization.

Baba asked many to remember His name and to surrender to Him, but to those who wanted to know who they were ('Who am I' inquiry), He advised shravanam (study) and mananam (meditation). To some, He advised remembering God's name, to others, hearing His leelas, to some, worship of His feet, and to others, reading and studying *Adhyatma Ramayan*, *Jnaneshwari* and other sacred scriptures. Some He made sit near His feet, some He sent to Khandoba's temple, some He advised the chanting of the thousand names of Vishnu, and to others, the study of the Chhandogya Upanishad and the *Bhagavad Gita*. There was no limit, no restriction to his instructions. To some, He gave instructions in person, and others, by visions or dreams. To one addicted to drink, He appeared in his dream, sat on his chest, pressed it, and left him after he gave a promise not to touch liquor. To some, He explained mantras like 'Guru Brahma' in dreams. To a devotee who was practicing hatha yoga, He sent word that he should leave off hatha yoga practices, sit quiet, and wait (saburi). It is impossible to describe all Baba's ways and methods. In ordinary worldly dealings, He set examples by His actions, one of which is given below.

### **Remuneration for Labor**

One day at noon, Baba went by Radha Krishna Mai's home and said, "Bring me a ladder." Some men then brought a ladder which they set against a house as directed by Baba. Baba then climbed up on the roof of Vaman Gondkar's house, crossed over to the roof of Radha Krishna Mai's house, and climbed down the other side. What object Baba had, none knew. At that time, Radha Krishna Mai was shivering with malaria. Perhaps Baba went there to drive off her fever.



Immediately after stepping down from the ladder, Baba paid two rupees to the men who brought the ladder. Someone asked Baba why He paid so much for this. Baba replied that no one should take the labor of others for granted. The workers should be paid promptly and liberally.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Das Ganu's Problem Solved by Kaka's Maid Servant

In this chapter Hemadpant describes how Das Ganu Maharaj's problem was solved by Kakasaheb Dixit's maid servant.

#### Preliminary

Sai (Lord) was originally formless. He assumed a form for the sake of His bhaktas. With the help of the actress maya, He played the part of an actor in the big drama of the universe. Let us remember and visualize Shri Sai. Let us imagine Shirdi and carefully visualize the program after the noon arati. When the arati ceremony was over, Sai Baba would come out of the masjid, and, while standing on its edge and gazing lovingly at His devotees, distribute udi. The bhaktas would respond with equal fervor. Some would clasp His feet, and others would remain standing and stare at Him in awe adoringly. Everyone would enjoy the shower of udi. Baba distributed handfuls of udi into the palms of His devotees and marked their foreheads with udi with His fingers. The love He bore for them in His heart was boundless. He then addressed the bhaktas as follows: "Oh Bhau, go take your lunch. You Anna, go to your lodgings. You, Bapu, enjoy your meal." In this way, He conversed with every devotee and sent them home. Even now these scenes of Baba can be visualized and enjoyed if the imagination is brought into play. Thus, bringing Sai before our mental vision, let us meditate on Him, from His holy feet to His benevolent face, and, prostrating before Him, humbly, lovingly and respectfully, revert to the story of this chapter.

#### Ishavasya Upanishad

Das Ganu once started to write a Marathi commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad. Let us first give a brief idea of this Upanishad before proceeding further.

It is called a 'Mantropanishad' as it is embodied in the mantras of the Vedic Samhitas. It constitutes the last or 40<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Vajasaneyi Samhita (Yajurveda) and it is, therefore, called Vajasaneyi Samhitopanishad. Being embodied in Vedic Samhitas, this is regarded as superior to all other Upanishads which occur in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas (explanatory treatises on mantras and rituals).

Not only this, other Upanishads are considered to be commentaries on the truths mentioned briefly in the Ishavasya Upanishad. For instance, the biggest of the Upanishads, viz. the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, is considered by Pandit Satwalekar to be a running commentary on the Ishavasya Upanishad.

Professor R.D. Ranade says, "The Ishopanishad is quite a small Upanishad and yet it contains many hints which show an extraordinary piercing insight. Within the short compass of 18 verses, it gives a valuable mystical description of the atman, a description of the ideal sage who stands unruffled in the midst of temptations and sorrows, an adumbration of the doctrine of karma yoga as later formulated, and finally, a reconciliation of the claims of knowledge and work. The most valuable idea that lies at the root of the Upanishad is that of a logical synthesis between the two opposites of knowledge and work, which are both required according to the Upanishad to be annulled in a higher synthesis." (page 24 of the Constructive Survey of the Upanishadic Philosophy). In another place he says that "The poetry of the Ishopanishad is a commixture of moral, mystical and metaphysical thought."

From the brief description given above about this Upanishad, anyone can see how difficult it is to translate this Upanishad into a vernacular language and bring out its exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it in Marathi Ovi metre, verse by verse, but as he did not comprehend the gist or essence of the Upanishad, he was not satisfied with his performance. He, therefore, consulted some learned men regarding his doubts and difficulties and discussed the Upanishad with them at great length. They did not help his comprehension, nor did they give him any rational satisfactory explanation, so Das Ganu was a little restless over the matter.

### **Satguru Only Is Competent and Qualified to Explain**

As we have seen, this Upanishad is the quintessence of the Vedas. It is the science of Self realization. It is the scythe or weapon which can rend asunder the bondage of life and death and make us free. Only he, therefore, who has himself attained Self-realization, can give us the correct interpretation of this Upanishad. When no one could satisfy Das Ganu, he resolved to consult Sai Baba about this. When an opportunity arose to go to Shirdi, Das Ganu went directly to Sai Baba, prostrated himself before Him, mentioned his difficulties about the Ishavasya Upanishad, and requested that Baba give the correct interpretation. Sai Baba blessed him and said, "You need not be anxious. There is no difficulty about the matter. The maid servant of Kaka (Kakasaheb Dixit) will solve your doubts at Vile Parle on your way home." The people who were present heard this, thought Baba was joking, and said, "How can an illiterate maid servant solve the difficult meaning of this Upanishad?" Das Ganu, however, thought otherwise. He was certain that whatever Baba said, must come true.

**Baba's word was the decree of Brahma (Almighty).**

### **Kaka's Maid Servant**

Fully believing in Baba's words, Das Ganu left Shirdi, arrived at Vile Parle (a suburb of Bombay), and stayed with Kakasaheb Dixit. The next day, while Das Ganu was enjoying his morning nap (some say he was engaged in worship), he heard a poor girl singing a beautiful song in clear and melodious tones. The song was about a crimson colored sari, how nice it was, how fine its embroidery, how beautiful its borders etc. Das Ganu liked the song so much, he went outside and saw it was being sung by a young girl, the sister of Namya, who was a servant of Kakasaheb. The girl was cleaning vessels and was wearing only a torn rag. Seeing her impoverished condition and her jovial temperment, Das Ganu felt pity for her and so the next day, when Rao Bahadur M.V. Pradhan gave him a pair of dhotars, he requested a sari be given to the poor little girl. Rao Bahadur bought a good chirdi (small sari) and presented it to her. Like a starving person receiving delicious food to eat, the little girl's joy knew no bounds. The next day she wore the new sari and out of great joy and merriment, she whirled, danced round, played 'fugadi' with the other girls and excelled them all. The following day, however, she kept the new sari in a box at home and came to work wearing her old, torn rags. Nevertheless, she looked as merry as she did the previous day. Seeing this, Das Ganu's pity was transformed into admiration. He knew that the girl, being poor, had to wear a torn rag, but now she had a new sari which she kept in reserve. Having put on the old rag, while keeping her new sari at home safe in a box, she strutted about showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus, Das Ganu realized that **all our feelings of pain and pleasure depend upon our attitude of mind. Bliss is**

**something which comes from the spirit within, not without, and is not dependent on external objects or circumstances from the transient material world.**

In this particular case, the impoverished condition of the poor girl, her torn rag, her new sari, the donor, the donee, and the acceptance were all parts of the Lord's plan and were pervaded by Him. The young girl was joyful when she had only torn rags to wear, was joyful when she wore her new sari, and was joyful when she once again was wearing her torn rags. Thus, her joyful attitude came from her inner spirit, not from the conditions of her life. Thinking deeply over this incident, Das Ganu realized one should be content and at peace with one's lot in life in the firm conviction that everything is pervaded and ordained by God. Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the lesson of the Ishavasya Upanishad - that it is our attitude of mind which determines our feelings. Lasting happiness and bliss come from the inner spirit, and not from the material world.

### **Unique Method of Teaching**

From the above incident, the reader will see Baba's teaching method was unique and varied.

Though Baba never left Shirdi, He sent some devotees to Machhindragad, some to Kolhapur and others to Sholapur for practicing sadhanas. To some, He appeared in His usual form; to others, He appeared in waking or dream states, day or night, and satisfied their desires. It is impossible to describe all the methods Baba used in imparting instructions to His bhaktas. In this particular case, He sent Das Ganu to Vile Parle where he had his problem solved through the maid servant experience. To those who say it was not necessary to send Das Ganu away, that Baba could have personally explained the meaning in the Ishavasya Upanishad, we note Baba followed the best course, for how else could Das Ganu have learnt the great lesson provided by the experience of the poor maid servant and her sari, which in turn helped him understand the meaning of the Ishavasya Upanishad?

We now close this chapter with another beautiful extract about this Upanishad.

### **The Ethics of the Ishavasya Upanishad**

"One of the main features of the Ishavasya Upanishad is the ethical advice it offers. It is interesting to note that the ethics of this Upanishad are definitely based upon the metaphysical position advanced in it. The very opening words of the Upanishad tell us

God pervades everything. As a corollary of this metaphysical position, the ethical advice it offers is that a man ought to enjoy whatever God bestows on him in the firm belief that as the Lord pervades everything, whatever is bestowed on him by God must be for his good. **It follows, naturally, that the Upanishad should forbid us from coveting another man's property. In fact, we are fittingly taught here a lesson of contentment with one's own lot in the belief that whatever exists, is divinely ordained.** The Upanishad also gives the moral advice always to spend one's lifetime in doing good actions, especially the karmas detailed in the shastras, in a mood of believing and joyful resignation to His will.

Inactivity, according to this Upanishad, would be the canker of the soul. It is only when a man spends his lifetime in doing good actions, that he can hope to attain the ideal of naishkarma. (However, we need God's grace to allow us to perform good actions.) Finally, the text goes on to say that a man who sees all beings in the Self and sees the Self as existing in all beings, in fact, for whom all beings and everything that exists have become the Self, cannot suffer infatuation. What ground would such a man have for grief? Loathing, infatuation and grief verily proceed from our not being able to see the atman in all things. But a man who realizes the oneness of all things, for whom everything has become the Self, must ipso facto, cease to be affected by the common foibles of humanity." (pages 169-170 of the *Creative Period* by Messrs. Belvalkar and Ranade.)

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Prominent Devotees of Sai Baba



# Chapter XXI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Stories of (1) V.H. Thakur (2) Anantrao Patankar and (3) Pandharpur Pleader

In this chapter, Hemadpant relates the stories of Vinayak Harishchandra Thakur, B.A., Anantrao Patankar of Poona and a pleader from Pandharpur. All these stories are very interesting, which, when carefully read and understood, will lead the readers on to the spiritual path.

#### Preliminary

As a general rule, our good karma in the form of accumulated merits from past births enables us to seek the company of saints and profit thereby. To illustrate this, Hemadpant gives an example from his own experience. He was a resident magistrate of Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, for many years. A famous Mohammedan saint named Pir Moulana was living there and many Hindus, Parsis and other religionists used to go to him for darshan. Inus, Hemadpant's mujavar (priest), urged him many times to go visit Pir Moulana, but for various reasons he was unable to go. After many years, Hemadpant's turn came, and he was called to Shirdi where he was permanently enlisted in Sai Baba's darbar. Only fortunate fellows get this contact with the saints.

#### Institution of Saints

There have been institutions of saints in this world from time immemorial. Saints appear (incarnate) in various places to carry out the missions allotted to them, but though they work in different places, they are, as it were, one. They work in unison under the

common authority of the Almighty Lord and are fully aware of the work each is doing, adding assistance where necessary. An example illustrating this is given below.

### Mr. Thakur

Mr. V.H.Thakur, B.A., was a clerk in the Revenue Department who once came with a survey party to a town named Vadgaum near Belgaum (S.M.Country). There, he saw a Kanarese saint (Appa) and bowed before him. The saint was explaining a portion of the book *Vichar Sagar* of Nichaldas (a standard work on Vedanta) to the audience. When Thakur was taking his leave to go, the saint said to him, "You should study this book, and if you do so, your desires will be fulfilled, and when, in the future, you go to the north in the discharge of your duties, by your good fortune, you will come across a great saint who will show you the future path, give you peace of mind and make you happy."

Thakur was then transferred to Junnar where he had to cross Nhane Ghat. This ghat was very steep and impassable and no conveyance other than a buffalo was of use in crossing it, so he had to take a buffalo ride through the ghat, which inconvenienced and pained him very much. Thereafter, he was transferred to Kalyan for a higher post, where he became acquainted with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Thakur heard much about Sai Baba from Nanasaheb Chandorkar and wanted to go see Him. The next day, Nanasaheb had to go to Shirdi and asked Thakur to accompany him. Thakur could not do so, as he had to attend the Thana Civil Court for a civil case, so Nanasaheb went alone. Thakur went to Thana, but the case was postponed. He then repented for not accompanying Nanasaheb and decided to go directly to Shirdi.

When Thakur arrived, he found that Nanasaheb had left the previous day, but some of his friends, whom he met there, took him to Baba. Thakur saw Baba, fell at His feet, and was overjoyed. His eyes were full of tears of joy and his hair stood on end. Then, after a while, the omniscient Baba said to him, "The path of this place is not as easy as the teachings of the Kanarese Saint Appa or even as the buffalo ride in the Nhane Ghat. **In this spiritual path, you have to put in your best exertion, as it is very difficult.**" When Thakur heard these significant signs and words, the meaning of which no one else knew, he was overwhelmed with joy. Thus, he came to know that the words of the Kanarese saint turned out to be true. Then, joining both hands and placing his head on Baba's feet, he prayed that he should be accepted and blessed. Baba then said, "Everything Appa told you was right, but **these things have to be practiced and lived. Mere reading won't do. You have to think and carry out what you read, otherwise it is of no use. Mere book learning, without the grace of the guru and Self-realization,**



**is of no avail.”** (Thakur had been reading and studying the theoretical portion of the work *Vichar Sagar*, but the practical way was shown to him at Shirdi.) The next story will bring out this truth more forcibly.

### **Anantrao Patankar**

Anantrao Patankar, a gentleman from Poona, wished to see Baba. He came to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan. His eyes were appeased and he was very much pleased. He fell at Baba's feet and, after performing proper worship, said to Baba, "I have read a lot, studied Vedas, Vedantas and Upanishads and heard all the Puranas, but I still do not have peace of mind, so I think all my reading was useless. Simple, ignorant, devout people are better than me.

### **UNLESS THE MIND BECOMES CALM, ALL BOOK LEARNING IS OF NO AVAIL.**

I have heard from many people that You give peace of mind to so many people by Your mere glance and wonderful words, so I have come here. Please take pity on me and bless me." Then Baba told him a parable which was as follows:

### **Parable of Nine Balls of Stool (Nava-vidha Bhakti)**

"Once a soudagar (merchant) came here. A mare passed nine balls of stool in front of him.

The merchant, intent on his quest, spread the end of his dhotar and gathered all nine balls in it and thus, he attained concentration (peace) of mind."

Mr. Patankar could not understand the meaning of this story, so he asked Ganesh Damodar, alias Dada Kelkar, "What does Baba mean by this?" Kelkar replied "I, too, do not understand all Baba says and means, but at His inspiration, will say what I have come to know. The mare is God's grace and the nine balls excreted are the nine forms or types of bhakti, viz. (1) shravana (hearing) (2) kirtana (praying) (3) smarana (remembering) (4) padasevana (resorting to the feet) (5) archana (worship) (6) namaskara (bowing) (7) dasya (service) (8) sakhyatva (friendship) (9) atmanivedana (surrender of the self). These are the nine types of bhakti. If any of these are faithfully followed, Lord Hari will be pleased and will manifest Himself in the home of the devotee. All the sadhanas, viz. japa (vocal worship), tapa (penance), yoga practice, and studying and expounding the scriptures are quite useless unless they are accompanied by bhakti, i.e. devotion. Knowledge of the

Vedas, or fame as a great jnani, or mere formal bhajan (worship) without bhakti are of no avail.

### **What is wanted is LOVING DEVOTION.**

Consider yourself as the seeker after the truth in the parable and be anxious and eager like him to collect or cultivate the nine types of devotion. Then you will attain stability and peace of mind.”

The next day when Patankar went to Baba for salutation, he was asked whether he collected the ‘nine balls of stool’. Patankar responded that being a poor fellow, he should first be graced by Baba and then they would be easily collected. Baba then blessed and comforted him, saying he would attain peace and welfare. Hearing this, Patankar became overjoyed and happy.

### **Pandharpur Pleader**

We shall close this chapter with a short story showing Baba’s omniscience and how it was used to correct people and set them on the right path.

Once a pleader from Pandharpur came to Shirdi, went to the masjid, saw Sai Baba, fell at His feet and, without being asked, offered some dakshina, then sat in a corner eager to hear the talk that was going on. Baba turned His face towards him and said, “How cunning people are! They fall at the feet, offer dakshina, but inwardly give abuses behind the back. Isn’t this wonderful?” This cap (remark) fit the pleader and he wore it. None understood the remark. The pleader grasped it’s meaning, but kept silent.

When they returned to the wada, the pleader said to Kakasaheb Dixit, “What Baba remarked was perfectly right. The dart (remark) was aimed at me. It was a hint to me that I should not indulge in reviling or scandalizing others. When the subjudge or munsiff of Pandharpur (Mr. Noolkar) came and stayed here for the improvement of his health, a discussion about this matter was going on in the bar room at Pandharpur (as it happens in many a bar room). It was said or discussed there whether the ailments from which the subjudge suffered were ever likely to be cured without medicine by merely going to Sai Baba and whether it was proper for an educated man like the subjudge to have recourse to such methods. The subjudge was taken to task, i.e. was criticized, as was Sai Baba. I took some part in this affair as well, and now Sai Baba has shown me the impropriety of my conduct. This was not to rebuke me, but was a favor, as advice, that I should not indulge in any scandal or slander of others and not interfere unnecessarily in other’s affairs.”

Shirdi is about a 100 koss (koss = 3 miles) distance from Pandharpur, still, Baba by His omniscience, knew what transpired in the bar room. The intervening places - rivers, jungles, and mountains - were not an obstruction to His all perceiving sight, as He could see or read the hearts of all. Nothing was secret or veiled from Him. Everything everywhere was known to Him. Let a man be far or near, he cannot avoid the all pervading gaze of Sai Baba. From this incident, the pleader learned the lesson never to speak ill of others, nor unnecessarily criticize them. Thus, his evil tendency ended and **he was set on the right path.**

Though the story refers to a pleader, still, it is applicable to all. Everyone should, therefore, take this lesson to heart and profit thereby.

Sai Baba's greatness is unfathomable and so are His wonderful leelas. His life is also such, for He is Para Brahma (Lord God) incarnate.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Gurustan



# Chapter XXII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Rescues from Serpent bites (1) Balasaheb Mirikar (2) Bapusaheb Booty (3) Amir Shakkar (4) Hemadpant - Baba's Opinion Regarding Killing of Serpents**

### **Preliminary**

How to meditate on Baba? No one is able to fathom the nature or form of the Almighty. Even the Vedas and the thousand tongued Shesha are not able to describe it fully. Devotees cannot understand, nor can they look at the form of the Lord, but they know that His holy feet are a source of grace to attain the supreme goal of life. They know of no other method than to meditate on the holy feet of the Lord. Hemadpant suggests an easy way of devotion and meditation as follows:

As the full moon of every month gradually diminishes, the moonlight also wanes in the same degree and on the night of the new moon, the moon is not visible at all, nor do we get her light. Therefore, when the moon begins to reappear, people are anxious to see the new crescent as it starts to form. On the night of the first day of the new moon, the moon is not seen and on the night of the second day she is also not clearly visible. People are then asked to look at the moon through an opening between two branches of a tree and when they begin to gaze with concentration through this aperture, the distant small crescent of the moon comes, to their great delight, within their ken. Following this method, let us try to see Baba's light. Look at Baba's posture. How fine it is! He is sitting with His legs folded, His right leg held across His left knee. The fingers of His left hand are spread on His right foot. On His right toe, His two fingers - the index and middle ones - are spread. By this posture, Baba means to say, as it were, if you want to see My Light, be

egoless and most humble, and meditate on My toe through the opening between the two branches - (index and middle fingers) - and then you will be able to see My Light. This is the easiest means of attaining devotion.

Now let us turn for a moment to Baba's life. Shirdi became a place of pilgrimage on account of Baba's stay. People from all over began to flock there, and both rich and poor began to be blessed and benefitted in many various ways. Who can describe Baba's boundless love, His wonderful natural knowledge and His all pervasiveness? Blessed is he who experienced one or all of these.

Sometimes Baba observed long periods of silence which was, in a way, His dissertation on Brahma. At other times, He was consciousness-bliss incarnate whilst surrounded by His devotees. Sometimes He spoke in parables, while at other times, He indulged in wit and humor. At times, He was quite clear and direct, yet on other occasions, He seemed enraged. Furthermore, although He often gave His teachings in a 'nut shell', under certain circumstances, He argued at length. In this way, He gave varied instructions to His many different bhaktas, according to their requirements. His life, therefore, was inscrutable, beyond the ken of our mind, beyond our intellect and speech. Our longing to see His face, to talk with Him and hear His leelas can no longer be satisfied, still, we are overflowing with joy. We can measure the amount of rainfall, calculate the velocity of wind, but who can measure the greatness of Sai Baba's leelas? Now we shall address one aspect of them, viz. how He anticipated or forestalled the calamities of His devotees and warded them off in time.

### **Balasaheb Mirikar**

Balasaheb Mirikar, son of Sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar, was mamlatdar of Kopergaon. He was going on tour to Chitali, and stopped on the way in Shirdi to see Sai Baba. When he went to the masjid and prostrated himself before Baba, the usual conversation regarding health and other matters commenced when Baba sounded a note of warning as follows: "Do you know our Dwarakamai?" As Balasaheb did not understand, he kept quiet. Baba continued, "This is our Dwarakamai, where you are sitting. She wards off all dangers and anxieties of the children who sit on her lap. This Masjidmai (its presiding deity) is very merciful. She is the mother of the simple devotees whom she will save in calamities. Once a person sits on her lap, all his troubles are over. He who rests in her shade gets bliss." Then Baba gave him udi and placed His protecting hand on his head. When Balasaheb was about to depart, Baba again said, "Do you know the 'Lamba Baba' (long gentleman), viz. serpent?" And then closing His left fist, He brought it near the right



elbow and moving His left arm like the hood of a serpent, He said, “He is so terrible, but what can he do to the children of Dwarakamai? When Dwarakamai (its presiding deity) protects, what can the serpent do?”

Everyone present was curious to know the meaning of this and its reference to Mirikar, but none had the courage to ask Baba. Then Balasaheb saluted Baba and left the masjid with Shama. Baba called Shama back and asked him to accompany Balasaheb and to enjoy the Chitali trip. Shama then went over to Balasaheb and told him he would come with him, according to Baba’s wish. Balasaheb replied that he need not come, as it would be inconvenient, so Shama returned to Baba and told Him what Balasaheb had said to him. Baba said, **“Alright, do not go. We should mean well and do well. Whatever is destined to happen, will happen.”**

Meanwhile, Balasaheb thought things over again and asked Shama to accompany him, so Shama took leave of Baba and started off in a tanga with Balasaheb. They reached Chitali at 9 pm and encamped in the Maruti temple. The office people had not come, so they sat in the temple quietly talking. Balasaheb was sitting on a mat reading a newspaper. His uparane (upper dhotar) was spread across his waist and on part of it, a snake was sitting unobserved. It began to move with a rustling sound which was heard by the peon. He brought a lantern, saw the snake, and raised an alarm, ‘serpent, serpent’. Balasaheb was frightened and began to quiver. Shama was also shocked. Then he and others moved noiselessly and took sticks and clubs in their hands. The snake got down slowly from Balasaheb’s waist and moved away from him. It was immediately done to death.

Thus, this calamity which was prophesied by Baba was averted and Balasaheb’s love for Baba was deeply confirmed.

### **Bapusaheb Booty**

One day a great astrologer named Nanasaheb Dengale told Bapusaheb Booty, who was then in Shirdi, “Today is an inauspicious day for you. There is danger to your life.” This made Bapusaheb restless. When they, as usual, came to the masjid, Baba said to Bapusaheb, “What does this Nana say? He foretells death for you. Well, you need not be afraid. Tell him boldly, “Let us see how death kills.” Later that evening, when Bapusaheb went to his privy for easing himself, he saw a snake. His servant saw it and lifted a stone to strike it. Bapusaheb asked him to get a big stick, but before the servant returned with the stick, the snake was seen moving away and soon disappeared. Bapusaheb

remembered with joy Baba's words of fearlessness.

### **Amir Shakkar**

Amir Shakkar was a native of the village Korale in Kopergaon Taluka. He belonged to the butcher caste. He worked as a commission agent in Bandra and was well known there. He once suffered from rheumatism which caused him great pain, but upon remembering God, he decided to leave his business, come to Shirdi, and seek Baba's grace to relieve his malady. Baba then stationed him in the Chavadi which was at the time, a damp, unhealthy place, unfit for such a patient. Any other place in the village, or Korale itself, would have been better for Amir, but Baba's word was the deciding factor and the chief medicine.

Baba did not allow Amir to come to the masjid, but had him stay in the Chavadi where he received a very great advantage, since Baba passed via the Chavadi every morning and evening. Also, every alternate day, Baba went with a procession to the Chavadi where He would sleep. Thus, Amir was easily in contact with Baba quite often. Amir stayed in the Chavadi for a full nine months, but then developed a disgust for the place.

One night, he stealthily left the place and went to Kopergaon and stayed in a dharmashala. There, he saw an old, dying fakir who asked him for water. Amir brought the fakir some water, but upon drinking it, the old man passed away. This put Amir in a fix. He thought that if he went and informed the authorities, he would be held responsible for the death, as he was the first and sole informant and knew something about the matter. He then repented for his actions, (viz. leaving Shirdi without Baba's permission) and prayed to Baba.

Amir decided to return to Shirdi that same night and ran all the way back, all the while remembering and muttering Baba's name. He reached Shirdi before day break and his anxiety finally abated. He then lived in the Chavadi in perfect accordance with Baba's wishes and orders and was cured.

One night it so happened that Baba cried out at midnight, "Oh Abdul, some devilish creature is dashing against the side of my bed." Abdul came with a lantern, examined Baba's bed, but found nothing. Baba asked him to examine the place carefully and He began to strike the ground with His satka. Seeing this leela of Baba, Amir thought Baba might have suspected some serpent had come in. Amir knew, by close and long contact with Baba, the meaning of His words and actions. Baba then saw something moving near



Amir's cushion. He asked Abdul to bring in a light which revealed a coiled serpent moving its head up and down. The serpent was immediately beaten to death. Thus, Baba gave a timely warning and saved Amir.

### **Hemadpant (scorpion and serpent)**

At Baba's recommendation, Kakasaheb Dixit read daily two works of Shri Ekanath Maharaj, viz. *Bhagwat* and *Bhawartha Ramayana*. Hemadpant had the good fortune to be in the audience when the reading of the works was going on. Once, when a portion from the *Ramayana* was being read which related to Hanuman's testing Rama's greatness according to his mother's instructions, all the listeners were spell bound. Hemadpant was one of them. Suddenly, a big scorpion (none knew where it came from) jumped and landed on Hemadpant's right shoulder on his uparane (upper dhotar). At first, it was not noticed, but as the Lord protects those who are intent on hearing His stories, Hemadpant cast a glance over his right shoulder and noticed it. There was dead silence and not a bit of movement. It seemed as if it, too, enjoyed the reading. Then, by the Lord's grace, Hemadpant, without disturbing the audience, took the two ends of his dhotar, folded them, and brought them together enclosing the scorpion within. He then went out and threw it in the garden. On another occasion, some people were sitting in the upper floor of Kakasaheb's Wada just before nightfall, when a serpent crept through a hole in the window frame and sat coiled up. A light was brought in. Though the snake was dazzled at first, it sat very still and only moved its head up and down. Many people rushed there with sticks and cudgels, but as it sat in an awkward place, no blow could be dealt. Upon hearing the noises of the men, the serpent went out hastily through the same hole. Everyone present then felt relieved.

### **Baba's Opinion**

One devotee, named Muktaram, said it was good the poor creature escaped. Hemadpant challenged him, saying it is better that serpents should be killed. There was a hot discussion between them - the former contending serpents and such creatures should not be killed, and the latter, that they should.

As night came on, the discussion came to an end, without arriving at any decision.

Neither Hemadpant nor Muktaram would change their opinions on the matter, so it was decided to refer the issue to Baba the next day.

Baba settled the matter by saying:

**“God lives in all beings and creatures, whether they be serpents or scorpions. He is the great wirepuller of the world, and all beings, serpents, scorpions etc. obey His command. Unless He wills it, nobody can do any harm to others. The world is all dependent on Him, and no one is independent. We should, therefore, pity and love all creatures, leave off adventurous fights and killings, and be patient. The Lord (God) is the Protector of all.”**

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XXIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Yoga and Onion - Shama Cured of Snake Bite - Cholera Ordinance  
Broken - Ordeal of Guru Bhakti**

### **Preliminary**

In reality, the jiva (human soul) transcends the three qualities viz. sattwa, rajas, and tamas, but being deluded by maya, the jiva forgets its true nature which is 'existence-knowledge-bliss' and thinks it is the doer and enjoyer, thus becoming entangled in endless miseries without knowing the way of deliverance. The only way of deliverance is loving devotion toward the guru's feet. The great player or actor, Lord Sai, has delighted His bhaktas and transformed them into Himself (His nature).

We regard Sai Baba as an incarnation of God for reasons already stated, but He always said **that He was an obedient servant of God**. Though an incarnation, He showed the people the way, and how to behave satisfactorily and carry out the duties of their respective stations (varnas) in this life. He never emulated others in any way, nor asked others to have something done for Him. For Him, who saw the Lord in all movable and immovable things of this world, **humility was the most proper thing. None He disregarded or disrespected, for He saw Narayan (Lord) in all beings. He never said, "I am God," but that He was a humble servant who always remembered the Lord and always uttered, "Allah Malik" (God is the sole proprietor or owner).**

We do not understand the various saints, how they behave, what they do and eat etc. We only know that by God's grace, they manifest themselves in this world to liberate

ignorant and bound souls. If we have merits attained from our past lives, we get a desire to listen to the stories and leelas of the saints, otherwise we do not. Let us now turn to the main stories of this chapter.

## **Yoga and Onion**

Once it so happened, a sadhak of yoga came to Shirdi with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He had studied all the works on yoga, including the yoga-sutras of Patanjali, but had no practical experience. He could not concentrate nor attain samadhi for even a short time. He thought if Sai Baba were pleased with him, He would show him the way to attain samadhi for a sustained time. With this thought in mind, he came to Shirdi.

When he went to the masjid and saw Sai Baba eating bread with onion, a thought arose in his mind, "How can this man, who is eating stale bread with raw onion, solve my difficulties and help me?" Sai Baba read his mind and said to Nanasaheb, "Oh Nana, he who has the power to digest onion should eat it, and none else." Hearing this remark, the yogi was wonder struck and fell at Baba's feet in complete surrender. With pure and open mind, he mentioned his difficulties to Baba who then gave him their solution. Thus, being satisfied and happy, he left Shirdi with Baba's udi and blessings.

## **Shama cured of snake bite**

Before Hemadpant begins this story, he compares the jiva with a parrot, stating that both are bound, one in a body, the other in a cage. Both think their present confined state is normal, for it is what they experience. It is only when a helper (i.e. guru) comes and, by God's grace, opens their cage (consciousness) and liberates them from their limited perceptions, that they understand their former state was bondage. **Through God's grace, their consciousness expands to a larger state of existence so they can realize how limited their former life was.**

In the last chapter it was shown how Baba anticipated the calamity that was to befall Mr. Mirikar and how Baba rescued him from it. The following story is even more amazing. Once, Shama was bitten by a poisonous snake. The little finger of his hand was stung and the poison began to spread into his body. The pain was very severe and Shama thought he would pass away soon. His friends wanted to take him to the God Viroba where such cases were often sent, but Shama ran to the masjid to his Viroba - (Sai Baba). When Baba saw him, He began to scold and abuse. He became enraged and said, "Oh vile Bhaturdya (priest) do not climb up! Beware if you do so!" and then roared, "Go! Get away!

Come down.” Seeing Baba thus red with wrath, Shama was greatly puzzled and disappointed. He thought the masjid was his home and Sai Baba his sole refuge, but if he is driven away like this, where should he go? He lost all hope of life and kept quiet. After a time, Baba became normal and was calm when Shama went up and sat near Him. Then Baba said to him, “Don’t be afraid. Don’t care a jot. The merciful fakir will save you. Go and sit quietly at home. Don’t go out. Believe in Me and remain fearless. Have no anxiety!” Then Shama was sent home. Immediately afterward, Baba sent Tatya Patil and Kakasaheb Dixit to him with instructions to the effect that he should eat what he liked, should move about in the home, but should never lie down and sleep. Needless to say, these instructions were acted upon and Shama was alright in a short time. It is important to remember in this connection that the words of Baba (or the five syllabled mantra, viz. ‘Go! Get away! Come down!’) were not addressed to Shama - as it had appeared - but were a direct order to the snake and its poison not to go up and circulate through Shama’s body. Like others well versed in mantrashastra, Baba did not need to use any incantation, charged rice or water, etc. His words only were most efficacious in saving the life of Shama.

### **Cholera Epidemic**

Once cholera was raging virulently in Shirdi. The residents were very frightened and stopped all communication with outside people. The panchas of the village assembled together and decided upon two ordinances as a remedy to check and put down the epidemic. They were: (1) no fuel cart should be allowed to come into the village (2) no goat should be killed there. If anyone disobeyed these ordinances, they were to be fined by the village authorities and panchas. Baba knew all this was mere superstition, and so He cared not two pence for the cholera ordinances.

While the ordinances were in force, a fuel cart came to Shirdi and wanted to enter the village. Everyone knew there was a dearth of fuel in the village, but still, the people began to drive away the fuel cart. Baba became aware of this. He went over to the spot and asked the cartman to take the fuel cart to the masjid. No one dared raise his voice against this action of Baba. Sai Baba wanted fuel for His dhuni and so He purchased it. Like an agnihotri keeping his sacred fire alive throughout his life, Baba kept His dhuni ever burning all day and night, and for this, He always stocked fuel.

Baba’s home, i.e. the masjid, which had no lock or key, was free and open to all. Some people removed fire wood from there for their own use, but Baba did not grumble about this. Sai Baba saw the whole universe as pervaded by the Almighty and so He never

bore enmity or ill will to anyone. Though perfectly detached, He behaved like an ordinary householder to set an example to the people

### **Ordeal of Guru Bhakti**

Let us now see how the second cholera ordinance fared with Baba. While it was in force, someone brought a goat to the masjid. It was weak and old and about to die. At that time, Fakir Pir Mohammed of Malegaon alias, Bade Baba, was near. Sai Baba asked him to cut it with one stroke and offer it as an oblation. (It should be noted, Bade Baba was very respected by Sai Baba. He always sat on the right hand side of Sai Baba. After the chillim (pipe) was first smoked by him, it was then offered to Baba and others. At noon mealtime, after the dishes were served, Baba respectfully called Bade Baba and made him sit on His left side, after which, all partook of the food. Baba paid him Rs. 50/ daily out of the amount collected as dakshina. Baba always accompanied him for one hundred paces when he was going away. Such was his position with Baba.) But when Baba asked him to cut the goat, he flatly refused saying, “Why should it be killed for no reason?” Then Baba asked Shama to kill it. Shama went to Radha Krishna Mai and brought back a knife from her which he placed before Baba. Knowing the purpose for which the knife was taken, she recalled it. Then Shama went to bring another knife, but stayed in the wada and did not return soon. Next, it was Kakasaheb Dixit’s turn. He was ‘pure gold’ no doubt, but had to be tested. Baba asked him to get a knife and kill the goat. He went to Sathe’s Wada and returned with a knife. He was ready to kill it at Baba’s bidding. He was born in a pure Brahmin family and never in his life knew of killing. Though quite adverse to do any act of violence, he made himself bold to kill the goat. All the people wondered that Bade Baba, a Mohammedan, was unwilling to kill the goat, while this pure Brahmin was making preparations to do so. Kakasaheb tightened his dhotar and with a semicircular motion, raised his hand with the knife and looked at Baba for the final signal. Baba said, “What are you thinking? Go on, strike!” Then, just as the hand was about to come down, Baba said, “Stop, you are so cruel! Being a Brahmin, why are you killing a goat?” Kakasaheb obeyed and, putting the knife down, said to Baba, “Your nectar like word is law unto us. We do not know any other ordinance. We remember You always, meditate on Your form, and obey You day and night. We do not know or consider whether it is right or wrong to kill. We do not want to reason or discuss things, because **implicit and prompt compliance with the guru’s orders is our duty and dharma.**”

Then Baba said to Kakasaheb that He would Himself do the offering and killing business. It was settled that the goat should be disposed of near a place called Takkyia where fakirs used to sit.

When the goat was being removed to that place, it fell dead on the way.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hemadpant closes this chapter with a classification of disciples. He says there are three kinds: (1) first or best (2) second or middling and (3) third or ordinary. The best kind of disciples are those who guess what their gurus want and immediately carry out such. They serve the guru without waiting for an order from him. The middling disciples are those who carry out the orders of their masters to the last letter without any delay, and the third kind of disciples are those who go on postponing the carrying out of their orders and making mistakes at every step.

Disciples should have firm faith (nishta) backed up by intelligence, and if they also have patience and perseverance (saburi), their spiritual goal will not be distant. Control of breath, ingoing and outgoing, hatha yoga or other difficult practices, are not at all necessary. When the disciples develop the above mentioned qualities, they become ready for further instructions, and the masters then appear and lead them on in their spiritual path to perfection.

In the next chapter we will deal with Baba's interesting wit and humor.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**





# Chapter XXIV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Baba's Wit and Humor - Chanak Leela (1) Hemadpant (2) Sudama  
(3) Anna Chinchanikar vs. Mavsibai**

### **Preliminary**

To say we shall state such and such in the next or this chapter, is a sort of egoism. **Unless we surrender our ego to the feet of our satguru, we will not succeed in our undertaking. If we become egoless, then our success is assured.**

By worshiping Sai Baba, we attain both worldly and spiritual objects, we become fixed in our true nature, and we receive peace and happiness. Those who want to improve their physical and spiritual welfare, should respectfully hear Sai Baba's leelas and meditate on them. If they do this, they will easily attain the object of their life and experience bliss.

Generally, people like wit and humor, but do not like jokes cut at their own expense. Baba's method, however, was peculiar. It was accompanied with gestures and was very interesting and instructive, so people did not mind if they were held up to ridicule. Hemadpant gives his own example as follows:

### **Chanak Leela**

In Shirdi, a bazar was held every Sunday and people from neighboring villages came and erected booths and stalls on the street so they could sell their wares and commodities. Every noon, the masjid was more or less crowded, but on Sunday, it was crowded to suffocation. On one such Sunday, Hemadpant sat in front of Baba shampooing His legs and muttering God's name. Shama was on Baba's left. Vamanrao

was to the right of Baba, and Shriman Booty, Kakasaheb Dixit and others were also present. Suddenly Shama laughed and said to Annasaheb, “Look, some grains seem to have stuck to the sleeve of your coat.” So saying, he touched the sleeve and found some loose grains. Hemadpant straightened his left forearm to see what was the matter, when to the surprise of all, some grains of grams came rolling down and were picked up by people who were sitting there.

This incident furnished subject matter for a joke. Everyone present began to wonder and discuss how the grains found their way into the sleeve of the coat and lodged there for such a long time. Hemadpant also could not guess how the grains managed to attach themselves to his coat and stayed there. When nobody could give a satisfactory explanation and all were wondering about this mystery, Baba said, “This fellow (Annasaheb aka Hemadpant) has the bad habit of eating alone. Today is a bazar day and he came here chewing grams. I know his habit and these grams are proof of it. So what reason do you have to be surprised in this matter?”

Upon hearing Baba’s words, Hemadpant became quite unsettled and earnestly replied, “Baba, I do not know of any time when I ate things alone, so why do You thrust this bad habit on me? I did not even go to the Shirdi bazar today, so how could I have bought grams, and since I did not buy any grams, how could I have eaten them? I never eat anything unless I share it with others who are present.”

Baba listened attentively to Hemadpant’s words and replied with a slight smile, “It is true that you share your food with people present around you, but if no one is present nearby, what can you do? Do you remember Me before eating? Am I not always with you? Do you offer Me anything before you eat?”

### **Moral**

Let us mark and note carefully what Baba taught us by this incident.

**He has advised us that before the senses, mind and intellect enjoy their objects, He should first be remembered, and if this be done, it is in a way, an offering to Him. The senses etc. can never remain without their objects, but if those objects are first offered to the guru, the attachment for them will naturally vanish. In this way, all the vrittis (thoughts) regarding desire, anger, avarice etc. should first be offered and directed to the guru, and if this practice be followed, the Lord will help to eradicate these vrittis. When, before enjoyment of the objects, one thinks Baba is**

close by, the question whether the object is fit to be enjoyed or not will at once arise. Then, the object that is NOT fit to be enjoyed will be shunned, and in this way, vicious habits or vices will disappear and one's character will improve. Thus, in this manner, love for the guru will grow and pure knowledge will sprout up. As this knowledge grows, the bondage of body consciousness (I am the body) will snap and the intellect will be merged in spirit consciousness (I am spirit). It is then, bliss and contentment shall be attained.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is no difference between guru and God. He who sees any difference has yet to realize God vision. So, leaving aside all ideas of difference, the guru and God should be regarded as one. If the guru is served as stated above, the Lord (God) will certainly be pleased and will purify the mind. He will give Self-realization. Thus, we should not enjoy any object with the senses without first remembering the guru. When the mind is trained in this way, we will always be reminded of Baba, and meditation on Baba will grow apace. The sagun form of Baba will be ever before our eyes and then devotion, nonattachment and salvation will be ours. When Baba's form is thus fixed before our mental vision, we will forget hunger, thirst and this samsar; consciousness of worldly pleasures will disappear and the mind shall attain peace and happiness.

### **Sudama's Story**

When the above story was being narrated, Hemadpant was reminded of a similar story of Sudama which illustrates the same principle and, therefore, it is given here.

Shri Krishna and his elder brother Balaram were living with a co-student named Sudama in the ashram of their guru, Sandipani. Once, Krishna and Balaram were sent to the forest to bring back fuel. The wife of Sandipani then sent Sudama off for the same purpose with some grams to be shared among the three. When Krishna met Sudama in the forest, he said to him, "Dada, I want water, as I am thirsty." Sudama replied, "No water should be drunk on an empty stomach, so it is better to rest awhile." He did not say he had grams with him and that Krishna should take some.

As Krishna was tired, He lay down to rest on Sudama's lap and began to snore. Seeing this, Sudama took out the grams and began to eat. Then Krishna suddenly asked him, "Dada, what are you eating? From whence is that sound?" Sudama replied, "What is there to eat? I am shivering with cold and my teeth are chattering. I can't even repeat distinctly Vishnu Sahasra Nama." Hearing this, the omniscient Krishna replied, "I just had a

dream in which I saw a man eating things of another, and when asked about this, he said, 'What earth (dust) should he eat?' (meaning thereby that he had nothing to eat). The other man said, 'Let it be so.' Dada, this is only a dream. I know you won't eat anything without me. Under the influence of the dream, I asked you what you were eating."

\* \* \* \* \*

If Sudama had known a bit of the omniscient Shri Krishna and His leelas, he would not have acted as he did. He, therefore, had to suffer for what he did. Though he was a chum of Shri Krishna, he had to pass his later life in utter poverty. But later when he offered Krishna a handful of parched rice earned by his wife with her own labor, Krishna was pleased and gave him a golden city to enjoy. This story should be remembered by those who have the habit of eating things alone, without partaking of them with others.

**The Shruti also emphasizes this lesson and asks us to offer things first to God and then enjoy them after they are renounced by Him.**

Baba has also taught us the same lesson in His inimitable and humorous way.

### **Anna Chinchanikar vs. Mavsibai**

Hemadpant now describes another witty incident in which Baba played a peace maker's part. There was a devotee named Damodar Ghanashyam Babare, alias Anna Chinchanikar. He was simple, rough and straight forward. He cared for no one, always spoke plainly, and carried out all dealings in cash. Though he looked outwardly harsh and uncompromising, he was good natured and guileless, so Sai Baba loved him. \*(Anna Chinchanikar willed away all his property to the Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba.)

One day this Anna, like others who serve Baba in their own way, was standing prone and was shampooing Baba's left arm which rested on the kathada (railing). On Baba's right side was an old widow named Venubai Koujalgi whom Baba called mother and whom all others called Mavsibai. This Mavsibai was an elderly woman of pure heart who was serving Baba in her own way. She clasped the fingers of both her hands round the trunk of Baba and was kneading Baba's abdomen. She did this so forcibly, that Baba's back and abdomen became flat (one) and Baba moved from side to side.

Anna, on the other side, was steady, but Mavsibai's face moved up and down with her strokes. Once it so happened that her face came very close to Anna's. Being of a witty

disposition she remarked, "Oh, this Anna is a lewd (bad) fellow. He wants to kiss me. Being so old with gray hair, he feels no shame in kissing me." These words enraged Anna.

He pulled up his sleeves and said sharply, "You say that I am an old bad fellow. Am I a fool? It is you who has picked a quarrel with me!"

Everyone present was enjoying the encounter between Anna and Mavsibai. Baba, who loved both of them equally and wanted to pacify them, managed the affair very skillfully. Lovingly He said, "Oh Anna, why are you unnecessarily raising this hue and cry? I do not understand the impropriety of kissing the mother?" Hearing these words of Baba, both of them were satisfied and everyone laughed merrily, enjoying Baba's wit.

### **Baba's Characteristics - His Dependency on Bhaktas**

Baba allowed His devotees to serve Him in their own way and did not like any one interfering in this. For example, this same Mavsibai was, on another occasion, kneading Baba's abdomen. Seeing the fury and force she used, the other devotees felt nervous and anxious. They said, "Oh mother, be more considerate and moderate, otherwise you will break Baba's arteries and nerves."

Hearing these words, Baba got up from His seat at once and dashed His satka on the ground. He became enraged and His eyes became red like live charcoal. No one dared to stand before or face Him. Baba then took hold of one end of His satka with both hands and pressed it into the hollow of His abdomen. He fixed the other end to a post and began to press His abdomen against it. The whole satka, which was about two or three feet in length, seemed to go into the abdomen and the people feared Baba's abdomen would be ruptured in a short time. The post was fixed and immovable and Baba drew closer and closer to it, clasping it firmly. Every moment, the rupture was expected. All the onlookers were worried, not knowing what to do. Some stood dumb with wonder, others with fear. Baba suffered through this ordeal for the sake of His bhaktas. Although the devotees had wanted only to give a hint to Mavsibai to be more moderate in her service and not cause any trouble or pain to Baba, Baba did not brook even this, despite their good intentions. Thus, the devotees were surprised to learn their well meaning effort resulted in this seeming catastrophe and they could do nothing, but wait and see. Fortunately, Baba's rage soon cooled down. He removed the satka, and resumed His seat. From this time onward, the devotees learned the lesson not to meddle with anyone, and to allow each bhakta to serve Baba as he chooses, for Baba alone is able to gauge the merits and worth of the service rendered unto Him.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XXV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Damu Anna Kasar of Ahmednagar - (1) Speculations - (2) Amra Leela

#### Preliminary

We begin this chapter with a reverent bow to Sai Baba, who is an ocean of mercy, who is God incarnate, who is Para Brahma and the great Yogeshwara (Lord of Yoga). Victory be unto Sai Baba, the crest jewel of saints and the home of all auspicious things. He is our Atmaram and a refuge for devotees. We prostrate ourselves before He who has attained the aim and end of life.

Sai Baba is always full of mercy. What is wanted on our part is wholehearted devotion to Him. When a devotee has firm faith and devotion, his wishes are soon fulfilled. When the desire arose in the mind of Hemadpant to write the life and leelas of Sai Baba, Baba immediately gave him the grace to do it. When the order 'to keep the memos' was given, Hemadpant was inspired and his intellect became strong and bold to undertake and finish the work. He was not, he says, qualified to write the work, but the gracious blessings of Baba enabled him to complete the undertaking. Thus, we now have the *Shri Sai Satcharita* which is a somakant jewel from which nectar in the form of Sai leelas oozes out for the readers to drink to their hearts' content.

**Whenever a devotee had complete and wholehearted devotion to Sai Baba, all his calamities and dangers were warded off and his welfare was protected by Baba.** A story illustrating this of Damodar Savalaram Rasane, Kasar of Ahmednagar (now of Poona,) alias Damu Anna, is given below.

## Damu Anna

Former mention of this gentleman was made in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter regarding the celebration of the Rama Navami festival in Shirdi. Damu Anna went to Shirdi in 1895 when the Rama Navami Utsava celebration began, and from that time onward, he has been providing an ornamental flag for the occasion every year. He also feeds the poor and the fakirs that come there for the festival.

### His Speculations: (1) Cotton

A Bombay friend of Damu Anna suggested they go into partnership in the cotton speculation business which would bring in an anticipated two lacs of rupees as profits. (In his statement to B.V. Narsimha Swami in 1936, Damu Anna clarified that the proposal regarding cotton speculation in Bombay was from a broker who was not to be a partner, and that he, Damu Anna, was to be the sole adventurer: vide. pg 75 of the *Devotees' Experiences* Part II.)

Although the broker wrote that the business was good, involved no risks, and therefore the opportunity should not be lost, Damu Anna was vacillating as to whether or not to invest in the speculation. He thought about this issue, and as he was a devotee of Baba, he wrote a detailed letter to Shama stating all the facts. He requested Shama to consult with Baba and said he would take Baba's advice in the matter. Shama received the letter the next day and brought it to the masjid at noon. He placed the letter before Baba who then asked about the nature of the contents. Shama replied that Damu Anna of Nagar wanted to consult Him about an important matter. Baba then said, "What has he written and what is he planning? **It seems he wants to catch the sky and he is not content with what God has given him.** Read his letter." Shama then said, "The letter contains what you have just now said. Oh Deva, You sit here so calm and composed, but You agitate the devotees. Then, when they get restless, you draw them here, some in person and others through letters. If you know the contents of the letter, why do you press me to read it?" Baba replied, "Oh Shama, read it please. I speak at random and who believes Me."

While Shama read the letter, Baba listened attentively and then said with feeling, "The Shet (Damu Anna) has gone mad. Write to him in reply that nothing is wanting in his house. Let him be content with the half loaf (bread) he has now and let him not be bothered about lacs." Shama then sent Baba's reply which Damu Anna was anxiously



awaiting. Reading it, Damu Anna found that all his hopes and prospects about making lacs of rupees as profit were dashed to the ground. He thought he had made a mistake in consulting Baba, but, as Shama had hinted in the reply, there was always a considerable difference between seeing and hearing, so Damu Anna decided to go to Shirdi personally and consult Baba about this pressing matter. He therefore went to Shirdi, saw Baba, prostrated himself before Him, and sat shampooing His legs. He was afraid to ask Baba openly about the speculation, but he thought in his mind that it might be better if a share in the business be assigned to Baba. Furthermore, he thought that if Baba were to help him in the transaction, he would surrender a portion of the profits to Him. Thus was Damu Anna secretly thinking in his mind, but **nothing is ever veiled from Baba**. Everything past, present and future is clear to Baba at all times. A child wants sweets, but its mother gives bitter pills; the former spoil its health, while the latter improve it. So the mother, looking to the welfare of her infant, coaxes it and gives it bitter pills. Baba, kind mother as He was, knew the present and future prospects of His devotees, and so reading Damu Anna's mind, He openly spoke to him, "Bapu, I do not want to be entangled in such worldly things (sharing profits)." Seeing Baba's disapproval, Damu Anna dropped the enterprise.

## **(2) Grain Dealing**

Damu Anna then thought of trading in grain, rice, wheat and other groceries. Baba read this thought as well and said to him, "You will be buying at five seers and selling at seven seers a rupee." So this business was also given up. The rise in the prices of grain continued for some time and Baba's prophecy seemed to be falsified, but in a month or two, there was abundant rain everywhere and the prices suddenly fell down. Those who stored grain suffered a severe loss, but Damu Anna was saved from this fate. Needless to say, the cotton speculation which was conducted by the broker with the help of another merchant, also collapsed with a severe loss to the adventurers. Seeing that Baba had saved him from two severe losses, one in cotton and the other in grain, Damu Anna's faith in Baba grew strong and he remained a true devotee of Baba.

## **Amra Leela (Mango Miracle)**

Once a parcel of about 300 good mangoes arrived in Shirdi. It was sent from Goa to Sai Baba in care of Shama by a mamlatdar named Rale. When it was opened, all the mangoes were found to be in good condition. All but four mangoes were put in Shama's charge, and the only four which were retained, were placed in the kolamba (pot) by Baba. He said, "These four fruits are for Damu Anna. Let them lie there."

Damu Anna had two wives, but had no issue. He consulted many astrologers and had also studied astrology to some extent. It was found that there was a 'papi' (inauspicious) planet in his horoscope and he therefore had no prospect of having children in this life. Nevertheless, Damu Anna had great faith in Sai Baba. When he arrived in Shirdi to worship Baba (two hours after the receipt of the mango parcel), Baba said, "Though other people are looking for mangoes, they are Damu Anna's. He whose they are should eat and die." Damu Anna, on hearing these words, was at first shocked, but Mhalasapati, a prominent Sai Baba devotee, explained that death meant the death of the little self, or ego, and that it is a blessing to receive such grace at Baba's feet.

Upon hearing this, Damu Anna said he would accept the mangoes and eat them, but Baba said to him, "Do not eat them yourself, but rather, give them to your junior wife. This amra leela (mango miracle of 4 mangoes) will give her four sons and four daughters." Thus, the mangoes were given to Damu's junior wife and ultimately, in due course, it was found Baba's words turned out to be true, and not those of the astrologer.

Whereas Baba's words established their veracity while He was living in the flesh, their efficacy continued after His passing away as well. Baba said, "Believe Me, though I pass away, My bones in My tomb will give you hope and confidence. Not only Myself, but My tomb will be speaking, moving and communicating with those who surrender themselves wholeheartedly to Me. Therefore, do not be anxious that I will be absent from you. You will hear My bones speaking and discussing your welfare. Always remember Me, believe in Me, heart and soul, and then you will be most benefitted."

## Prayer

Hemadpant closes this chapter with a prayer. "Oh Sai, satguru, the wish fulfilling tree of the bhaktas, let us never forget and lose sight of Your feet. We have been troubled with the ins and outs (births and deaths) in this samsar. Free us now from this cycle of births and deaths. Restrain us from the outgoing of our senses to their objects, and introvert us and bring us face to face with the atma (Self). As long as this outgoing tendency of the senses and the mind is not checked, there is no prospect of Self-realization. Neither son, nor wife, nor friend, will be of any use in the end. It is only You, who will give us salvation and happiness. Destroy completely our tendency for discussions and other evil matters. **Let our tongue get a passion for chanting Your name.** Drive out our thoughts, good or otherwise, make us forget our bodies and houses, and do away with our egoism. Make us **ever remember Your name** and forget all other things. Remove the restlessness of our mind and make it steady and calm. If you just embrace us, the dark night of our ignorance will vanish and we shall live happily in Your light. That

You made us drink the nectar of Your leelas and awakened us from our slumber is due to Your grace and our store of merit in past births.”

Note: In this connection, the following extract from Damu Anna’s statement mentioned above is worth perusal (page 76).

“Once, when I sat at His feet along with many others, I had two questions in my mind and He gave answers to both.

(1) There are so many crowding to Sai Baba. Do they all get benefit from Him?

To this He replied, “Look at the mango tree in blossom. If all the flowers brought forth fruit, what a splendid crop it would be. But do they? Most fall off, either as flowers or as unripe fruits, by wind etc. Very few remain.”

(2) The second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how would I fare then? To this Baba answered that He would be with me when and wherever I thought of Him. (This was about 1910-11 when my brothers had separated from me, my sister had died, and when there had been a theft and police inquiry. All these incidents had upset me very much.) Sai Baba’s grace was with me during this difficult time and thus, His promise to be with me was kept. For example, when my sister died, my mind was very upset. I did not care for life and its enjoyments. When I went to Baba, He calmed me with His upadesh and made me eat a feast of pooran poli at Appa Kilkarni’s house. Still another incident relates to a theft in my house committed by my friend of thirty years who stole my wife’s jewel box, including her auspicious nathi (nose ring). I wept before Baba’s photo. The next day, the man returned the jewel box and prayed for pardon.

Even after His passing in 1918, Sai Baba’s grace continues to bless me. He is still guiding me and ever with me.”

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**

## Prominent Devotees of Sai Baba



Lakshmibai  
Shinde



Madhavrao  
Deshpande



Mhalsapathi, Bhagat



Mirkar,  
Balasaheb



Mungi, Lakshmen  
Govind



Nanduram Sanklecha  
Marwadi



Nark



Noolkar,  
Lakshman



Pillay, Dr

# Chapter XXVI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Stories of (1) Bhakta Pant (2) Harischandra Pitale and (3) Gopal Ambadekar**

### **Preliminary**

All the things we see in the universe are nothing but a play of maya - the creative power of the Lord. These things do not really exist. What really exists is the Real Absolute. Just as we mistake a rope or a stick for a serpent when it is dark, we always see the phenomena, i.e. things as they outwardly appear, and not the noumenon which underlies all visible things. It is only the satguru that opens our eyes to understanding, enabling us to see things in their true light and not as they appear. Let us, therefore, worship the satguru and pray to him to give us true vision, which is God vision.

### **Inner Worship**

Hemadpant has given us a novel form of worship. Let us, he says, use hot water in the form of tears of joy to wash the satguru's feet. Let us besmear His body with the sandal paste of pure love. Let us cover His body with the cloth of true faith. Let us offer eight lotuses in the form of our eight sattwic emotions and fruit in the form of our concentrated mind. Let us apply bukka (black powder) in the form of devotion to His head and tie His kafni with the waistband of bhakti. Let us place our head on His toes.

Decorating the satguru with jewelry in this way, let us offer our all to Him and wave chamar of devotion to ward off heat. After such blissful worship, let us pray thus:

Lord, turn our mind inward that we may develop discrimination between the unreal and the real and nonattachment for all worldly things, enabling us to get Self-realization. We surrender ourselves, body and soul (body consciousness and ego). Make our eyes Your eyes, so that we should never feel pleasure and pain. Control our body and mind as You will and wish. Let our mind find rest at Your feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now let us turn to the stories of this chapter.

### **Bhakta Pant**

Once it so happened that a devotee by the name of Pant, a disciple of another satguru, had the good fortune of visiting Shirdi. He had no mind to go to Shirdi, but man proposes one way and God disposes the other. He was traveling in a B.B. & C.I. Rly. train where he met many friends and relations bound for Shirdi. They all asked him to accompany them and he could not decline. They alighted at Bombay, while Pant got off at Virar, where he received permission from his satguru for the Shirdi trip. After arranging for his expenses, he joined his friends and relations on their trip to Shirdi.

Everyone reached Shirdi in the morning and went to the masjid at about 11 a.m. Seeing the concourse of devotees assembled for Baba's worship, they were all pleased, but Pant suddenly had a seizure and fell senseless. Everyone was frightened and tried their best to bring him to his senses with pitchers of water which they poured over his head. Pant, with Baba's grace, regained his consciousness and sat upright as if he had just awakened from sleep. The omniscient Baba, knowing Pant was a disciple of another guru, dissolved his fears and confirmed his faith in his own guru by addressing him as follows: "Come what may, leave not, but stick to your bolster (support), i.e. guru, and ever remain steady, always at one (in union) with him." Pant knew at once the significance of this remark, and thus he was reminded of his satguru. Pant always remembered this kindness of Baba throughout his life.

### **Harischandra Pitale**

There was a gentleman in Bombay named Harischandra Pitale. He had a son who suffered from epilepsy. He tried many allopathic and ayurvedic doctors, but found no cure. Only one remedy remained, viz. resorting to the feet of the saints.

It has been stated in chapter XV that Das Ganu, by his inimitable and splendid kirtans, spread the fame of Sai Baba in the Bombay Presidency. Mr. Pitale heard some of these kirtans in 1910 and learned that Baba, by His touch and mere glance, cured many incurable diseases. A desire arose in Mr. Pitale's mind to see Sai Baba. Thus, making all the necessary preparations and taking presents and fruit baskets, Mr. Pitale came to Shirdi with his family, wife and children. He then brought them to the masjid, prostrated before Baba, and placed his sick son at Baba's feet. No sooner had Baba seen the child, then an untoward thing happened. The son immediately rolled his eyes and fell down senseless. His mouth began to foam, his whole body began to perspire profusely, and it appeared he lost consciousness. Seeing this, the parents became very nervous and agitated. The boy used to have these fits very often, but this fit seemed to persist for a long time. Tears began to flow ceaselessly from the mother's eyes and she began to wail, crying that her condition was like that of a person who, being afraid of robbers, ran into a house which collapsed on him or who, being tormented by the heat of the sun, took refuge under a tree which fell upon him. Then Baba comforted her saying, "Do not wail like this. Wait a bit. Have patience. Take the boy to your lodging. He will come to his senses within half an hour." They did as Baba directed and found His words came true, for as soon as the child was taken into the wada, he recovered. The entire Pitale family, i.e. husband and wife and near relations, were delighted and all their doubts vanished.

Following this miracle, Mr. Pitale and his wife, filled with gratitude, went to see Baba and humbly and respectfully prostrated before Him. Mr. Pitale began to shampoo Baba's legs and mentally thanked Him for His help. Baba then smilingly said, "Are not all your thoughts, doubts and apprehensions calmed down now? **Hari (Lord) will protect he who has faith and patience.**"

Mr. Pitale was a well to do, rich gentleman. He distributed sweet meats on a large scale and gave Baba excellent fruit and pan (betel leaves). Mrs. Pitale was a very sattwic lady, simple, loving and faithful. She used to sit near the post staring at Baba with tears of joy flowing down her cheeks. Seeing her amicable and loving nature, Baba was very pleased with her. Like gods, saints are always dependent on their devotees who surrender and worship them with their heart and soul.

After passing many happy days in Baba's company, the Pitale family went to the masjid to take Baba's leave to depart. Baba gave them udi and blessings and asked Mr. Pitale to come close, saying to him, "Bapu, I have previously given you two rupees, now I will give you three rupees. Keep these in your shrine for worship and you will be benefitted."



Mr. Pitale accepted them as prasad, prostrated himself again before Baba, and prayed for His blessings. A thought arose in his mind, that as this was his first trip to Shirdi, how could Baba have given him two rupees previously? He was curious to have this mystery solved, but neither husband nor wife would say anything regarding the matter.

When Mr. Pitale returned to Bombay, he told his old mother all that had happened at Shirdi and the mystery about Baba's having given him two rupees previously. The mother also did not understand the mystery, but thinking seriously about it, she was reminded of an old incident which solved the question. She said to her son, "As you now went to Sai Baba with your son, so too, had your father many years ago, when he took you to Akkalkot for the darshan of the Maharaj. That Maharaj was also a siddha, a perfect yogi, omniscient and liberal. Your father was pure and devout and his worship was accepted. He then gave your father Rs. 2/ to be kept in the shrine and worshiped. Your father worshiped them accordingly till his death, but thereafter, the worship was neglected and the rupees were lost. After some years, the memory of these two rupees also disappeared and now, as you are very fortunate, Akkalkotkar Maharaj has appeared to you in the form of Sai Baba just to remind you of your duties and worship, and to ward off all dangers. Now beware henceforth and leave off all doubts and bad thoughts. Follow the example of your ancestors and behave well. Go on worshipping the family gods and the rupees and appraise them properly. Take pride in the blessing of the saints. Sai Samartha has kindly revived the spirit of bhakti in you. Cultivate it to your benefit."

Hearing the remarks of his mother, Mr. Pitale was very delighted. He came to know, and was convinced about the all pervasiveness of Baba and the significance of His darshan. From that time on, he became very careful about his behavior.

### **Mr. Ambadekar**

Mr. Gopal Narayan Ambadekar of Poona was a devotee of Baba. He served for ten years in the Abkari department in the Thana District, Javhar State, from which he had to retire. He tried to get a different job, but did not succeed. He was overtaken by other calamities and his condition grew from bad to worse. He passed seven years in this state, visiting Shirdi every year and placing his grievance before Baba. In 1916 his plight became worse and he decided to commit suicide in Shirdi, so he went there with his wife and stayed for two months. One night, while sitting in a bullock cart in front of Dixit's Wada, Ambadekar resolved to end his life by throwing himself into a nearby well. Although he intended to act this way, Baba willed he do something else. A few paces from the wada,



there was a hotel and its proprietor, Mr. Sagun, a devotee of Baba, came out and accosted Ambedekar thus, "Did you ever read about the life of Akkalkotkar Maharaj?" Ambadekar took the book from Sagun and began to read it. Casually, or we may say providentially, he came across a story which was to this effect:

During the lifetime of Akkalkotkar Maharaj, a certain devotee suffered greatly from an incurable disease, and when he could endure the agony and pain no longer, he became desperate. One night, in order to end his miseries, the devotee threw himself into a well. Immediately, the Maharaj went to the well and took him out with his own hands and advised him thus, "You must enjoy the fruit - good or bad - of your past actions. If the enjoyment be incomplete, suicide won't help you. You will have to take another birth and suffer again, so instead of killing yourself, why not suffer for some time and finish up the fruit of your past deeds and be done with it once and for all?"

Reading this appropriate and timely story, Ambadekar was quite surprised and moved. Had he not gotten Baba's hint through the story, he would have been no more. Seeing Baba's all pervasiveness and benevolence, his faith in Him was confirmed and Ambedekar became a staunch devotee. His father had been a devotee of Akkalkotkar Maharaj and Sai Baba wanted him to walk in his late father's footsteps and continue his devotion to Him. Ambadekar then received Sai Baba's blessings, and his prospects began to improve. He studied astrology and gained proficiency in it, thereby improving his lot. He was able to earn sufficient money and passed his later life in ease and comfort.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**



# Chapter XXVII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Favor Shown by Giving Bhagvat and Vishnu Sahasra Nam - Dixit's Vitthal Vision - Gita Rahasya - Khapardes**

This chapter describes how Sai Baba favored His devotees by granting them religious books after He had touched and consecrated them for parayana (reading regularly) and certain other matters.

#### **Preliminary**

When a man takes a plunge into the sea, he gets the merit of bathing in all the tirthas and sacred rivers. Similarly, when a man takes refuge at the feet of the satguru, he gets the merit of bowing to the trinity, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva) and also Para-Brahma. Victory be unto Shri Sai, the wish fulfilling tree and the ocean of knowledge, who gives us Self-realization. Oh Sai, create in us regard for Your stories. Let the readers and hearers devour them with the same relish with which the chatak bird drinks water from the clouds and becomes happy. May the readers experience all the sattwic emotions, (viz. let their bodies perspire, let their eyes be full of tears, let their prana be steady, let their minds be composed, let their hair stand on end, let them cry, sob and shake) and may all their hostilities and prejudices, great and small, vanish while reading Your stories. If this happens, it is a sign of the grace of the guru dawning upon them. When these emotions develop in you, the guru is most pleased and will certainly lead you on to the goal of Self-realization.

The best way, therefore, to become free from the shackles of maya, is complete and whole-hearted surrender to Sai Baba. The Vedas cannot take you across the ocean of maya. It is only the satguru who can do so and make you see the Lord in all creatures.

## Granting Consecrated Book

The variety of imparting instructions given by Baba has already been noted in the previous chapters. In this one, we shall deal with one aspect of it. It was the habit of some devotees to bring special religious books which they wanted to study to Baba and ask Him to touch and consecrate them and then return the blessed books to them.

While reading daily such books, they felt that Baba was with them. Once, Kaka Mahajani came to Shirdi with a copy of *Ekanathi Bhagwat*. Shama wanted to read the book and took it with him to the masjid. There, Baba took it from him, touched it, and turning some pages here and there, gave it to Shama and asked him to keep it with him. Shama said that it belonged to Kaka and had to be returned to him. “No, no”, said Baba. “As I have given it to you, better keep it with you for safe custody. It will be of use to you.” In this way, many books were entrusted to Shama.

After a few days, Kaka Mahajani brought another copy of *Ekanathi Bhagwat* and gave it to Baba to be blessed. Baba then gave it back as prasad and asked him to preserve it well and assured him that it would stand him in good stead. Kaka accepted it with a bow.

## Shama and Vishnu Sahasra Nam

Shama was a very intimate devotee of Baba and Baba wanted to favor him in a particular way by giving him a copy of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* as prasad. This was done in the following way. Once a Ramadas (follower of saint Ramadas) came to Shirdi and stayed for some time. The routine he followed daily was as follows: he got up early in the morning, washed his face, bathed, and then, after putting on saffron colored clothes and besmearing himself with sacred ashes, read with faith *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* (a book giving a thousand names in praise of Vishnu and held second in importance to the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Adhyatma Ramayana* (esoteric version of Rama’s story)). The Ramadas read these books often.

After a few days, Baba thought of favoring and initiating Shama with *Vishnu Sahasra Nam*. He therefore called the Ramadas to Him and said that He was suffering from intense stomach pain and unless He took senna pods, (sona mukhi - a mild purgative drug) the pain would not stop. Sai Baba then asked the Ramadas to please go to the bazar and get the drug for Him. The Ramadas closed his reading and went to the bazar. Baba then

descended from His seat, went over to where the Ramadasi had been reading, took the copy of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* and brought it back to where He had been sitting. Baba then called to Shama, “Oh Shama, this book is very valuable and efficacious, so I am presenting it to you. Read it. Once I suffered intensely. My heart began to palpitate and My life was in danger. At that critical time, **I hugged this book to My heart and then, Shama, what a relief it gave Me. So I give this to you. Read it slowly, little by little. Read daily at least one name and it will do you much good.**”

Shama replied that he did not want the book and that the owner of it, the Ramadasi, a mad, obstinate, irritable fellow, would certainly pick a quarrel with him. Besides, Shama continued, as a rustic, he could not read distinctly the sanskrit (Devanagari) letters of the book. Shama thought that Baba wanted to set him up against the Ramadasi by this act of His, but he had no idea how deeply Baba felt for him. Baba must have wanted to tie this necklace of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* around Shama’s neck, even though he was a rustic, to save him from the miseries of worldly existence. Shama was Sai Baba’s intimate devotee.

**The efficacy of God’s name is well known.** It saves us from all sins and bad tendencies and frees us from the cycles of birth and death. There is no easier sadhana than this. It is the best purifier of our mind and it requires no paraphernalia and no restrictions. It is so easy and so effective. Baba wanted Shama to practice this sadhana, although Shama did not crave it, so Baba forced this on him.

It is reported that long ago, Ekanath Maharaj similarly forced this *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* on a poor Brahmin neighbor and thus saved him. The reading and study of the *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* is a broad open way of purifying the mind and so Baba thrust this on His Shama.

The Ramadasi returned soon with the senna pods. Anna Chinchani, who was present at that time and who wanted to play the part of Narada (the celestial rishi who was well known for setting up quarrels between gods and demons and vice versa), informed the Ramadasi of what had happened. The Ramadasi at once flared up and blasted Shama with all his fury. He said it was Shama who had Baba pretend to have a stomach ache so as to send him to buy medicine, taking his sacred book while he was gone. He began to scold and abuse Shama and remarked that if the book not be returned, he would dash Shama’s head. Shama calmly remonstrated, but in vain. Then Baba spoke kindly to the Ramadasi as follows, “Oh Ramadasi, what is the matter with you? Why are you so turbulent? Is not Shama our boy? Why do you scold him unnecessarily? How is it that you are so quarrelsome? Can you not speak softly with sweet words? You read daily

these sacred books and still your mind is impure and your passions uncontrolled. What sort of Ramadasi are you? You ought to be indifferent to all things. Is it not strange that you should covet this book so strongly? A true Ramadasi should have no 'mamata' (attachment), but have 'samata' (equanimity) toward all. You are now quarrelling with the boy Shama for a mere book. Go, take your seat! Books can be had in plenty for money, but not men. Think well and be considerate! What worth is your book? Shama was not concerned with it. I took it Myself and gave the book to him. You know it by heart. I thought Shama might read it and profit thereby, so I gave it to him." \*

How sweet were these words of Baba, so soft, tender and nectar-like! Their effect was wonderful. The Ramadasi calmed down and said to Shama that he would take Pancha Ratni Gita in return. Shama was very pleased and said, "Why one? I shall give ten copies in return!"

So the matter was ultimately brought to a peaceful resolution. The question for consideration is, "Why should the Ramadasi press for *Pancha Ratni Gita*, the God which he never cared to know, and why should he, who read religious books daily in the masjid in front of Baba, quarrel with Shama before Baba? We do not know how to apportion the blame and whom to blame, but had this incident not occurred, the importance of the book's subject - the efficacy of God's name and the study of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* - would not have been instilled in Shama. Thus, we see that Baba's method of teaching and initiating was unique. In this case, Shama gradually studied the book and mastered its contents to such an extent that he was able to explain it to Professor G.G. Narke, M.A., of the College of Engineering, Poona, who was the son-in-law of Shriman Booty and a devotee of Baba.

### **Vitthal Vision**

One day, while Kakasaheb Dixit was meditating after his morning bath in his wada at Shirdi, he saw a vision of Vitthal. When he went to see Baba afterward, Baba asked him, "Did Vitthal Patil come? Did you see him? He is very elusive. Hold him fast, otherwise he will give you the slip and run away." Then, at noon, a certain hawker came along with 20 or 25 pictures of Vitthal of Pandharpur for sale. Mr. Dixit was surprised to see that the form of Vitthal which he had seen in his meditation tallied exactly with the one in the picture and he was reminded of Baba's words. He therefore bought one picture most willingly and kept it in his shrine for worship.

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\*Editor's Note: Through this incident, Baba demonstrates how the Ramdasi, with all his reading and studying of sacred books, had still not given up attachments nor learned to control his anger. In a later chapter in the *Satcharita*, Baba warns that mere reading of religious books without actual practice of the precepts therein develops pride of learning and little else. What is required is sarvaswa sharanagati (complete surrender) to the satguru as well as repetition of the name of God.

Thus, this story not only teaches the importance of repeating the name of God, but stresses the necessity of practicing what we read to avoid the pit holes of pride and attachment.

### ***Gita Rahasya***

Baba always loved those who studied Brahma vidya (metaphysics) and encouraged them. To give an example: Once Bapusaheb Jog received a parcel post. It contained a copy of *Gita Rahasya* by Lokmanya Tilak. Taking it under his armpit, he went to the masjid and prostrated himself before Baba. As he did so, the parcel fell at Baba's feet. Baba inquired as to what it was. The package was then opened and the book placed in Baba's hand. He turned some pages here and there for a few minutes and, taking out a rupee from His pocket, placed it on the book and handed the same with the rupee to Jog, saying to him, "Read this completely and you will be benefitted."

### **Mr. and Mrs. Khaparde**

Let us close this chapter with a description of the Khapardes. Once, Dadasaheb Khaparde and his family came and lived in Shirdi for a few months. (The diary of his stay has been published in English in 'Sai Leela' magazine, volume one.) Dadasaheb was not an ordinary man. He was the richest and most famous advocate of Amraoti (Berar) and was a member of the Council of State, Delhi. He was very intelligent and a very good speaker. Still, he dared not open his mouth before Baba. Most devotees spoke and argued with Baba off and on, but only three, viz. Khaparde, Noolkar and Booty always kept silent. They were meek, modest, humble and good natured. Dadasaheb, who was able to expound *Panchadashi* (a well known Sanskrit treatise on the adwaita philosophy by the famous Vidyanaraya) to others, said nothing or uttered no word when he came to the masjid and was in Baba's presence. Indeed, a man however learned he may be, even in Vedas, fades away before one who has realized Brahma and become one with it. Learning cannot shine before Self-realization.

Dadasaheb Khaparde stayed in Shirdi for four months, but Mrs. Kharpade stayed for seven.

Both were highly pleased with their Shirdi stay. Mrs. Khaparde was faithful and devout and loved by Baba deeply. Every noon she brought naivedya to the masjid and after it was accepted by Baba, she used to return and take her meals. Seeing her steady and firm devotion, Baba wanted to exhibit it to others. One noon, she brought a dish containing sanza (wheat pudding), as well as purees, rice, soup, kheer (sweet rice), and other sundry articles to the masjid. Baba, who usually waited for hours before His noon

meal, got up at once and went to His dining seat. He then removed the outer covering from Mrs. Khaparde's dish and began to partake of the delicacies zealously. Seeing this, Shama became confused and asked Baba directly, "Why this partiality? You throw away the dishes of others and do not even care to look at them, but this one, You select earnestly and do justice to it. Why is the dish of this woman so sweet? I don't understand."

Baba then explained, "This food is really extraordinary. In a former birth, this lady was a merchant's fat cow yielding much milk. Then she disappeared and took birth in a gardener's family, then in a kshatriya family, and married a merchant. Next, she was born in a Brahmin family. I now see her after a very long time. Let Me take some sweet morsels of love from her dish." Saying this, Baba ate her dish heartily, washed His mouth and hands, gave out some belches as a mark of satisfaction, and resumed His seat.

The woman then bowed and began to shampoo Baba's legs. As she was caring for his legs, Baba began to talk with her and knead her arms. Seeing this reciprocal service, Shama began to joke saying, "It is going on well. It is a wonderful sight to see God and His bhakta serving each other!" Being pleased with her sincere service, Baba asked her in a low and fascinating tone to chant 'Rajaram, Rajaram' then, and always, and said, "If you do this, your life's object will be gained, your mind will attain peace and you will be immensely benefitted."

This action is what is technically called, "shakti-pat", i.e. transference of power from the guru to the disciple. How forceful and effective were Baba's words! In an instant they pierced her heart and found lodging there.

\* \* \* \* \*

This case illustrates the nature of the relationship that exists between the guru and the disciple. Both should love and serve each other as One. There is no distinction, nor any difference, between them. Both are One, and one cannot live without the other. The disciple, placing his head on the guru's feet, is a gross or outward vision.

\* \* \* \* \*

The guru and his disciple are really, internally, one and the same. Those who see any difference between them are yet unripe and not perfect.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**



# Chapter XXVIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Sparrows Drawn to Shirdi (1) Lakhamichand (2) Burhanpore Lady (3) Megha**

#### **Preliminary**

Sai is not finite or limited. He dwells in all beings, from ants and insects to the God Brahma. He pervades all. Sai Baba was well versed in the knowledge of the Vedas, as well as in the science of Self-Realization. As He was proficient in both these, He was well fit to be a satguru. Anyone, though learned, but not able to awaken the disciples and establish them in Self-realization, does not deserve to be called satguru. Although the mother gives birth to the body, and death invariably follows life, the satguru does away with both life and death, and so he is more kind and merciful than anyone.

Sai Baba often said - let His man (devotee) be at any distance, a thousand koss away from Him, he will be drawn to Shirdi like a sparrow with a thread tied to its feet. This chapter describes the stories of three such sparrows.

#### **(1) Lala Lakhamichand**

This gentleman was first serving in the railway, then later, in Shri Venkateshar Press in Bombay, and thereafter in the firm of Messrs. Ralli Brothers, as a munshi (clerk). He met Sai Baba in 1910. One or two months before Christmas, when he was in Santa Cruz (a suburb of Bombay), he dreamed of an old man with a beard, standing and surrounded by His bhaktas. Some days later, he went to his friend's house, Mr. Dattatreya Manjunath Bijur, to hear the kirtan of Das Ganu. It was always the practice of Das Ganu to keep Baba's picture in front of the audience while performing the kirtan. Lakhamichand was

surprised to see that the features of the old man he saw in his dream tallied exactly with those in the picture and thus, he came to the conclusion that the old man he saw in his dream was Sai Baba Himself. The sight of this picture, Das Ganu's kirtan, and the life of the saint Tukaram, on which Das Ganu discoursed, all made a deep impression on Lakhamichand's mind and he pined to go to Shirdi. **It is ever the experience of bhaktas that God always helps them in their search for a satguru and for other spiritual endeavors.** That very night at 8:00 pm, a friend named Shankarrao knocked at Lakhamichand's door and asked him whether he would accompany him to Shirdi. His joy knew no bounds and he decided at once to go to Shirdi. He borrowed Rs.15/ from his cousin and, after making due preparations, left for Shirdi.

While in the train bound for Shirdi, Lakhamichand and his friend, Shankarrao, sang some bhajans (religious songs) and inquired about Sai Baba with some fellow passengers - four Mohammedans who were returning to their place near Shirdi - who told them Sai Baba was a great saint living in Shirdi for many years.

When they reached Kopergaon, Lakhamichand wanted to buy some good guavas to offer Sai Baba, but he was so interested in the local scenery and sights, he forgot to purchase them. As they were nearing Shirdi, he was reminded of the guavas. Just then he saw an old woman with a basket of guavas on her head, running after the tanga. The tanga was brought to a stop and Lakhamichand gladly purchased some select fruit. The woman then said, "Take all the rest and offer them on my behalf to Baba". Both he and Shankarrao were astonished because they knew Lakhamichand had intended to purchase guavas, but had forgotten to do so, and now, suddenly, they encounter this old woman selling guavas who is devoted to Baba. Lakhamichand thought that perhaps this very woman might be related to the old man he saw in his dream.

Shankarrao and Lakhamischand continued on and as they neared Shirdi, they saw the flags on the masjid and they saluted them. With puja materials in hand, they then went to the masjid and worshiped Baba with due formality. Lakhamichand was very moved and was extremely happy to see Baba. He was enraptured with Baba's feet as a bee with a sweet smelling lotus. Then Baba spoke as follows:

"Cunning fellow! He does bhajan on the way, yet made inquiries of others. Why ask others? We should see everything with our own eyes. What is the necessity of questioning others? Just think for yourself whether your dream is true or not. Where was the necessity of the darshan by taking a loan from a marwari (cousin)? Is your heart's desire now satisfied?"

Hearing these words, Lakhamichand was wonderstruck at Baba's omniscience. He was at a loss to know how Baba came to know about all the things that had happened en route from his house to Shirdi. **The chief thing to note in this respect is that Baba never liked people to run into debt for taking His darshan, or celebrating any holiday or making any pilgrimage.**

## **Sanza**

At noon when Lakhamichand was sitting for meals, he received some sanza (wheat pudding) from a devotee as prasad. He was pleased to have it. The next day he expected it, but got nothing, so he was anxious to have it again. Then, at noon on the third day after the arati, Bapusaheb Jog asked Baba what he should bring for naivedya. Baba told him to bring sanza. The bhaktas then brought two big potfuls of sanza.

Lakhamichand, who was suffering from back pain, was very hungry. Baba said to him, "It is good that you are hungry. Take some sanza and some medicine for the pain in your back." Lakhamichand was wonderstruck to see that Baba had read his mind again and had spoken out about what he was thinking. How omniscient was Baba!

## **Evil Eye**

On one occasion, Lakhamichand witnessed the nightly procession to the Chavadi. At that time, Baba suffered from a bad cough. Lakhamichand thought this suffering of Baba might be due to somebody's evil eye. The next morning, when he went to the masjid, Baba spoke to Shama as follows, "I suffered last night from a bad cough. Is it due to some evil eye? I think that somebody's evil eye has worked on Me and so I am suffering." In this case, Baba spoke out about what was passing in Lakhamichand's mind.

Seeing this proof of Baba's omniscience and kindness to His bhaktas, Lakhamichand fell prostrate at Baba's feet and said, "I am very pleased with Your darshan. Be ever kind and merciful to me and always protect me. There is no other God to me in this world. I worship and bow down at Your lotus feet. Let my mind be ever rapt in Your bhajan and feet. Let Your grace protect me from the miseries of the world and let me ever chant Your name and be happy."

After receiving Baba's udi and blessings, Lakhamichand and his friend returned home singing Baba's glory all the way. He was very pleased and contented with Baba's grace. Lakhamichand remained a staunch devotee of Baba afterward and always sent garlands of

flowers, camphor and dakshina with any person he knew who was going to Shirdi.

### **Burhanpore Lady**

Now let us turn to another sparrow (Baba's word meaning devotee).

In a dream, a lady in Burhanpore saw Sai Baba coming to her door and begging khichadi (rice cooked with dal and salt) for His meal. Upon awakening, she saw no one at her door and realized she had been dreaming. She was, however, pleased with the vision and told her husband all about it. He was employed in the postal department and, when he was transferred to Akola, both husband and wife, who were both devout, decided to go to Shirdi. Then, on a suitable day, they left for Shirdi and after visiting Gomati Tirth, which was on the way, they reached Shirdi and stayed there for two months.

Every day the couple went to the masjid, performed Baba's worship and passed their time happily. They had come to Shirdi to offer khichadi as naiveyda (as inspired by the wife's dream), but for the first fourteen days, somehow or other, it could not be offered.

The lady did not like this delay, so on the fifteenth day, she went to the masjid at noon with her khichadi. There, she found that Baba and others were already sitting for meals and the curtain was down. The lady, however, could not wait. She opened the curtain and entered. Strange to say, Baba seemed hungry for khichadi that day and wanted that dish first. When the lady came in with her khichadi, Baba was delighted and began to eat morsel after morsel of it. Seeing the earnestness of Baba in this respect, everybody was wonderstruck and those who heard the story of the khichadi were convinced of Baba's extraordinary love for His devotees.

### **(3) Megha**

Now let us describe the third and bigger 'sparrow'. Megha of Viramgaon was a simple and illiterate Brahmin cook of Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe. He was a devotee of Shiva and always chanted the five syllabled mantra "Namah Shivaya". Megha did not know the Sandhya nor its chief mantra, the Gayatri. Rao Bahadur Sathe, Megha's employer, was interested in him and taught him the Sandhya and the Gayatri. Sathe told him that Sai Baba of Shirdi was the embodied form of the Lord Shiva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway station, Megha learned that Sai Baba was a Moslem and his simple, orthodox mind became perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem. He begged his master not to send him to Shirdi, but his employer insisted on his going and gave him a letter of

introduction. Megha was instructed to give the letter to his master's father-in-law, Ganesh Damodar, alias Dada Kelkar, who would then give it to Sai Baba. The letter would introduce Megha to Sai Baba.

When Megha reached Shirdi and went to the masjid, Baba was very indignant and would not allow him to enter. "Kick out that rascal", roared Baba, and then He said to Megha, "You are a high caste Brahmin and I am a low Moslem. You will lose your caste by coming here. So get away!" Hearing these words, Megha began to tremble. He wondered how Baba had come to know what was passing in his mind.

Megha stayed in Shirdi for several days, serving Baba in his own way, but remained unconvinced. He then went home, following which, he went to Tryambak (Nasik District), where he stayed for a year and a half. Then, once again, he returned to Shirdi. This time, at the intercession of Dada Kelkar, Megha was allowed to enter the masjid.

Sai Baba's help to Megha was not through any oral instruction. He worked upon Megha internally (mentally) with the result that he was considerably changed and benefitted. As a result, Megha began to look upon Sai Baba as an incarnation of Shiva. In order to worship Shiva, bel leaves are required and Megha used to go miles and miles every day to get them and worship his Shiva (Baba). His practice was to worship all the Gods in the village, then come to the masjid and, after saluting Baba's gadi (asan), to worship Baba. Then, after performing some service to Baba (shampooing His legs), Megha drank the washings (tirth) of Baba's feet. Once it so happened that he came to the masjid without worshiping God Khandoba, as the door of the temple was closed. Baba did not accept his worship and sent him away saying that the door to the temple was now open. Megha left, found the temple door open, worshiped the deity and then returned to Baba as usual.

### **Ganges - Bath**

On Makar Sankranti Day, Megha wanted to besmear the body of Baba with sandal paste and bathe Him with Ganges water. Baba was first unwilling to undergo this, but at Megha's repeated requests, He consented. Megha had to traverse a distance of eight koss (going and returning) to bring the sacred water from the Gomati River. After he had brought the water, Megha made all the preparations for the bath at noon and asked Baba to get ready. Then Baba again asked him to be freed from His bath saying that as a fakir, He had nothing to do (or gain) with Ganges water, but Megha did not listen. He knew that Shiva is pleased with a bath of Ganges water and therefore he must give his Shiva (Baba) the sacred bath on that auspicious day. Baba then consented, came down and sat on a pat (wooden board) and, protruding His head said, "Oh Megha, at least do this favor.

Since the head is the most important part of the body, pour water only over it - it is equivalent to the full or whole bath.” “Alright,” said Megha and lifting the water pot up, began to pour it on Baba’s head, but in so doing, he was overwhelmed with love and cried out “Har Gange” as he emptied the pot on Baba’s entire body. Megha then put the pot aside and began to look at Baba. To his surprise and amazement, he found that Baba’s head was drenched and His body was quite dry!

### **Trident and Pindi**

Megha worshiped Baba in two places and in two manners. In the masjid, he worshiped Baba in person and in the wada, he worshiped Baba’s big picture which had been given by Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Megha carried out this practice for twelve months.

Then, in order to appreciate his devotion and confirm his faith, Baba gave him a vision. Early one morning when Megha was still lying down in bed with his eyes closed, yet internally awake, he clearly saw Baba’s form. Baba, knowing him to be awake, threw akshata (rice grains marked red with kumkum) and said, “Megha, draw a trident” and then disappeared. Hearing Baba’s words, he eagerly opened his eyes, but did not see Baba. He saw only the rice grains spread here and there in his room.

Megha went over to Baba, told Him about the vision, and asked permission to draw a trident. Baba said, “Did you not hear My words asking you to draw a trident? It was no vision, but a direct order, and My words are always full of meaning.” Megha replied, “I thought You woke me up, but all the doors were closed, so I thought it was a vision.” Baba rejoined, **“I require no door to enter. I have no form, nor any extension. I always live everywhere. I carry on, as a wire puller, all the actions of a man who trusts Me and merges in Me.”**

Megha returned to the wada and drew a red trident on the wall near Baba’s picture. The next day a Ramadasi bhakta came from Poona, saluted Baba, and offered Him pindi (an image of Shiva). Megha was present in the wada at that same time. Baba said to him, “See, Shankar has come. Protect Him now.” Megha was surprised to see the pindi following his having drawn the trident. Kakasaheb Dixit was also in the wada at this time. He was standing with a towel on his head after having taken his bath and was remembering Sai when he saw a pindi in his mental vision. While he was wondering about this, Megha came and showed him the pindi presented to him by Baba. Dixit was happy to know that this pindi tallied exactly with the one he saw a few minutes before in his vision.

A few days later, after the drawing of the trident, Baba installed the pindi near the large picture. Megha was worshipping. The worship of Shiva was dear to Megha and by arranging the drawing of the trident and the installation of the pindi, Baba confirmed his

faith therein.

After continuous service to Baba for many years, doing regular worship and arati every noon and evening, Megha passed away in 1912. Baba passed His hands over his corpse and said, "This was a true devotee of Mine." Baba ordered, at His own expense, the usual funeral dinner to be given to the Brahmins and that order was carried out by Kakasaheb Dixit.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**





## Chapter XXIX

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**Stories of (1) Madrasi Bhajani Mela - (2) Tendulkar (father and son) - (3) Dr. Captain Hate - (4) Waman Naravekar**

#### **(1) Madrasi Bhajani Mela**

In 1916 a Madrasi Bhajani Mela (Party of the Ramadasi Panth) started on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Banaras. The party consisted of a man, his wife, daughter and sister-in-law. Unfortunately, their names are not mentioned. On their way, the party heard of a great sage named Sai Baba who lived in Shirdi in Kopergaon Taluka, Ahmednagar District. They heard that this saint was calm, composed and very liberal and that he distributed money every day to His bhaktas and to skillful people who came to Shirdi and demonstrated their abilities. A lot of money in the form of dakshina was collected daily by Sai Baba and out of this amount, He gave one rupee daily to a three year old girl, Amani, the daughter of a bhakta, Kondaji . He also gave two to five rupees to certain individuals, Rs. 6/ to Jamali, the mother of Amani and Rs. 10/ to 20 and even Rs. 50/ to other bhaktas as He pleased. Hearing all this, the Mela party came to Shirdi and stayed there. The Mela performed beautiful bhajans and sang very well, but inwardly, they craved money. Three of the party were full of avarice, but the chief lady or mistress was of a very different nature. She had great regard and love for Sai Baba. Once, it so happened that when the noon day arati was going on, Baba was very pleased with her faith and devotion and was pleased to give her darshan of her Ishtam (beloved deity). Baba then appeared to her as Sitanath (Rama), while to all the others, the usual Sainath. Seeing her beloved deity, she was very much moved. Tears began to flow from her eyes, as she clapped her hands in joy. The people began to wonder at her joyful mood, but they were not able to guess its cause. Late in the afternoon, she disclosed everything to her

husband. She told him how she saw Shri Rama in Sai Baba. He thought that as she was very simple and devout, her seeing Rama might be a hallucination of her mind. He discredited her, saying it was not possible that she alone should see Rama, while they all saw Sai Baba. She did not resent this remark, as she was fortunate enough to get Rama darshan now and then when her mind was calm and composed and free from avarice.

### **Wonderful Vision**

Things continued on in this way when, one night, the husband had a wonderful vision in his dream as follows: He was in a big city. The police there had arrested him, tied his hands with a rope and put him in a cage (lock up). As the police were tightening the grip, he saw Sai Baba standing quietly outside near the cage. Seeing Baba so close, he said in a plaintive tone, "Hearing Your fame, I came to bow at Your feet. Why should a calamity befall me when You are standing here in person?" Baba said, "You must suffer the consequences of your actions." He said, "I have not done anything in this life which would bring such a misfortune on me." Baba said, "If not in this life, you must have committed some sin in your past life." He then replied, "I do not know anything of my past life, but assuming that I did commit some sin then, why should it not be burnt and destroyed in Your presence, as dry grass before fire?" Baba answered, "**Have you got such faith?**" He replied, "Yes". Baba then asked him to close his eyes. No sooner did he shut them, than he heard a thumping sound of something falling down. Upon opening his eyes, he saw he was free and the police had fallen down, bleeding. Being quite frightened, he began to look at Baba, who said, "Now you are caught. Officers will come and arrest you." The man then begged, "There is no other savior except You. Save me anyway!" Then Baba again asked him to close his eyes. He did so, and when he opened them, he saw he was free, out of the cage, and Baba was by his side. He then fell at Baba's feet whereupon Baba asked him, "Is there any difference between this namaskar and your previous ones? Think well and reply." He said, "There is a lot of difference. My former namaskars were offered with the object of getting money from You, but the present namaskar is one offered to You as God. Besides, formerly, I thought resentfully that You, being a Mohammedan, were spoiling we Hindus." Baba replied, "Do you not believe in your mind in Mohammedan Gods?" He said, "No." Then Baba said, "Have you not got a panja (emblem of the hand) in your house and do you not worship the same in Tabut, i.e. the Moharum festival?" Also, there is in your house another Mohammedan deity, Kadbibi, whom you propitiate and appease on your marriage anniversary and other festivals. Is this not so?" He admitted all this. Baba then said, "What more do you want?" Then a desire arose in his mind to get the darshan of his guru Ramadas. When Baba asked him to turn around and see, lo, Ramadas was in front of him. No sooner did he begin to fall at his feet, when Ramadas vanished. He then inquisitively asked Baba, "You look old. Do You know

Your age?" Baba replied, "What! Do you say I am old! Just run a race with me and see!" Saying this, Baba began to run and the man followed. Baba disappeared in the dust raised by His footsteps as He ran and the man awakened.

After awakening, the man began to think seriously about his dream vision. His mental attitude was completely changed and he realized the greatness of Baba. After this, the man's grabbing and doubting tendencies disappeared and true devotion to Baba's sacred feet developed in his mind. The vision was a mere dream, but the questions and answers therein were most significant and interesting.

The next morning when all the persons assembled in the masjid for the arati, Baba gave him as prasad two rupees worth of sweetmeats and also two rupees from His pocket and blessed him. He made him stay there for a few more days and gave him His blessing saying, "Allah (God) will give you plenty and He will do you all good." Although the man did not get more money, he received far better things, viz. Baba's blessing, which stood him in good stead all along. The party got plenty of money afterwards and their pilgrimage was successful, as they did not suffer any trouble or inconvenience during their journey. They all returned home safe and sound, thinking of Baba's words and blessings and the ananda (bliss) they experienced by His grace.

This story illustrates certain methods which Baba followed to improve and reform His devotees.

## **(2) Tendulkar family**

The Tendulkar family lived in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, and all its members were devoted to Baba. Mrs. Savitribai Tendulkar published a Marathi book named *Shri Sainath Bhajan Mala* containing 800 abhangas and padas describing the leelas of Baba. It is a book worth reading by those who are interested in Baba.

Their son, Baba Tendulkar, was studying hard day and night and wanted to appear for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers. Examining his horoscope, they told him the stars were not favorable that year and he should appear for the examination next year, when he would certainly be successful. This cast a gloom over him and made him restless. A few days afterward, his mother went to Shirdi and saw Baba. Amongst other things, she mentioned the gloomy and morose condition of her son, who was to appear for the examination in a few days. Hearing this, Baba said, **"Tell your son to believe in Me, to throw aside horoscopes and predictions of astrologers and palmists, and go on with his studies. Let him appear for the examination with a calm**

mind. He is sure to pass this year. **Ask him to trust in Me** and not get disappointed.” The mother returned home and communicated Baba’s message to her son. He then studied hard and in due course appeared for the examination. In the written papers he did well, but being overwhelmed by doubts, he thought he would not secure sufficient marks for passing, and so he did not care to appear for the oral examination. The examiner, however, was after him. He sent word through a fellow student stating that he had passed the written exam and that he should appear for the oral one. The son, being thus encouraged, appeared for the oral examination and was successful. Thus, he got through the examination successfully that year by Baba’s grace, even though the stars were against him.

It is to be noted here that doubts and difficulties surround us just to move us and confirm our faith. We are tested, as it were. **If we but hold on steadily to Baba with full faith and continue our endeavors, our efforts will ultimately be crowned with success.**

The father of this boy, Raghunathrao, was serving in a foreign mercantile firm in Bombay. As he grew old, he was not able to attend to his work properly and so he had to take leave and rest. As he did not improve during the period of leave, a further extension of leave or retirement from service was inevitable. The chief manager of the firm decided to retire him on pension, as he was an old and reliable servant. The question regarding the amount of pension to be given was under consideration. He was getting Rs. 150/ and his pension (i.e. half the amount, viz. Rs. 75/) would not be enough to meet the expenses of the family, so they were all anxious about this matter. Fifteen days before the final settlement, Baba appeared to Mrs. Tendulkar in her dream and said, “I would like Rs.100/ to be settled and paid to your husband as pension. Will this satisfy you?” She replied, “Baba, why ask me this? We fully trust in you.” Though Baba said Rs.100/, still, he was given ten rupees more, i.e. Rs.110/ as a special case. Such wonderful love and care did Baba exhibit for His bhaktas

### **(3) Captain Hate**

Captain Hate, who was staying in Bikaner, was a great devotee of Baba. Once Baba appeared to him in his dream and said, “Did you forget Me?” Hate then immediately held Baba’s feet and replied, “If a child forgets its mother, how could it be saved?” Then Hate went into the garden and took out fresh walpapadi vegetables, and arranging ‘shidha’ (ghee, wheat flour and dal, etc.) and dakshina, was about to offer all this to Baba when he

was awakened and realized that the whole scene was just a dream. Inspired by his dream, however, Captain Hate decided to have an actual arrangement of everything made and then offer it to Baba in Shirdi.

When Hate arrived in Gwalior some days afterward, he sent Rs.12/ by money order to his friend, Mr. Nimonkar, with instructions that Rs. 2/ should be spent in buying shidha articles and walpapadi vegetables, and that those items should then be offered to Baba with Rs.10/ as dakshina. Nimokar went to Shirdi and purchased the things mentioned, but walpapadi was not available. In a short time, however, a woman turned up with a basket on her head which curiously enough contained the walpapadi. The vegetables were purchased and Mr. Nimonkar prepared the 'naivedya' (rice and walpapadi). Everything was then arranged and offered the next day to Baba on behalf of Captain Hate. All the people were surprised to see that Baba, while dining, took and ate walpapadi and did not touch rice and other things. Hate's joy knew no bounds when he heard about this from his friend.

### **Consecrated Rupee**

On another occasion, Captain Hate wished he had a coin consecrated by Baba's touch in his house. Hate came across a friend who was bound for Shirdi and sent a rupee with him. The friend went to Shirdi and, after the usual salutation, gave Baba his own dakshina first, which Baba pocketed. Then he gave Captain Hate's rupee. Baba took it in His hand and began to stare at it. He then held it in front, tossed it up with His right thumb, and played with it. Baba then said to the friend, "Return this to its owner with the prasad of udi. Tell him I want nothing from him. Ask him to live in peace and contentment." The friend returned to Gwalior, handed over the consecrated rupee to Captain Hate, and told him all that had happened at Shirdi. Hate was extremely pleased. He realized Baba always encouraged good thoughts and just as Hate had wished intently, Baba fulfilled the same accordingly.

### **(4) Waman Narvekar**

Now let the readers hear a different story. A gentleman named Waman Narvekar loved Baba very much. He once bought a rupee. Engraved on one side (obverse) of it were the figures of Rama, Laxman and Sita. Engraved on the other (reverse) side, the figure of Maruti with folded hands. Waman Narvekar offered the rupee to Baba with a hope that He would consecrate it with His touch and return it to him with udi. Sai Baba, however, immediately pocketed the rupee. Shama then spoke to Baba regarding

Wamanrao's intention and requested him to return it, but Baba said in the presence of Wamanrao: "Why should it be returned to him? We should keep it ourselves. If he gives Rs. 25/ for it, it will be returned." Then, for the sake of that rupee, Wamanrao collected Rs. 25/ and placed them before Baba, at which point Baba said, "The value of that rupee far exceeds 25 rupees. Shama, take this rupee. Let us have it in our store. Keep this in your shrine and worship it." No one had the courage to ask Baba why He followed this particular action. He only knows what is best and most suitable to each and all.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**

# Chapter XXX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Drawn to Shirdi (1) Kakaji Vaidya of Vani (2) Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay**

In this chapter the story of two more devotees who were drawn to Shirdi is narrated.

#### **Preliminary**

Bow to kind Sai who is an abode of mercy and who is affectionate with His devotees. By His mere darshan, He does away with their fear of this 'bhava' (samsar) and destroys their calamities. He was first nirgun (formless), but on account of the devotion of His bhaktas, He was obliged to take a form. The mission of the saints is to give liberation (Self-realization) to bhaktas, and for Sai Baba, a divine incarnation, it was His prime mission. Those who take refuge in His feet have all their sins destroyed and their progress is certain. Remembering His feet, Brahmins from holy places come to Him, read scriptures, and chant the Gayatri mantra in His presence. We, who are weak and without any merits, do not know what bhakti is, but we know this much, that though all others may leave us, Sai won't forsake us. Those whom He favors get enormous strength, knowledge, and discrimination between the unreal and the real.

Sai knows fully the desires of His devotees and fulfils them according to His grace. Hence, the devotees get what they want and are grateful. We therefore invoke Baba and prostrate ourselves before Him. Forgetting all our faults, let Him free us from all anxieties. When overcome with calamities, we should remember and pray to Sai Baba, who will calm and pacify the mind through His grace.

Hemadpant says that Sai Baba, the ocean of mercy, favored him, and the result of this is the present work, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, for without Baba's grace, what qualifications would he have and how would he be able to undertake such an enterprise? But as Baba took all the responsibility for the writing of *Shri Sai Satcharita*, Hemadpant felt no burden nor any care about this at all. When the powerful light of knowledge was there to inspire his speech and pen, Hemadpant entertained no doubt, nor felt any anxiety, to perform the service of writing the *Shri Sai Satcharita*. Sai Baba chose Hemadpant due to the accumulation of his merits in his past births, and therefore, Hemadpant considers himself fortunate and blessed indeed.

The following story is not a mere tale, but pure nectar. He who drinks it will realize Sai's greatness and all pervasiveness. Those who want to argue and criticize, should not go in for these stories. What is wanted here is not discussion, but unlimited love and devotion. Learned, devout and faithful believers, or those who consider themselves as servants of the saints, will like and appreciate these stories. Others will take them to be fables. The fortunate bhaktas of Sai will find the Sai leelas as the Kalpataru (wish fulfilling tree). Drinking this nectar of Sai leelas will give liberation to ignorant jivas, satisfaction to householders, and a sadhana to spiritual aspirants.

Now to the story of this chapter.

### **Kakaji Vaidya**

There lived in Vani, Nasik District, a man named Kakaji Vaidya. He was the priest of the goddess Sapta Shringi. He was so overwhelmed with adverse circumstances and calamities that he lost his peace of mind and became quite restless. Under such circumstances, he went into the temple of the goddess one evening and prayed fervently to her from deep within his heart, invoking her aid to free him from anxiety. The goddess was pleased with his devotion and that same night appeared to him in his dream saying, "You should go to Baba, and then your mind will become calm and composed." Kakaji was anxious to know which Baba the goddess meant, but before he could get any explanation, he was awakened. He then began to think as to which Baba the goddess had directed him. After some thinking, he resolved that the Baba of which the goddess spoke might be 'Tryambakeshwar' (Lord Shiva), so he went to 'Tryambak', a holy place in the Nasik District, and stayed there for ten days. During this period, he bathed early in the morning, chanted the 'Rudra' hymns, did the 'Abhishekam' (pouring fresh cold water unceasingly over the pindi) and performed other religious rites. But with all that, he was as restless as before. He then returned to the temple and again invoked the goddess most pitifully. That night she again appeared in his dream and said, "Why did you go to Tryambakeshwar in



vain? I meant by Baba - Shri Sai Samarth of Shirdi.”

The question before Kakaji now was, “How and when to go to Shirdi and how to see Baba?”

**If anyone is in real earnest to see a saint, not only the saint, but God also, fulfills his wish.**

In fact, the ‘sant’ (saint) and the ‘anant’ (God) are one and the same. There is not the least difference between them. If any one thinks he can choose to go and see a saint, that will be a mere boast. Unless the saint wills it, who is able to go and see him? Even the leaf of a tree won’t move without his bidding. The more anxious a bhakta is for the saint’s visit, and the more devout and faithful he is, the more speedily and effectively is his wish satisfied to his heart’s content. He who invites anyone for a visit, also arranges everything for his reception, and so it happened with Kakaji.

### **Shama’s Vows**

While Kakaji was thinking about how and when he would go to Shirdi, a guest came to his home to take him to Shirdi. That visitor was none other than Shama, a very close and intimate devotee of Baba. How he came to Vani just at that juncture, we shall now see.

When Shama was very young he was sickly, so his mother made a vow to her family goddess, Sapta Shringi at Vani, that if her son became well, she would bring him to the goddess’s temple and dedicate him at her holy feet. The goddess bestowed her blessings and the child became well. Then, after some years, the mother suffered greatly from ring worms on her breasts. She again made a vow to her deity, praying that if she was healed, she would offer the goddess two silver breasts. The goddess answered her prayers, but the mother neglected to fulfill her two vows. On her death bed, she called her son Shama to her and drew his attention to the vows and, after having him promise he would fulfil them, she breathed her last.

After some time, Shama quite forgot about these vows and thus, thirty years elapsed. About this time, a famous astrologer came to Shirdi and stayed there for a month. His predictions in the case of Shriman Booty and others came true and everyone was satisfied. Shama’s younger brother, Bapaji, consulted this astrologer and was told that his mother’s vows, which his elder brother (Shama) promised to fulfill at her death bed, were not yet fulfilled, hence, the goddess was displeased with them and was bringing

troubles on them. Bapaji related this to his brother, Shama, who was then reminded of the unfulfilled vows. Thinking that any further delay would be dangerous, Shama called a goldsmith and had a pair of silver breasts prepared. He then went to the masjid, prostrated himself before Baba, and, placing before Him the two silver breasts, requested Baba to accept them and free him from the vows, as Baba was to him his Sapta Shringi goddess.

But Sai Baba insisted Shama go to the temple himself and offer the silver breasts at the feet of the goddess. Thus, after receiving Baba's permission and udi, Shama left for Vani where, while searching for a priest, he came to Kakaji's house. Kakaji was quite anxious to visit Baba and was thrilled when he learned Shama was from Shirdi. Kakaji at once embraced him and felt overwhelmed with love. They talked about Sai leelas and together went to the temple to complete the rites of Shama's mother's vows. When finished, they both left Vani for Shirdi.

Once they arrived in Shirdi, Kakaji went to the masjid and fell at Baba's feet. His eyes became bedewed with tears and his mind attained calmness. Just as the goddess had predicted in his vision, no sooner did Kakaji see Baba, than his mind lost all its restlessness and became calm and composed. Kakaji began to think, "What a wonderful power this is! Baba did not speak. There were no questions and no answers. No benediction was pronounced. The mere darshan itself was so conducive to happiness." The restlessness of Kakaji's mind disappeared by Baba's darshan and consciousness of joy came upon him. This is what is called 'the greatness of darshan'. Kakaji's eyes were fixed on Sai's feet and he could not utter a single word. Hearing Baba's leelas, his joy knew no bounds. He surrendered himself completely to Baba, forgot his anxiety and cares, and was filled with undiluted happiness. Kakaji lived in Shirdi happily for twelve days and after receiving Baba's udi and blessings, he took Baba's leave and returned home.

### **Khushalchand of Rahata**

It is said that a dream occurring in the small hours of the morning generally comes true in the waking state. This may be so, but regarding dreams blessed by Baba, there is no time restriction. For example, one afternoon Baba told Kakasaheb Dixit to go to Rahata and fetch Khushalchand and bring him to Shirdi, as He had not seen him for quite some time. Kakasaheb obeyed and took a tanga to Rahata. He met Khushalchand and gave him Baba's message. Hearing it, Khushalchand was surprised and said that while taking his noon nap, Baba appeared in his dream and asked him to come to Shirdi immediately, and that he was most anxious to go. As he had no horse nearby, he had sent his son to inform Baba. Just as his son was leaving the village, Dixit's tanga turned up. Dixit said he was sent specially to bring Khushalchand to Shirdi, and so both set out in the

tanga to go to Sai Baba's. Khushalchand arrived and saw Baba and all were pleased. Seeing this leela of Baba, Khushalchand was quite moved.

### **Punjabi Ramalal of Bombay**

Once a Punjabi Brahmin of Bombay, Ramalal, had a dream in which Baba appeared and asked him to come to Shirdi. Baba appeared to him as a mahant (saint), but Ramalal did not know His whereabouts. Ramalal thought he should go and see Baba, but as he did not know His address, he did not know what to do. But He who calls anyone for an interview, makes the necessary arrangements for the same, and as such, that is what happened in this case. The same afternoon when Ramalal was strolling in the streets, he saw a picture of Baba in a shop. The features of the mahant he saw in his dream exactly tallied with those of the picture. After making inquiries, he discovered the picture was of Sai Baba of Shirdi. Soon after, he then went to Shirdi and stayed there till his death.

In this way, Baba brought his devotees to Shirdi for darshan and satisfied their wants, material as well as spiritual.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**

## Nanda Deep



# Chapter XXXI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **The Passing Away in Baba's Presence of: (1) Sannyasi Vijayanand (2) Balaram Mankar (3) Tatyasaheb Noolkar (4) Megha (5) Tiger**

In this chapter Hemadpant describes the passing away of certain persons and a tiger in Baba's presence.

#### **Preliminary**

The last wish or thought a man has at the hour of death determines his future course. Shri Krishna has said in the Gita (VII 5-6), "He who remembers Me in his last moments comes verily to Me, and he who meditates otherwise at that time goes to what he looks for." We cannot be certain that we can entertain a particular good thought at our last moment, for more often than not, we are more likely to be frightened and terrified by many causes. Hence, constant practice is necessary for enabling us to fix our mind on any desired good thought at any or the last moment. All saints, therefore, recommend that we always remember God and chant His name so that we may not be puzzled when the time for departure comes. The devotees on their part, surrender themselves completely to the saints, fully believing that the all knowing saints would guide and help them in their last moments. A few such cases will be noted here.

#### **(1) Vijayanand**

A Madrasi Sannyasi named Vijayanand started on a pilgrimage to Manasa-Sarovar. En route, hearing of Baba's fame, he stopped at Shirdi. There, he met a Somadevaji Swami from Hardwar and inquired of him about the particulars of the Manasa-Sarovar trip. The swami told him Sarovar was five hundred miles above the Gangotri and described the



difficulties of the journey, viz. plenty of snow and the change of dialect every 50 koss, as well as the suspicious nature of the people of Bhutan who create a lot of trouble for the pilgrims on the way. Upon hearing this, the Sannyasi was dejected and cancelled his trip. Later, when he went to Sai Baba and prostrated before Him, Baba became enraged and said, "Drive out this useless Sannyasi! His company is of no use." The Sannyasi did not know or understand Baba's nature. He felt uncomfortable, but continued to sit there, watching things that were going on during the morning darbar when the masjid was overcrowded. Baba was being worshiped in various ways. Some were washing His feet; some were taking the tirth (holy water) from His toe and drinking it heartily. Still others were touching their eyes with tirth, and some were applying sandal paste and other fragrances to Baba's body. All were doing these things, forgetting the distinction of caste and creed. Though Baba became enraged with Vijayanand, he was filled with affection for Baba and did not want to leave the masjid.

After being in Shirdi for two days, Vijayanand received a letter from Madras stating his mother was quite ill. He felt very dejected and wanted to be by his mother's side, but he could not leave without Baba's permission, so he took the letter and saw Baba, asking His permission to return home. The omniscient Baba, knowing the future, said to him, "If you so loved your mother, why did you take Sannyasa? Fondness or attachment ill becomes an ochre garb. Go and sit quietly at your lodging and wait with patience for a few days. In the wada, there are many robbers. Bolt your doors and be very vigilant. The thieves will carry away everything. Wealth and prosperity are transient and the body is subject to decay and death. Knowing this, do your duty and leave all attachment to the things of this world and the next. He who does this and surrenders himself to the feet of Hari (Lord) will become free from all troubles and attain bliss. The Lord runs and helps he who remembers and meditates on Him with love and affection. Your store of past merits is considerable, so you have come here. Now attend to what I say and realize the end of your life. Being desireless, begin tomorrow the study of the Bhagwat.

**Do three 'saptahas' i.e. three readings during three weeks, conscientiously. The Lord will be pleased with you and will destroy your sorrows. Your illusions will vanish and you will find peace."**

Seeing that his end was approaching, Baba prescribed that remedy and made him read 'Ramavijaya' which pleases the God of death.

The next morning, after bathing and other purifying rites, he commenced to read Bhagwat in a secluded part of the Lendi garden. He completed two readings and thereafter felt quite exhausted. He returned to the wada and stayed in his lodging for two days and on the third

day, he breathed his last on fakir (Bade) Baba's lap. Baba asked the people to preserve the body for a day for a good reason because the police came, and on making proper inquiries, gave permission for the disposal of the body. It was buried in a proper place with due rites. In this way, Baba helped the Sannyasi and insured him sadgati (salvation).

## (2) Balaram Mankar

There was a householder devotee of Baba by the name of Balaram Mankar. When his wife passed away, he became dejected and, entrusting his household to his son, left his home and came to Shirdi to live with Baba. Being pleased with his devotion, Baba wanted to give a good turn to his life and He did this in the following way. Baba gave him Rs. 12/ and asked him to go and live in Macchindragad (District Satara). Mankar was at first unwilling to go and leave Baba, but Baba convinced him that He was giving the best course for him to follow and asked him to practice meditation three times a day on the Gad. Believing in Baba's words, Mankar went to the Gad. He was very pleased with the lovely surroundings of the place, the pure water and healthy air, and he began assiduously to practice the meditation as recommended by Baba .

After a few days, he had a revelation. Generally, bhaktas get a revelation in their samadhi or trance states, but in Mankar's case, he had it when he came down to his ordinary consciousness from his trance. Baba appeared to him in person. Not only did Mankar see him, but he also asked Baba why he was sent to the Gad. Baba replied, "In Shirdi, many thoughts and ideas began to rise in your mind and I sent you here to rest your unsteady mind. You thought I was in Shirdi with a body composed of the five elements and three and a half cubits in length, and not outside of it. Now you see and can determine for yourself whether the person you see here this moment is the same one you saw in Shirdi. It is for this reason I sent you here."

Then, after the period was over, Mankar left the Gad and proceeded to his native place, Bandra. He wanted to travel by rail from Poona to Dadar, but when he went to the booking office to get his ticket, he found it quite crowded. Just as he was thinking it would take a long time to get his ticket, a villager with a langoti (piece of cloth) on his waist and kambali on his shoulder, turned up and said, "Where are you going?" "To Dadar," replied Mankar. Then the stranger said, "Please take this Dadar ticket of mine, as I have some urgent business here and have had to cancel my Dadar trip." Mankar was very glad to receive the ticket and was just taking money out of his pocket, when the rustic disappeared in the crowd. Mankar searched for him in the crowd, but to no avail. He even waited for him until the train left the station, but found no trace of him. This was the second revelation Mankar received in a strange form. Then, after Mankar returned home, he decided after some

time, to return to Shirdi and remain with Baba, always following His biddings and advice.

In the end, he was very fortunate to leave this world in the presence, and with the blessings, of Baba.

### **(3) Tatyasaheb Noolkar**

Hemadpant gives no particulars regarding Tatyasaheb Noolkar, except the bare mention of the fact that he passed away in Shirdi. A brief summary of his account which appeared in the 'Sai Leela' magazine is given here.

Tatyasaheb was a sub-judge at Pandarpur in 1909 when Nanasaheb Chandorkar was mamlatdar there. Both met often and exchanged discussions. Tatyasaheb did not believe in saints, while Nanasaheb loved them. Nanasaheb often recounted Sai Baba's leelas to him and pressed him to go to Shirdi and see Baba. He finally agreed to go to Shirdi on two conditions: (1) He must get a Brahmin cook and (2) He must get good Nagpur oranges for presentation. Both these conditions were providentially fulfilled. A Brahmin cook came to Nanasaheb for service and he was sent to Tatyasaheb, and a fruit parcel containing 100 beautiful oranges was received by Tatyasaheb, the consigner being unknown. As the conditions were fulfilled, Tatyasaheb had to go to Shirdi. At first, Baba was enraged with him. But, by and by, Tatyasaheb received such experiences that he was convinced Baba was God incarnate. He was enamoured of Baba and stayed there until his death. As his end was approaching, sacred literature was read to him and at the last hour, Baba's pada-tirth was brought and given to him for drinking. Baba, hearing of his death, said, "Oh, Tatya went ahead of us. He won't be reborn."

### **(4) Megha**

The story of Megha has already been described in chapter 28. When Megha died, all the villagers followed the funeral procession. Baba accompanied them as well and showered flowers on Megha's body. After the obsequies were performed, tears flowed from Baba's eyes and, like an ordinary mortal, Baba showed Himself overcome with grief and sorrow. Then, covering the body with flowers and crying like a near relation, Baba returned to the masjid.

Many saints have been seen giving sadgati (salvation) to men, but Baba's greatness is unique. Even a wild animal like a tiger came to Baba's feet for being saved. This story will now be narrated.



## **(5) Tiger**

Seven days before Baba passed away, a wonderful incident occurred at Shirdi. A country cart came to Shirdi and stopped in front of the masjid. A tiger was on the cart, fastened with iron chains, with its fierce face turned to the rear. It was suffering with pain and was in agony. Its keepers - three Derveshies - were taking it from place to place and making money by exhibiting it. It was the means of their subsistence. They tried all sorts of remedies to cure it from the malady from which it was suffering, but all was in vain. Then they heard of Baba's fame and came to Him with the animal. They took it down from the cart while it was in chains and made it stand at the door. It was naturally fierce, besides being disease ridden. The animal was restless and the people looked at it with fear and amazement. The Derveshies went in, told Baba everything about the animal and, with His consent, brought it before Him. As the tiger approached the steps of the masjid, it was taken back by Baba's luster. It hung its head, but when the tiger looked up at Baba, it was with affection. It immediately began to move the tuft of its tail and dashed it thrice against the ground. It then fell down senseless. Seeing it dead, the Derveshies were first quite dejected and sorrowful, but on mature thought, they came to realize that as the animal was diseased and was nearing its end, it was very meritorious on its part that it should meet its death at the feet and in the presence of Sai Baba. The tiger was their debtor and when the debt was paid off, it was free and met its end at Sai Baba's feet. When any creature bows its head down at the feet of a saint as it meets its death, it is saved. It must have a considerable store of merits to achieve such a fortunate end.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**

## Khandoba Mandir



# Chapter XXXII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### In Quest of Guru and God - Fasting Disapproved

In this chapter, Hemadpant describes two things: (1) how Baba met His guru in the woods, and through him, God and (2) How Baba made Mrs. Gokhale, who had made up her mind to fast for three days, eat puran polis.

#### Preliminary

In the beginning, Hemadpant describes the samsara (visible world) with an allegory of the ashvattha (banyan) tree which has, in the phraseology of the *Bhagavad Gita*, roots above and branches below. Its branches are spread downward and upward and are nourished by the gunas (qualities), and its sprouts are the objects of the senses. Its roots, leading to actions, are extended downward to the world of men. Its form cannot be known in this world, nor its end, its beginning, nor its support. Cutting this ashvattha tree's strong roots with the sharp weapon of non-attachment allows one to seek and tread the path which leads to liberation.

For traversing this path, the help of a good guide (guru) is absolutely necessary. However learned a man may be, or however deep his study of Vedas and Vedangas (sacred literature) may be, he cannot go to his destination safely unless the guide be there to help him and show him the right way. The guide (guru) helps him avoid the pitfalls and dangers on the journey, thus, creating smooth sailing.

Baba's experience in this matter and the story He told is wonderful and, when adhered to, will create faith, devotion and salvation.

## The Quest

Once, four of us were studying religious scriptures and other books and, being thus enlightened, we began to discuss the nature of Brahma. One of us said we should raise the lower self by the higher Self and not depend on others. To this, the second replied that he who controls his mind is blessed. He stated we should be free from thoughts and ideas.

The third said the world (phenomenon) is always changing and the formless is eternal, so we should discriminate between the unreal and the real. The fourth, Baba Himself, urged that bookish knowledge is worthless and added, "Let us do our prescribed duty and surrender our body, mind and five pranas (life force) to the guru's feet. **The guru is God, all pervading.** To get this conviction, strong unbounded faith is necessary."

Discussing in this wise, we four learned men began to ramble through the woods in quest of God. The three wanted to make the quest with their free and unaided intellect. On the way, a vanjari ( a man who trades in certain things, such as grain etc. by carrying them on a bullock cart) met us and asked us, "It is hot now, where and how far are you going?" "To search the woods," we replied. He inquired, "On what quest are you bound?" We gave him an ambiguous and evasive reply. Seeing us rambling aimlessly, he was moved and said, "Without knowing the woods fully, you should not wander at random. If you want to walk through the forests and jungles, you should take a guide with you. Why do you exert yourselves unnecessarily at this sultry noon time? You may not disclose your secret quest, but you should sit down, eat bread, drink water, take rest, and then go. Be always patient at heart." Though he spoke so tenderly, we discarded his request and marched on. We thought that we were self-contained men and needed nobody's help. The woods were vast and trackless. The trees therein grew so close and tall that the sun's rays could not penetrate through them, so we lost our way and wandered here and there for a long time. Ultimately, through sheer good luck, we came back to the place whence we started. The vanjari met us again and said, "Relying on your own cleverness, you missed your way. A guide is always necessary to show us the right way in small or great matters. No quest can be successfully carried out on an empty stomach. Unless God wills it, no one meets us on the way. Do not discard offers of food. A served dish should not be thrust away. Offers of bread and food should be regarded as auspicious signs of success." Saying this, he again offered us food and asked us to be calm and patient. Again, we did not like this good hospitality and discarded his offer and went away. Without discussing our quest, and without taking any food, the three began to move out. So obstinate were they! I was hungry and thirsty and I was moved by the vanjari's extraordinary love.

We thought of ourselves as very learned, but were quite strangers to pity and kindness. The vanjari was quite an illiterate and unqualified fellow and belonged to a low caste. Still,

he had love in his heart and asked us to eat the bread. In this way, he who loves others disinterestedly is really enlightened and so I thought acceptance of his hospitality was the best beginning of getting knowledge. I, therefore, accepted with great respect, the loaf of bread he offered and ate it and drank water.

Then lo! The guru came at once and stood before us. "What was the dispute about?" he asked. I told him everything that had happened. He then said, "Would you like to come with me? I will show you what you want. He alone who believes in what I say will be successful." The others did not agree to what he said and left him, but I bowed to him reverently and accepted his dictum. He then took Me to a well. He tied My feet with a rope and hung Me - head downward and feet up - from a tree near the well. I was suspended three feet above the water, which I could reach neither with My hands, nor with My mouth. Suspending Me in this manner, he went away, no one knew where. After 10 or 12 ghatakas ( 4 or 5 hours) he returned, and taking Me out quickly, asked Me how I fared. "In bliss supreme, I was. How can a fool like Me describe the joy I experienced?" Hearing My answer, the guru was very pleased with Me, drew Me near him, and kept Me with him. He took care of Me as tenderly as a mother bird does of her young ones. He put Me in his school. How beautiful it was! There, I forgot My parents, all My attachment snapped and I was easily liberated. I thought I should stare at him always. If his image were not fixed in My pupils, I would prefer to be blind. Such was the school! No one who entered it could return empty handed. My guru became My all in all, My home and property, mother and father - everything. All My senses were concentrated in My eyes and My sight was centered on him.

Thus, was My guru the sole object of My meditation and I was conscious of none else. While meditating on him, My mind and intellect were stunned, and thus, I had to keep quiet and bow to him in silence.\*

There are other schools where you see an altogether different format. The disciples go there to seek knowledge, but must spend their money, time and labor, only to be disappointed. The guru at such schools boasts of his secret knowledge and straight forwardness. He makes a show of his being holy, but he is not tender at heart. He speaks a lot and sings his own glory, but his words do not touch the disciples' hearts and they are not convinced. This type of teacher (guru) is not Self-realized, so how can such schools be of any use to the disciples?

The master (guru) mentioned in the story of the well was a different type entirely. By his grace, realization flashed upon Me of itself, without effort or study. I did not have to seek anything, but everything became clear to Me. The guru alone knows how the topsy-



turvy suspension 'with head down and feet up' can give happiness.\*

Among the four learned men who were wandering in the forest, one was a karmatha (ritualistic) who only knew how to observe and abstain from certain rites. The second was a jnani who was puffed up with pride of knowledge. The third was a bhakta who, even though he surrendered himself completely to God, believing that God was the sole doer, retained a subtle sense of doership created by the ego. They were discussing and arguing the question of God, and, relying on their unaided knowledge, went in search of Him. Sai, who was discrimination and dispassion incarnate, was one of the four. Being Himself Brahma incarnate, some may ask, "Why did He mix with these other three and act unwisely?" He did this for attaining the good of the public **by setting an example to follow**. Though an incarnation Himself, He respected a low vanjari by accepting his food in the firm belief that "Food is Brahma" and showed how those who rejected the vanjari's hospitable offer suffered, and how it was impossible to get jnana without a guru. The Shruti (Taittiriya Upanishad) exhorts us to honor and worship mother, father and preceptor, and to study (learn and teach) the sacred scriptures. These are the means of purifying our minds and unless this purification is effected, Self-realization is not possible. Neither the senses, nor the mind and intellect, reach the higher Self. Modes of proof, such as perception and inference, will not help us in the matter. It is the grace of the guru that counts. The objects of our life, such as dharma, artha, and kama are attainable without effort, but the fourth object, moksha (liberation) can only be had with the help of the guru.

In the darbar of Shri Sai, many personalities appear and play their part. Astrologers come and give their predictions; princes, noblemen, ordinary and poor men, sannyasis, yogis, songsters and others, all come for darshan. Even a mahar comes, and making a johar (his salutation), says this Sai is the mai baap (true parents) who will do away with our rounds of births and deaths. So very many different types of people come, each playing the part assigned to him, and so, too, the vanjari appeared and played his special part. Let us now revert to the other story.

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\* Editor's note: the description of the topsy-turvy position in the well for 4 or 5 hours should not be taken too literally, for no one can be at ease and feel bliss suspended in such a position for so many hours. This seems to be a figurative description of the trance or samadhi state. There are two sorts of consciousness: (1) sensual and (2) spiritual. When our senses and mind, which are created by God with an outgoing tendency, meet their objects, we experience the sensual consciousness in which we feel pleasure or pain, but not bliss supreme. When the senses and the mind are withdrawn from their objects and are given the opposite direction, (topsy-turvy) - i.e. when they are introverted and fixed on the Self, we experience spiritual consciousness in which we feel unalloyed joy or bliss which is ineffable. The words, "In bliss supreme I was, and how can I describe the joy I felt?" show that the guru put him in a trance and kept him above or aloof from the waters of the restless senses and mind.

## **Fasting and Mrs. Gokhale**

Sai Baba never fasted, nor did He allow others to do so. The mind of the faster is never at ease. How could one attain paramartha (the goal of life) if one is weak from not eating? God is not attained on an empty stomach. First, the soul has to be appeased. If there is no food (nutrition) in the stomach, how can one have the strength to seek God and describe His greatness? In short, when all our organs get their proper nutrition and are sound, we can practice devotion and other sadhanas to attain God. Therefore, neither fasting nor overeating is good.

Moderation in diet is really wholesome both to the body and to the mind.

### **Mrs. Gokhale**

Mrs. Gokhale came to Shirdi with an introductory letter for Dada Kelkar from Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar, a devotee of Sai Baba. She came to Baba with a determination to sit at Baba's feet while observing a three day fast. The previous day, before her arrival, Baba had said to Dada Kelkar that He would not allow His children to starve during the shimga (holy holidays) and if they had to starve, why was He there? The next day, when Mrs. Gokhale went with Dada Kelkar and sat at Baba's feet, Baba immediately said to her, "What is the necessity of fasting? Go to Dadabhat's house, prepare puran polis (wheat rotis with gram flour and jaggery), and feed his children and yourself as well." The shimga holidays were going on at that time. Mrs. Kelkar was having her menses and there was no one to cook in Dadabhat's house, so Baba's advice was very timely. Mrs. Gokhale went to Dadabhat's house as directed and prepared the puran polis. She fed everyone, including herself. Thus, Baba taught everyone an important lesson through this occurrence.

### **Baba's Sircar**

Baba related the following story of his boyhood : "When I was a youngster, I was in search of bread and went to Beedgaum. There, I found work doing embroidery. I worked hard, sparing no pain. The employer was very pleased with Me. Three other boys had worked there before Me. The first received Rs. 50/. The second received Rs. 100/. The third boy received Rs. 150/. I was given twice the whole of this amount, i.e. Rs. 600/. Seeing My cleverness, the employer loved Me, praised Me and honored Me with a full dress, a turban for My head and a shella for My body.

I kept this dress intact without using it. **I thought that what a man might give does not last long and is always imperfect, but what my Sircar (God) gives, lasts to the end of time.** No other gift from any man can be compared to His. My Sircar says, "Take, take," but everyone comes to Me and says, "Give, give". No one attends carefully to the meaning of what I say. My Sircar's treasury (spiritual wealth) is full to overflowing. I say, dig out and take away this wealth in cartloads. The blessed devotee should fill himself with this wealth."

The skill of My Fakir, the leela of My Bhagwan, and the aptitude of My Sircar is quite unique. What about Me? The body (earth) will mix with earth, breath with air, for the mortal body exists for only a limited time.

Thus, remember well these words:

**This time won't come again. I go somewhere, sit somewhere. Hard maya troubles Me much, still, I always feel concerned for My men. He who does anything (spiritual endeavor) will reap its fruit and He who remembers these words of Mine will get invaluable happiness."**

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace Be to All**



# Chapter XXXIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Greatness of Udi Scorpion Sting and Plague Cases Cured - Jamner Miracle - Narayanrao's Sickness - Balabuva Sutar - Appasaheb Kulkarni - Haribhau Karnik**

In the last chapter we described the greatness of the guru; now in this chapter, we will describe the greatness of udi.

### **Preliminary**

Let us bow before the great saints. Their merciful glances will destroy mountains of sins and do away with all the evil taints of our character. Their casual talks teach us good lessons and confer on us imperishable happiness. Their minds do not know any difference such as, "This is ours and this is yours." Such differentiation never arises in their minds. We can never repay the debt we owe them in a single life, or even in many future lives.

### **Udi**

It is well known that Baba took dakshina from all, and out of the amount thus collected, He distributed most of it to charity, purchasing only some fuel with the balance left. This fuel He threw in the dhuni - the sacred fire, which He kept ever burning. The ash from this fire was called udi and was freely distributed to the devotees at the time of their departure from Shirdi.

What did Baba teach or hint by this udi? Baba taught by His udi that all the visible phenomena in the universe is as transient as the ash. Our bodies, composed of matter

comprising the five elements, will decompose after all their sense enjoyments are over, and will be reduced to ashes. In order to remind His devotees of the fact that their bodies will be reduced to ashes, Baba distributed udi to them. Baba also taught by the udi that Brahma is the only reality and the universe is ephemeral - that no one in this world, whether it be a father, mother, wife, or child is really ours. We come here (in this world) alone, and we have to go out alone.

It was found that the udi cured many physical and mental maladies, but what Baba really wanted, was to din into the devotees' ears, the principles of discrimination between the unreal and the real. He wanted to cultivate non-attachment for the unreal by His udi and dakshina. The udi teaches discrimination and the dakshina, nonattachment. Unless we have discrimination and non-attachment, it is not possible to cross the sea of mundane existence. Sai Baba, therefore, asked for and took dakshina, and, as the devotees would take their leave, He would give udi as prasad, besmearing it on their foreheads while placing His hand of blessing on their heads. When Baba was in a cheerful mood, He used to sing merrily. One such song was about udi. The theme of this song was, "Oh, playful Rama, come, come, and bring with You sacks of udi." Baba used to sing in very clear and sweet tones.

Thus, udi has a strong spiritual implication, but it has material significance as well. It confers health, prosperity, freedom from anxiety and many other worldly gains. The udi, therefore, creates both material and spiritual benefits. The following story narrates the healing benefits of udi.

### **Scorpion Sting**

Narayan Motiram Jani of Nasik was a devotee of Baba. He was serving under another of Baba's devotees by the name of Ramachandra Vaman Modak. Narayan and his mother decided to go to Shirdi and see Baba, who told them he should no longer work in the service of anyone, but should start an independent business. Some days later, this prophecy came true. Narayan left the service in which he was employed and started a boarding house, "Anandashram". This new business thrived.

Once, a friend of Narayanrao was stung by a scorpion. The pain it caused was severe and unbearable. As holy ash is most efficacious in such cases when applied directly to the source of pain, Narayanrao searched to find some udi, but was unsuccessful. He then stood before Sai Baba's picture and invoked Baba's aid. He chanted Baba's name and, taking out a pinch of the ashes from the stick of incense burning in front of Baba's picture and visualizing it to be Baba's udi, he applied it directly to

the area of the scorpion sting. As soon as he took his fingers away from the wound, the pain vanished and both Narayanrao and Narayan Jani were amazed and grateful to Baba.

### **Bubonic Plague Case**

Once a devotee in Bandra learned that his daughter, who was staying in another village, had come down with bubonic plague. He had no udi with him, so he sent word to Nanasaheb Chandorkar to send some. Nanasaheb got the message while en route near the Thana Railway Station. He was travelling with his wife to Kalyan. He had no udi with him at that time. He, therefore, picked up some earth from the road, meditated upon Sai Baba, invoked His aid, and applied it on his wife's forehead.

When the devotee then went to his daughter's house, he was thrilled to learn that his daughter, who had been suffering for three days, began to improve the very moment Nanasaheb invoked Baba's aid near the Thana Railway Station.

### **The Jamner Miracle**

In 1904-1905 Nanasaheb Chandorkar was mamlatdar at Jamner, in the Khandesh District, which is more than 100 miles from Shirdi. His daughter, Mainatai, was pregnant and was about to deliver. Her case was very serious and she was suffering from labor pains for two or three days. Nanasaheb tried all types of remedies, but they proved ineffective. He then remembered Sai Baba and invoked His aid.

At that same time in Shirdi, Ramgirbuva, whom Baba called Bapugirbuva, wanted to go to his native village of Khandesh. Baba called him and told him to take a little rest and stop at Jamner on his way home and give some udi and a copy of the arati to Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Ramgirbuva said he had only two rupees with him and that amount was barely sufficient for the railway fare to Jalgaon, so it was not possible for him to go from Jalgaon to Jamner, a distance of about 30 miles. Baba assured him he need not worry, as everything would be provided for him. Then Baba asked Shama to write the well known arati composed by Madhav Adkar (a translation of this is given at the end of this book) and give a copy of it with the udi to Ramgirbuva who would then deliver it to Nanasaheb. Relying on Baba's words, Ramgirbuva left Shirdi and reached Jalgaon at about 2:45 a.m. He had only two annas left and was in a hard plight. To his great relief, he heard someone calling out, "Who is Bapugirbuva of Shirdi?" He immediately went over and identified himself. The peon, professing to be sent by Nanasaheb Chandorkar, then took Bapugirbuva out to an excellent tanga with a fine pair of horses and driver and asked him to get in. The peon and Ramgirbuva then drove quickly through the night and by early

morning, they came to a small brook. The driver took the horses for water and then asked Ramgirbuva to partake of some food. Seeing the beard, moustache and livery of the peon, Ramgirbuva suspected him to be a Moslem and was unwilling to take any refreshments from him, but the peon satisfied him by saying that he was a Hindu, a Kshatriya of Garhwal. He explained Nanasaheb had sent the food, so there should be no difficulty, nor any doubt, about acceptance. Then both of them had some food and continued on the journey. They reached Jamner at dawn. Ramgirbuva alighted to attend a call of nature and returned within a few minutes, but found no tanga and no peon. He was dumbfounded. He then went to the neighboring katcheri and made inquiries. Having learned that the mamlatdar (Nanasaheb Chandorkar) was at home, Ramgirbuva went to Nanasaheb's house, announced himself, and gave him Baba's udi and arati. At this time, Mainatai's case was most serious and all were deeply anxious about her. Nanasaheb called out to his wife and asked her to give the udi, mixed with water, to their daughter to drink. He then asked his wife to sing Baba's arati. Nanasaheb thought that Baba's help was most opportune. In a few minutes, the news came that the delivery was safe and the crisis had passed away. Then, when Ramgirbuva thanked Nanasaheb for the peon, tanga and refreshments, the latter was greatly surprised, as he had sent none to the station and was not even aware of any person coming from Shirdi.

Mr. B.V. Deo of Thana, retired mamlatdar, made inquiries about this matter with Bapurao Chandorkar, the son of Nanasaheb. He also asked Ramgirbuva questions and, after satisfying himself, wrote an elaborate article, part prose and part poetry, in 'Sai Leela' magazine (Vol. 13, Nos. 11,12 and 13). Brother B.V. Narsimhaswami also wrote down some statements of (1) Mainatai (No.V, page 14) and (2) Bapusaheb Chandorkar (No.XX, page 50) and (3) Ramgirbuva (No. XXVII, page 83), dated June 1, 1936, September 16, 1936 and December 1, 1936 respectively and published them in his *Devotees' Experiences, Part III*. The following is quoted from Ramgirbuva's statement:

"One day Baba called me to Him and gave me a packet of udi and a copy of the arati. I had to go to Khandesh at that time. Baba directed me to go to Jamner and told me to deliver the arati and udi to Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who lived in Jamner. I told Baba all I had was Rs. 2/, and asked Him how that could take me by train from Kopergaon to Jalgaon, and then from Jalgaon to Jamner. Baba said, "God will give." That was on a Friday and I started out at once. I reached Manmad at 7:30 p.m. and arrived at Jalgaon at 2:45 a.m. At that time, plague regulations were enforced and I had a great deal of trouble. I was unsure what I should do in order to get to Jamner. At about 3:00 a.m., a peon in boots, turban and well equipped with other details of good dress came to me and took me to a tanga and had me get in. I was very frightened. We reached Jamner early in the morning and by the time I had attended my call of nature, the tanga and peon had disappeared."

## Narayanrao

Bhakta Narayanrao (the father's name and surname are not given) had the good fortune to see Sai Baba twice during the latter's lifetime. Three years after the passing away of Baba in 1918, Narayanrao, who became ill within a year of Baba's mahasamadhi and suffered quite a bit, wanted to come to Shirdi, but was not able to.

Since all the ordinary remedies provided no relief from his illness, Narayanrao meditated on Sai Baba day and night. One night, he had a vision in his dream. Baba came to him through a cellar and comforted him saying, "Don't be anxious! You will be improving by tomorrow, and within a week, you will be on your legs again." Narayanrao became perfectly well within the time mentioned in the vision. Now the point for consideration is this: Was Baba living because He had a body, and was He dead because He left it? No, **Baba is ever alive, for He transcends both life and death. He who loves Him wholeheartedly gets response from Him at any time and at any place. He is always by our side and will take any form and appear before the devout bhakta and help him. Appasaheb Kulkarni**

Appasaheb Kulkarni had a chance to receive Sai Baba's blessings in 1917 when he was transferred to Thana. There, he began to worship Baba's picture which was presented to him by Balasaheb Bhate. Kulkarni performed the worship in real earnest. He offered flowers, sandal paste and naivedya daily to Baba in the form of His picture and he longed intently to see Him. It may be noted in this connection that seeing Baba's picture earnestly is equivalent to seeing Him in person.

The following story illustrates this statement.

## Balabuva Sutar

A saint in Bombay by the name of Balabuva Sutar, who, on account of his piety, devotion and bhajan was called the "Modern Tukaram", came to Shirdi for the first time in 1917. When he bowed before Sai Baba, the latter said, "I've known this man for the past four years." Balabuva wondered how that could be possible, as this was his first trip to Shirdi. But thinking about it seriously, he recollected that he had prostrated himself four years ago before Baba's portrait in Bombay and so he recognized the significance of Baba's words. He thought to himself, "How omniscient and all pervading are the saints and how kind are they to their bhaktas. I merely bowed to His photo, and yet this fact was

noticed by Baba. I now realize that seeing Baba's photo is equivalent to seeing Him in person!"

### **Appasaheb Kulkarni**

Now to return to Appasaheb's story. While Appasaheb Kulkarni was in Thana, he had to go on tour to Bhivandi and was not expected to return for a week. In his absence, the following wonderful thing took place on the third day. A fakir turned up at Appasaheb's house at noon. His features exactly resembled those in Sai Baba's photo. Mrs. Kulkarni and the children all asked him whether he was Sai Baba of Shirdi. He said, "No," but that he was an obedient servant of His and had come there at His order to inquire about the health of the family. He then asked for dakshina. The lady gave him a rupee. He gave her a small packet of udi and asked her to keep it in the shrine along with the photo for worship. He then left the house and went away.

The following will describe the wonderful leela of Sai Baba.

Appasaheb could not proceed with his tour as his horse fell sick at Bhivandi. When he returned home that afternoon, his wife told him about the fakir's visit. He winced mentally as he had not been there to receive the darshan of the fakir and was dissatisfied that only one rupee was paid as dakshina. He thought to himself that had he been present, he would have offered not less than ten rupees. Thinking in this manner, he immediately started off in quest of the fakir and searched for him in the masjid and other places, without taking any food. His search was in vain, so he returned home and had something to eat. (The reader may remember at this point Baba's dictum in chapter 32 that **God's quest should not be made on an empty stomach.**) Thus, indirectly, Sai Baba taught Appasaheb a lesson about the importance of feeding the body.

After his meal, Appasaheb went out for a walk with a friend, Mr. Chitre. After walking some distance, they saw a man approaching them rapidly. Appasaheb thought that he must be the fakir who came to his house at noon, as his features tallied with those in the photo of Baba. The fakir immediately put forth His hand and asked for dakshina. Appasaheb gave Him a rupee. The fakir demanded again and again, so Appasaheb gave Him two more rupees, but still He was not satisfied. Then Appasaheb borrowed Rs. 3/ from Mr. Chitre and gave them to the fakir, but the fakir wanted still more. Appasaheb then asked the fakir to accompany him to his home, and when they arrived there, he gave Him three more rupees, in all nine. The fakir showed dissatisfaction and demanded again. Appasaheb then told Him he had a currency note of Rs. 10/. The fakir asked for the note, took it, and returned the nine rupees in cash, then went away. (Appasaheb had said he

would pay Rs. 10/. That sum was taken from him and nine rupees, consecrated by Baba's touch, were returned to him.) The figure 9 is significant. It denotes the nine types of devotion (vide Chapter 21). It may also be noted here that just before Baba took his mahasamadhi, He gave Rs. 9/ to Laxmibai Shinde.

Appasaheb examined the udi packet and found it contained some flower petals and akshata. Then, some time later, he got a hair from Baba when he saw Him at Shirdi. He put the udi packet and the hair in a talisman and always wore it on his arm. Appasaheb realized the power of the udi.

Though very clever, Appasaheb only earned Rs. 40/, but after he secured Baba's photo and His udi, he received many times forty rupees per month and also gained much power and influence. Along with these temporal benefits, his spiritual progress was rapid. So those who are fortunate enough to get Baba's udi should, after a bath, apply it on the forehead and drink a bit mixed in water as holy tirth.

### **Haribhau Karnik**

In 1917 Haribhau Karnik of Dahanu (Thana District) came to Shirdi on Guru Pournima day (in the month of Ashada) and worshiped Baba with all formality. He offered clothes and dakshina and, after taking Baba's leave through Shama, started to walk down the steps of the masjid. Just as he was leaving, he thought he ought to offer one more rupee to Baba, and so he started to turn around. Shama quickly informed him by signs that as he had received permission from Baba to leave, he should go and not return. Thus, Haribhau then started for home.

On his way home, he stopped at the temple of Kala Rama at Nasik to receive darshan from a saint by the name of Narsing Maharaj who always sat just inside the big door of the temple. As Haribhau approached the saint, Narsing Maharaj quickly got up, leaving his disciples, and caught Haribhau's wrist saying, "Give me my one rupee." Karnik was quite surprised. He paid the rupee most willingly, realizing Baba, through Narsing Maharaj, had recovered the additional rupee he had intended to give just before leaving Shirdi.

This story illustrates how the saints work in unison and, in reality, all saints are one.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



## Prominent Devotees of Sai Baba





## Chapter XXXIV

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**Greatness of Udi (Continued) (1) Doctor's Nephew - (2) Dr. Pillay - (3) Shama's Sister-in-law - (4) Irani Girl (5) Harda Gentleman - (6) Bombay Lady**

This chapter continues the subject of the "Greatness of Udi" and describes cases in which the application of udi was most efficacious.

#### **Doctor's Nephew**

There lived in Malegaon (Nasik District), a doctor who had a nephew who was suffering from an incurable disease - tubercular bone abscess. The doctor, as well as his brothers and other medical practitioners, tried all sorts of remedies and even an operation, but there was no relief for the little boy's suffering. Friends and relations advised the boy's parents to seek divine aid and recommended they go to Sai Baba, who was known to have cured incurable cases. They placed the boy before Him and pleaded humbly and respectfully, imploring Him to save their son. The merciful Baba comforted them saying, **"Those who resort to this Masjid shall never suffer anything in this life and to the end of time.** Be now carefree. Apply udi on the abscess and within one week, he will recover. Believe in God. This is no masjid, but Dwarawati. He who enters here will soon get health and happiness and his sufferings will come to an end." The boy was made to sit before Baba, who moved His hands on the affected area and cast His loving glances on the child. With the application of the udi, the boy began to recover and was all right in a few days. The parents then left Shirdi with their son, thanking Baba for the cure which was effected by the udi and Baba's grace. Hearing all of this, the doctor, who was the boy's uncle, was

quite amazed and desired to see Baba. He intended to stop at Shirdi on his way to Bombay where he had some business, but at Malegaon and Manmad, someone spoke to him against Baba and poisoned his thoughts. He therefore dropped the idea of visiting Shirdi and went to Bombay directly. The doctor had wanted to spend the rest of his leave at Alibag, but at Bombay he heard a voice on three successive nights crying out, "Still you disbelieve me?" Then the doctor changed his mind and resolved to go to Shirdi. He had, however, to attend to a case in Bombay of an infectious fever which had showed no signs of abatement, so he thought his Shirdi trip would be postponed. He then had an idea to propose a test and said to himself, "If the patient becomes better today, I shall start for Shirdi tomorrow." The wonder is that exactly at the time the determination was taken, the patient's fever began to abate and the temperature returned to normal. The doctor then left for Shirdi, as per his determination, took Baba's darshan, and prostrated before Him. Baba gave him such amazing experiences that he became His devotee. The doctor stayed there for four days and returned home with Baba's udi and blessings. Within a fortnight, he was transferred on promotion to Bijapur. His nephew's case had given him an opportunity for seeing Baba and this visit engendered in him a never failing love of Sai Baba.

### Dr. Pillay

Dr. Pillay was an intimate bhakta of Sai Baba. He was very much liked by Baba, who always called him bhau (brother). Baba talked with him at various times, consulted him in matters, and wanted him at His side. At one time, Dr. Pillay suffered from a bad case of guinea worms. He said to Kakasaheb Dixit, "The pain is most excruciating and unbearable. I prefer death to it. I know this pain is to repay some past karma, but please go to Baba and tell Him to stop the pain and transfer the working out of my past karma to ten future lives of mine."

Dixit went to Baba and related Dr. Pillay's request. Baba, being moved by the request, said to Dixit, "Tell him to be fearless. Why should he suffer for ten future lives? In ten days he can work out the sufferings and consequences of his past karma. While I am here to give him temporal and spiritual welfare, why should he pray for death? Bring him here on someone's back and let us work out and finish his sufferings once and for all."

The doctor was brought in his painful condition and was seated on Baba's right side where Fakir Baba always sat. Baba gave him His bolster and said, "Lie here calmly and be at ease. **The true remedy comes after the result of past actions has been suffered and is over.** Our karma is the cause of our happiness and sorrow, therefore, put up with whatever comes to you. Allah (God) is the sole dispenser and protector. Always think of

Him. He will take care of you. Surrender to His feet with body, mind, wealth and speech, i.e. completely, and then see what He does.” Dr. Pillay then said Nanasaheb had put a bandage over his leg, but that he had found no relief. “Nana is fool,” Baba replied. “Take off that bandage or else you will die. A crow will come now and peck at you, and then you will recover.”

While this conversation was going on, Abdul, who always cleaned the masjid and trimmed the lamps, turned up. While he was attending his work of trimming the lamps, his foot accidentally fell upon the stretched leg of Dr. Pillay. The leg was already swollen and when Abdul’s foot fell upon it and pressed it, all seven guinea worms were squeezed out at once. The pain was unbearable and Dr. Pillay cried out loudly. After some time, he calmed down and began to sing and cry alternately. Then Baba remarked, “See, our bhau is alright now and singing.” Dr. Pillay then inquired as to when the crow would come and peck at him. Baba replied, “Did you not see the crow? He won’t come again. Abdul was the crow. Now go and rest yourself in the wada and you will be alright soon.”

By the application of the udi to the wound and by drinking it mixed in water, and without taking any other treatment or medicine, the disease was completely cured in ten days as Baba predicted.

### **Shama’s Sister-in-Law**

Shama’s younger brother, Bapaji, was staying near Sawul well. His wife was attacked with bubonic plague. She had a high fever and two bubos in her groins. Bapaji ran to Shama, who was in Shirdi, and asked him to come and help. Shama was frightened and ran to Baba, prostrated himself before Him, invoked His aid, and requested him to cure his sister-in-law. He also asked Baba for permission to go to his brother’s house. Then Baba said, “Don’t go there at this late hour of night. Send her udi. God is our father and master. She will be alright. You may go there in the morning and return immediately afterward.”

Shama had full faith in Baba’s udi. It was sent with Bapaji. The udi was applied on the bubos and some of it was mixed with water and given to the patient to drink. As soon as Shama’s sister-in-law drank the mixture, she began to perspire profusely. Her fever abated and she fell into a good sleep. The next morning Bapaji was surprised to see his wife well and refreshed, with no fever and no bubos. When Shama, with Baba’s permission, went to his sister-in-law’s the next morning, he was happily surprised to see her at the hearth preparing tea. On questioning his brother, he learned that Baba’s udi cured her completely

in one night. Thus, Shama then realized the significance of Baba's words, "Go there in the morning and return immediately."

After having his tea, Shama returned to Shirdi and, after greeting Baba, said, "Deva, what is this play of Yours? You first raise a storm and make us restless, and then calm it down and ease us." Baba replied, "You see, mysterious is the path of action. Though I do nothing, they hold Me responsible for the actions which take place due to adrishta (destiny). I am only their witness. The Lord is the sole Doer and Inspirer. He is also most merciful. Neither am I God, nor the Lord. I am His obedient servant and remember Him often. **He, who casting aside his egoism, thanks the Lord and trusts Him entirely, will have his shackles removed and will obtain liberation.**"

### **Irani's Daughter**

The following describes the experience of an Irani gentleman. His young daughter had convulsions every hour. When the fits occurred, she would lose her power of speech, her limbs would shrink and contract, and she would fall down senseless. No remedy gave her any relief. A friend recommended Baba's udi to her father and asked him to get some from Kakasaheb Dixit at Vile Parle, a suburb of Bombay. The Irani gentleman, having procured the udi, mixed it with water and gave it to his daughter to drink every day. At first, the convulsions, which were occurring hourly, slowed down to every seven hours, and after a few days, they stopped totally and the daughter completely recovered.

### **Harda Gentleman**

An old gentleman from Harda was suffering from a stone in his bladder. Such stones are generally removed by a surgical operation and he was advised to undergo such. He was old and weak and could not consider having the surgery. His suffering, however, soon came to an end in another way. The inamdar of that town happened to come there at that time. He was a devotee of Baba and always had a substantial amount of udi with him. On the recommendation of his friends, the elderly gentleman's son got some of this udi and, mixing it with water, gave it to his father to drink. Within five minutes, the udi was assimilated, the stone was dissolved and passed through his urine, and the old man was relieved.

### **Bombay Lady**

A woman of the Kayastha Prabhu caste in Bombay always suffered terrible pain at

her delivery. She was very much frightened each time she became pregnant and did not know what to do. Shri Rama Maruti of Kalyan, who was a devotee of Baba, advised her husband to take her to Shirdi for a painless delivery. When she next became pregnant, both husband and wife came to Shirdi, stayed there for a few months and worshiped Baba, receiving the benefit of His company.

When the time came for her to deliver, there was, as usual, obstruction in the passage from the womb. She began to suffer labor pains and was frightened, but she began to pray to Baba for relief. In the meantime, some neighboring women arrived and, after invoking Baba's aid, gave her a udi mixture to drink. In five minutes, the woman delivered safely and painlessly. The issue was still born according to its fate, but the mother, who was relieved of her anxiety and pain, thanked Baba for the safe delivery and remained ever grateful to Him.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XXXV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Tested and Found Not Wanting - Kaka Mahajani's Friend and Master - Bandra Insomnia Case - Bala Patil Newaskar**

This chapter continues to describe the importance of udi. It also gives two cases in which Baba was tested and found not wanting. These cases will be taken up first.

#### **Preliminary**

In spiritual matters or endeavors, sectarianism is the greatest bar to our progress. Those who believe that God is without form are heard saying that to believe God is with form is an illusion. They believe that saints are only human beings and question why they should bow before them or offer them dakshina. People belonging to other sects also raise objections, questioning why they should bow and offer allegiance to saints other than their own satgurus. Objections regarding Sai Baba were made. Some people complained that when they went to Shirdi, Sai Baba asked dakshina of them. They questioned whether saints should collect money in this fashion, reasoning that if they did so, where was their sainthood? There are, however, instances where men went to Shirdi to scoff, but remained there to pray. Two such instances are given below.

#### **Kaka Mahajani's Friend**

A friend of Kaka Mahajani worshiped God without form and was averse to idolatry. Out of curiosity, he agreed to go to Shirdi with Kaka Mahajani on two conditions: that he would neither bow to Baba nor pay Him dakshina. Kaka agreed to these conditions and they both left Bombay on a Saturday night, reaching Shirdi the next morning.

As soon as they put their feet on the steps of the masjid, Baba, looking at the friend from a small distance, addressed him in sweet words as follows, "Oh, welcome sir." The tone that uttered these words was a very peculiar one. It exactly resembled the tone of the friend's father. It reminded him of his departed father and generated a thrill of joy through his body. What an enchanting power the tone had. Being surprised, the friend said, "This is no doubt the voice of my father!" Then he immediately went up to Baba, forgetting his resolution, and placed his head upon His feet.

Sai Baba asked for dakshina twice, once in the morning and again at noon at the time of their taking leave, but He asked it only from Kaka, and not from his friend. The friend whispered to Kaka, "Baba asked for dakshina from you twice. I am with you, why does He omit me?" "You ask Baba Himself," Kaka replied. Then, just as Baba asked Kaka what his friend was whispering, the friend asked Baba Himself whether he should pay any dakshina. Baba replied, "You had no intention to pay, so you were not asked, but if you want to pay now, you may." The friend then paid Rs.17/ as dakshina, the same amount that Kaka paid, and Baba addressed him with a few words of advice, "You should destroy the Teli's wall (sense of difference) between us so that we can see and meet each other face to face." Baba then allowed them to depart. Though the weather was cloudy and threatening, Baba assured them a safe journey and they reached Bombay safely according to Baba's grace.

### **Kaka Mahajani's Master**

Kaka was the manager in the firm of Thakkar Dharamsey Jethabhai, a solicitor of Bombay. Both Kaka and his employer were on close terms. Mr. Thakkar knew that Kaka often went to Shirdi, stayed there for several days, and then returned after receiving Baba's permission. Out of curiosity, and just to test Baba, Mr. Thakkar decided to go to Shirdi with Kaka during the Shimga holidays. As Kaka's return was uncertain, Mr. Thakkar also took another man with him as an associate. The three started out together and Kaka bought two seers of raisins (dried grapes with seeds) on the way for presentation to Baba. They reached Shirdi in due time and went to the masjid for darshan.

Babasaheb Tarkhad was at the masjid and Mr. Thakkar asked him why he came to see Baba. "For darshan," Tarkhad replied. Mr. Thakkar then asked if miracles took place there. Tarkhad replied it was not his attitude to see miracles, but the earnest intentions of the bhaktas were satisfied by Baba. Kaka then prostrated before Sai Baba and gave Him the raisins. Baba ordered them to be distributed. Mr. Thakkar received a few of them. He did not like raisins and was advised by his doctor not to eat them without washing and



cleaning them, so he was in a bind. He did not want to eat them, nor could he reject them. To keep up formalities, he put them in his mouth, but did not know what to do with the seeds. He could not spit them out on the floor of the masjid, so he pocketed them and thought if Baba was really a saint, how could He be ignorant of his dislike of the raisins and why would He force them on him? Just as this thought arose in his mind, Baba gave him some more raisins, but Mr. Thakkar did not eat them and just held them in his hand. Baba then told him directly to eat the raisins. He obeyed, and found to his surprise, they were all seedless. Mr. Thakkar had wanted to see a miracle, and here was one! He knew Baba read his thoughts and, as per his wish, had converted the raisins (with seeds) into seedless grapes. What a wonderful power, but Mr. Thakkar decided to test Baba further and asked Tarkhad, who was sitting near him and who also received some raisins, what kind of grapes he received. Mr. Tarkhad replied, "The variety with seeds." Mr. Thakkar was still more surprised to hear this. Then, to confirm his growing faith, Mr. Thakkar thought that if Baba was a real saint, the raisins should now be given to Kaka Mahajani first. Reading this thought as well, Sai Baba ordered that distribution should be commenced with Kaka. These two actions were sufficient proof for Mr. Thakkar and satisfied his doubts.

Shama (Madhavarao Deshpande) then introduced Mr. Thakkar as Kaka's master. Baba said, "How could he be his master? He has a different master altogether." Kaka appreciated this reply. Then, forgetting his resolve, Mr. Thakkar saluted Baba and returned to the wada.

After the noon arati was over, they all went to the masjid to receive permission from Baba to take their leave for their departure. Shama spoke for all of them and then Baba said:

"There was a fickle minded gentleman. He had health and wealth and was free from both physical and mental afflictions, but he took on needless anxieties and burdens and wandered here and there with no peace of mind. Sometimes he dropped these burdens and at other times carried them about with him. His mind knew no steadiness. Seeing his state, I took pity on him and said, "Now please keep your faith on any one place (point) you like. Why roam about like this? Stay quietly in one place." Mr. Thakkar realized at once the description was exactly that of himself.

Thakkar also wished that Kaka would be allowed to return with him, although it was not expected that Kaka would be permitted to leave Shirdi so soon. Baba read this thought and permitted Kaka to return with his master, giving Mr. Thakkar still another example as proof of Baba's capacity to read another's mind.

Baba then asked Kaka for Rs. 15/ as dakshina and received it. To Kaka, He said, “If I take one rupee as dakshina from anyone, I have to return it tenfold to him. I never take anything gratis. I never ask anyone indiscriminately. I only ask and take from him whom the Fakir (my guru) points out. If anyone is still indebted to the Fakir from the past, money is received from him. The donor gives, i.e. sows his seeds, only to reap a rich harvest in the future. Wealth should be the means to work out dharma. If it is used for personal enjoyment, it is wasted. Unless you have given it before, you do not get it now, so the best way to receive, is to give. The giving of dakshina advances vairagya (non-attachment) and thereby bhakti and jnana. Give one and receive tenfold.”

Hearing these words, Mr. Thakkar put Rs. 15/ into Baba’s hand, forgetting his resolve not to do so. He thought he did well in coming to Shirdi, as all his doubts were dissolved and he learned so much.

Baba’s skill in handling such cases was unique. Although he caused these miracles to happen, He was totally nonattached to them. Whether or not anyone greeted Him and whether or not anyone gave Him dakshina, was all the same to Him. He disrespected none. He felt no pleasure because He was worshiped, and no pain because He was disregarded. He transcended the pairs of opposites, viz. pleasure and pain, etc.

### **Insomnia Case**

A Kayastha Prabhu gentleman of Bandra suffered from insomnia for a long time. As soon as he laid himself down for sleep, his departed father appeared to him in his dream, and abused and scolded him severely. This disturbed his sleep and made him restless throughout the night. This went on every night and the man did not know what to do. One day, he consulted a devotee of Baba who recommended udi as the only infallible remedy he knew. The devotee gave the man some udi and asked him to apply a little of it to his forehead before going to bed and to keep the udi packet under his pillow. The gentleman tried the remedy and found, to his great surprise and joy, that he got sound sleep with no disturbance of any kind. He continued using the remedy and always remembered Sai. He then got a picture of Sai Baba which he hung on the wall near his pillow. He started worshiping it every day, and on Thursdays, he would offer a garland and naivedya. The gentleman did well and completely forgot his former trouble.

### **Balaji Patil Newaskar**

This man was a great devotee of Baba. He rendered most excellent and detached service. Every day he swept and kept clean all the passages and streets in Shirdi through which Baba passed during his daily routine. (After Balaji Newaskar, this work was done equally well by a female devotee named Radha Krishna Mai, and after her, by Abdula.)

When Balaji reaped his corn every year, he brought the whole quantity to Shirdi and presented it to Baba. He returned home with whatever corn Baba gave back to him and maintained himself and his family with it. Balaji followed this practice for many years, and his son continued after him.

Balaji had two wives and some children. Sometimes they all went to Shirdi from Newase to receive Baba's darshan. Baba not only bestowed His grace on them, He bought saris and other clothes which He gave them with His blessings.

### **Power and Efficacy of Udi**

Once, it so happened that on the day of Balaji's anniversary, a certain number of guests were invited for dinner. When dinner time arrived, it was discovered that three times the number of people invited showed up. Mrs. Newaskar was in a bind. She thought the food that had been prepared would not suffice for the people assembled, and that if it fell short, the honor of the family would be at stake. Her mother-in-law comforted her by saying, "Don't be afraid. It is not ours, but Sai's food. Put udi into each dish of food, then cover every vessel with cloth and serve the dishes without taking the lids away. Sai will save us from ignominy." She did as she was advised and it was found to their surprise and joy that not only did the food suffice for all, but plenty of it remained after serving. "As one feels intently, so he realizes accordingly" was proved in this case.\*

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\* A similar instance was reported by a friend, Mr. B.A. Chougule, First Class Sub-Judge and a great devotee of Baba. In February, 1943, there was a puja festival and public dinner at Karjat (District Ahmednagar). About five times the number of people invited came for that celebration and all were fed. To the astonishment of all, it was found that by Baba's grace, there was no shortage of food.

\*\* A similar incident where Baba appeared as a serpent at Coimbatore (South India) on Thursday, January 7, 1943 at 3:30 p.m. has been published in *Sai Sudha* (Volume III, No. 7-8, January, 1943, page 26). There, the serpent heard the bhajan, accepted flowers and milk, allowed itself to be seen by thousands of people, and was photographed. Baba's picture was placed near the serpent for the photograph. Both the picture and the serpent came out very well in the photo. For details and for the photo, the readers are requested to refer to the above mentioned number of *Sai Sudha*.

### **Sai Appearing as Serpent**

Raghu Patil of Shirdi went to visit Balaji Patil at Newase. That evening, he saw a serpent that had entered the cowshed hissing. The cattle were all afraid and had begun to move about. Everyone in the house was frightened except Balaji, who thought it was Sai Baba appearing in the form of a serpent. Without being in the least afraid, he brought a cup of milk and placed it before the serpent saying, “Baba, why do You hiss and make such noise? Do you want to frighten us? Take this cup of milk and drink it with a calm mind.” So saying, he sat close by unperturbed. The other people present were frightened and did not know what to do. In a short time, the serpent disappeared. No one knew where it went. It was not found even though a thorough search was made in the cowshed.\*\*

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XXXVI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Wonderful Stories of (1) Two Goa Gentleman (2) Mrs. Aurangabadkar

This chapter relates the wonderful stories of two gentlemen from Goa and of Mrs. Aurangabadkar of Sholapur.

#### Two Gentlemen

Two gentlemen from Goa came to Shirdi to receive Sai Baba's darshan. They entered the masjid and prostrated before Baba. Although they both came together, Baba asked only one of them to give Him Rs. 15/ as dakshina, the sum of which was paid willingly. The other man voluntarily offered Rs. 35/, but this sum was rejected by Baba to the astonishment of all. Shama, who was present, asked Baba, "What is this? Both gentlemen came together, but one's dakshina You have accepted, and the other's, though voluntarily paid, You have refused? Why this difference?" Baba replied, "Shama, you know nothing. I take nothing from anyone. The Masjidmai (the presiding deity of the masjid) calls for the debt, the donor pays it and becomes free. Have I any home, property, or family to look after? I require nothing. I am ever free. Debt, enmity, and murder have to be atoned for - there is no escape." Baba then continued in His characteristic way as follows:

"At first, this gentleman was poor and took a vow to God that he would pay his first month's salary if he found employment. He got an appointment at Rs. 15/ per month. Then, he steadily received promotions. His wages increased to Rs. 30/, then Rs. 60/, then 100/, 200/, and ultimately, to Rs. 700/ per month. In his prosperity, he forgot the vow he had taken. The force of his karma has driven him here and I have asked that amount (Rs.

15/) from him as dakshina.”

Baba then told another story. “While wandering by the seaside, I came to a huge mansion and sat on its verandah. The owner gave Me a good reception and fed Me sumptuously. He showed Me a neat, clean place to sleep near a cupboard. I slept there and while I was sound asleep, the man removed a laterite slab, broke the wall, entered in, and scissored off all the money from My pocket. When I woke up, I found that Rs. 30,000/ had been stolen. I was greatly distressed and sat weeping and moaning. The money was in currency notes and I thought that the Brahmin had stolen it. I lost all interest in food and drink and sat for a fortnight on the verandah, bemoaning My loss. After the fortnight was over, a passing fakir saw Me crying and inquired as to the cause of My sorrow. I told him everything. He said, “If you act according to my bidding, you will recover your money. Go to a fakir, (I shall give his whereabouts), and surrender yourself to him. He will get your money back. In the meanwhile, give up your favorite food until you recover your money.” I followed the fakir’s advice and got my money. Then, I left the wada and went to the seashore, where a steamer was docked. I could not go on board, however, as it was crowded. It was then a good natured peon interceded for me, and luckily, I was able to get on the boat. The steamer then brought me to another shore where I caught a train and came to the masjidmai.”

After Baba finished the story, He asked Shama to arrange for the guests to have something to eat, so Shama took them home and fed them dinner. During the meal, Shama said to the guests that Baba’s story was rather mysterious, as He had never gone to the seaside, never had any money (Rs. 30,000/ as described), never traveled, and never lost any money nor recovered it. Shama inquired whether they understood the story and grasped its significance. The guests were deeply moved and were shedding tears. With choking voices they said that Baba was omniscient, infinite, the One (Para Brahma) without a second. They explained that the story Baba told was exactly their story. Baba had described what had already taken place. They thought it amazing how Baba knew this and said they would provide all the details after the meal.

Thus, the guests finished their dinner and, while chewing betel leaves, began to tell their stories. One of them said the following:

“My native place is a hill station on the ghats. I went to Goa to earn my living by securing a job and took a vow to God Datta that if I found employment, I would offer Him my first month’s wages. By His grace, I got an appointment of Rs.15/ per month, and with time, continued to get promotions and higher wages, just as Baba had described. I forgot

all about my vow. Baba has just reminded me of it in this way and has sought Rs.15/ from me. It is not dakshina as one might think it to be, but rather, a repayment of an old debt and fulfilment of a long forgotten vow.”

## **Moral**

Baba never, in fact, actually begged any money, nor allowed His bhaktas to beg. He regarded money as a danger or bar to spiritual progress and did not allow His bhaktas to fall into its clutches. An incident with Bhagat Mhalasapati illustrates this point. Mhalasapati was very poor and could hardly make both ends meet. Baba never allowed him to make any money, nor gave him anything from the dakshina He collected. Once, a kind and liberal merchant named Hansraj gave a large amount of money to Mhalasapati in Baba’s presence, but Baba did not allow him to accept it.

## **The tale of the second guest**

After the first guest finished explaining how Baba helped him fulfill his forgotten vow by collecting Rs.15/ as dakshina from him, Shama’s second dinner guest began his story.

“My Brahmin cook was serving me faithfully for thirty-five years. Unfortunately, he fell into bad ways, his mind changed, and he robbed me of my treasure. By removing a laterite slab from my wall where my cupboard stands, he snuck in while all were asleep and stole all my accumulated wealth (Rs. 30,000/) in currency notes. I do not know how Baba knew to mention that exact amount. Night and day I cried and cried. My inquiries came to naught. I spent two weeks in great anxiety.

One day, as I sat on the verandah, sad and dejected, a passing fakir noted my condition and inquired as to its cause. After I related the recent upsetting events to him, he told me about an avalia (saint) named Sai Baba who lives in Shirdi, Kopergaon Taluka. The fakir told me to make a vow to Baba, give up eating my favorite food, and to say to Him, “I have given up eating this food until I take Your darshan.” I then took a vow to give up eating rice and said, “Baba, I will eat rice only after recovering my property and after taking Your darshan.”

Fifteen days passed. The Brahmin cook, of his own accord, came to me, returned my money and apologized, saying, “I went mad and acted rashly. I now place my head on your feet and beg your forgiveness.” Thus, everything ended well. The fakir, who met me and helped me, was not seen again. An intense desire to see Sai Baba, whom the fakir

pointed out to me, arose in my mind. I definitely thought that the fakir who came all the way to my house was none other than Sai Baba. He, who saw me and helped me to retrieve my lost money, only wants to lead us on the path of spiritual progress.

I was overjoyed when I recovered my stolen property and, being so excited, I forgot all about my vow to receive Sai Baba's darshan. Then one night when I was in Colaba, I saw Sai Baba in my dream. This reminded me of my promised visit to Shirdi. I went to Goa and from there wanted to leave for Shirdi by taking a steamer to Bombay en route. When I arrived at the harbor, I found the steamer was crowded and the captain would not allow me to board. Suddenly, a peon, who was a stranger to me, interceded on my behalf and I was permitted to board the steamer, which then brought me to Bombay. From there, I took a train and came to Shirdi. All this happened through the grace of Sai Baba, who is all pervading and all knowing!

The second guest continued, "How great our good fortune that Baba got our money back and drew us here to Himself! You Shirdi folk must be infinitely superior and more fortunate than we! Baba has played, laughed, talked and lived with you for so many years! Your store of merits must be infinite, for they brought Baba to Shirdi. Sai is Datta. It is He who ordered the vow and who gave me a seat in the steamer which brought me here. Thus, I have received proof of Baba's omniscience and omnipotence."

### **Mrs. Aurangabadkar**

A lady from Sholapur, the wife of Sakharam Aurangabadkar, had no issue during her twenty-seven years of marriage. Having made a number of vows to Gods and Goddesses for a child and being still unsuccessful, she became almost hopeless. As a last attempt in this matter, she came to Shirdi with her stepson Vishwanath and stayed there for two months, serving Baba. Whenever she went to the masjid, she found it full and Baba surrounded by devotees. She wanted to see Baba alone, fall at His feet, open her heart, and pray for an issue, but no suitable opportunity presented itself. Ultimately, she requested Shama to intercede for her when he would be alone with Baba. Shama told her Baba's darbar was open, but still, he would make the request for her and ask the Lord to bless her. He asked her to sit in the open courtyard at the time of Baba's meals and to be ready with a coconut and some joss sticks, then, when he would beckon her, she should come up.

One day after dinner, while Shama was rubbing Baba's wet hands with a towel, Baba pinched Shama's cheek. Shama, feigning anger retorted, "Deva, is it proper for you to



pinch me like this? We don't want such a mischievous God who pinches us so. Are we Your dependents and is this the fruit of our intimacy?" Baba then answered, "Oh Shama, during the seventy-two generations you were with Me, I never pinched you until this moment, and now you resent My touching you." Shama answered, "We want a God who will ever give us kisses and sweets to eat. Let our worship of Your lotus feet be ever strong and by Your grace strengthen our faith." Baba then said, "Yes, I have indeed come for that. I have much love and affection for you and will ever bless you."

Then Baba went up and took His seat. Shama beckoned to the lady. She came up, bowed, and presented the cocoanut and joss sticks. Baba shook the cocoanut, which was dry. The kernel within rolled and made a noise. Baba said, "Shama, this inside is rolling. Do you know what it says?" Shama replied, "This woman prays that a child might be similarly rolling and quickening in her womb. So give her the cocoanut with Your blessing."

Baba, "Will the cocoanut give her any issue? How foolish people are to fancy such things."

Shama, "I know the power of Your word and blessing. Your word will give her a series of children. You are wrangling right now and not giving a real blessing."

This parley went on for a while. Baba repeatedly ordering the cocoanut to be broken and Shama pleading for the gift of the unbroken fruit to be given to the lady. Finally, Baba yielded saying, "She will have an issue." "When?", asked Shama. "In twelve months," was the reply. The cocoanut was thereafter broken into two parts, one was eaten by the two, the other was given to the lady.

Then Shama said to the lady, "Dear madam, you are a witness to these words. If within twelve months you do not get an issue, I will break a cocoanut against this Deva's head and drive Him out of this masjid. If I fail in this, I will not call myself Madhav. You will soon realize what I say."

The lady delivered a son in one year's time and the son was brought to Baba when he was five months old. Both the husband and wife prostrated themselves before Baba and the grateful father (Mr. Aurangabadkar) paid a sum of Rs. 500/ which was spent in constructing a shed for Baba's horse, Shyamakarna.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XXXVII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Chavadi Procession

In this chapter, Hemadpant, after making some preliminary observations on some points of Vedanta, describes the Chavadi procession.

#### Preliminary

Blessed is Sai's life. Blessed is His daily routine. His ways and actions are indescribable. Sometimes He was intoxicated with Brahmanand (divine joy) and at other times, content with Self knowledge. At all times, while doing so many things, He was ever detached. Though sometimes He seemed quite actionless (doing nothing), He was not idle or dozing. He always abided in His own Self. Though He looked calm and quiet as the placid sea, He was deep and unfathomable. Who can describe His ineffable nature? He regarded men as brothers, and women as sisters and mothers. He was a perfect and perpetual celibate, as everyone knows. May the understanding (knowledge) we gain in His company last long unto death. Let us ever serve Him with wholehearted devotion to His feet. Let us see Him (God) in all beings and let us ever love His name.

Hemadpant, after making some lengthy dissertations on some topics of Vedanta, which he actually considered a digression, goes on to describe the Chavadi procession.

### Chavadi Procession

Baba's dormitory has already been described. One day He slept in the masjid, and

the next, in the Chavadi, a small building near the masjid containing two rooms. This alternate sleeping pattern went on until Baba's mahasamadhi.

By the tenth of December, 1909, devotees began offering regular worship service to Baba in the Chavadi. This will now be described with His grace.

On alternate evenings, when it was time for Baba to proceed from the masjid to the Chavadi, people would gather in the mandap (courtyard) of the masjid and sing bhajans for a few hours in front of Baba. A beautiful ratha (small car) was parked behind them, and a tulsi vrindavan was to their right. Both men and women devotees sang bhajans and some played various musical instruments - tal, chiplis and kartal, mridang, khanjiri and ghol. Sai Baba was the magnet who drew all the devotees to Him there.

Outside in the open, some devotees trimmed their divatyas (torches), some decorated the palanquin, and still others stood with cane sticks in their hands and uttered cries of victory to Baba. The corner of the masjid was decorated with buntings and all around the masjid, rows of burning lamps shed their light. Baba's horse, Shyamakarna, stood beautifully decorated outside.

After everything was prepared, Tatya Patil would then arrive with a group of men and ask Baba to be ready. (Tatya called Baba by the name of Mama. Their relationship was extremely close.) Baba would sit quietly in His place until Tatya helped Him get up by putting his arm under Baba's arm pit. Then Baba, wearing His usual kafni, would put His satka (short stick) under His arm pit, and, after taking His chilim (tobacco pipe) and tobacco, and throwing a cloth over His shoulder, was ready to start the procession. Tatya would then throw a beautiful golden embroidered shela over Baba's body. After this, Baba would move a small bundle of fuel sticks lying nearby with His right toe and, after extinguishing the burning lamp with His right hand, He would start for the Chavadi.

All sorts of musical instruments sounded - tashe, band and horns, and mridang. Fire works burst into different colors. Men and women singing Baba's name and doing bhajan to the accompaniment of mridang and veena would then start walking in a procession. Some devotees danced with joy and some carried various flags and banners.

The bhalgars announced Baba's name when He reached the steps of the masjid. Two people, each holding a chavaris, stood on either side of Baba, while some of the devotees fanned Him. Folded cloths covered the path on which Baba would walk in procession to the Chavadi. Tatyaba held Baba's left hand, Mhalasapati held His right, and Bapusaheb

Jog held the chhatra (umbrella) over Baba's head. Thus, the procession marched solemnly toward the Chavadi. Shyamakarna, Baba's fully decorated red horse, lead the way and behind him were waiters, carriers, musical players and the crowd of devotees. Harinama (the name of the Lord) was chanted to the accompaniment of music and the skies were filled with the name of Sai. In this manner, the procession reached the corner whereby the Chavadi came into view and all the people that had participated in the procession were pleased and delighted.

As Baba stood at the corner facing the Chavadi, He shone with a peculiar luster. Baba's face appeared to glitter like dawn, bathed in the glory of the rising sun. Majestically, Baba stood facing north, deep in concentration, as if He was calling someone. All the musical instruments rang out as Baba moved His right arm up and down for some time. At that same time, Kakasaheb Dixit came forward with a silver plate containing flowers besmeared with gulal (red powder) and lightly tossed them on Baba's body every so often. The musical instruments sounded their very best at this juncture and Baba's face beamed with steady radiance and beauty. Everyone breathed in this splendor and beauty.

As the festivities continued, Mhalasapati would often begin to dance, as if possessed by some deity, but all were surprised to see that Baba's concentration was not in the least disturbed. The procession would then continue, as Tatya Patil, holding a lantern in his hand, walked along Baba's left side and Bhagat Mhalasapati, holding the hem of Baba's garment in his hand, walked along Baba's right side. It was indeed a beautiful procession and an expression of devotion. Everyone flocked together to see such a divine sight. Baba would walk very slowly, His bhaktas following on both sides with love and devotion. Thus, with joy pervading the whole atmosphere, the procession reached the Chavadi. (That scene and those days are now gone, never more to be seen, but solace and comfort can be had by remembering and visualizing that scene and sight.)

The Chavadi was fully decorated with mirrors, many sorts of lamps, and a clean, white ceiling. Upon reaching the Chavadi, Tatya would spread an asan with a bolster, put a beautiful anagarkha (coat) on Baba, and make Him sit there. The devotees would then worship Him in various ways. They put a mugut (crown) with a tuft above on His head and placed garlands of flowers and jewels around His neck. Baba's forehead was marked with musk mixed vertical lines and a dot as Vaishnava devotees do. His devotees would stare at Him in wonder. They would change His head dress now and then and hold it aloft on the head, fearing Baba might throw it away. But Baba knew the heart of them all and meekly submitted to all their methods without objection. With all these decorations, Baba looked wonderfully splendid.

Standing near Baba, Nanasaheb Nimonkar held the chhatra (umbrella) with its beautiful pendants which moved in a circle with its supporting stick. Bapusaheb Jog washed Baba's feet in a silver dish and offered arghya and worship with due formalities. He then besmeared Baba's arms with sandal paste and offered tambul (betel leaves). Baba sat on the asan (gadi) while Tatyaba and others would bow and worship His feet. Other devotees on either side of Baba waved chamars and fans. Shama would then prepare the chillim and hand it over to Tatyaba, who would draw a flame out of it with his breath and present it to Baba. After Baba had His smoke, the chillim was given to Bhagat Mhalasapati and then passed around to all. Blessed was the inanimate chillim. It first had to undergo many ordeals of penance, i.e. being treaded by pot makers, being dried in the open sun, and being burnt in fire, but when all was finished, it received the good fortune of being touched by Baba's hand and lips.

After the smoking of the chillim, devotees would put garlands of flowers around Baba's neck and give Him nosegays and bunches of fragrant flowers. Although Baba was entirely without attachment to all these necklaces of jewels, garlands of flowers and various decorations, He allowed these displays out of love for His devotees, knowing it pleased them to show devotion in this way.

The final part of the ceremony in the Chavadi was conducted by Bapusaheb Jog as he waved the arati over Baba, observing all formalities, while musical instruments sounded their auspicious tunes. When the arati was over, the devotees would bow before Baba one by one and, after taking His leave, return home. At times, when Tatyaba, after offering chillim, attar (scent) and rose water, stood up to depart, Baba would say to him lovingly, "Guard Me. Go if you like, but return sometime at night and inquire after Me." After replying in the affirmative, Tatyaba would leave the Chavadi and go home. Baba would then prepare His bed. He would arrange 50 or 60 white chaddars, one upon another, to make His bed, and then He would lie down to rest.

We shall also take rest now and close this chapter with a request to the readers that they should remember Sai Baba and His Chavadi procession every night before they retire to go to bed.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XXXVIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Baba's Handi - Disrespect of Shrine - Kala or Hodge Podge - Cup of Buttermilk**

In the last chapter, we described Baba's Chavadi procession. In this one, we take up Baba's handi (cooking pot) and some other subjects.

#### **Preliminary**

Oh blessed satguru Sai, we bow to You, who have given happiness to the whole world, provided for the welfare of the devotees, and removed the afflictions of those who have resorted to Your holy feet. As the protector and savior of bhaktas who surrender themselves to You, You have incarnated in this world to bless people and help them. The liquid essence of Pure Self was poured into the mold of Brahman and out of this has come the crest jewel of saints - Sai. Sai is Atmaram Himself. He is the abode of perfect divine bliss. Having attained mastery of this life, and being detached and without desire, Sai makes His devotees free and desireless.

#### **Baba's Handi**

Different sadhanas (means of accomplishments) are prescribed in the scriptures for different ages. Tapa (penance) is recommended for Krita age, jnana (knowledge) for Treta age, yajna (sacrifice) for Dwapara age, and dana (charity) for Kali (present) age. Of all the charities, giving food is the best one. We are much perturbed when we get no food at noon. Other beings feel the same way under similar circumstances. Knowing this, he who

gives food to the poor and hungry, is the best donor or charitable person. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, "Food is Brahma; from food all creatures are born, and having been born, by food they live, then having departed, into food again they enter." When an atithi (uninvited guest) comes to our door at noon, it is our bounden duty to welcome him by giving him food. Other kinds of charities, viz. giving away wealth, property and clothes etc., require some discrimination, but in the matter of food, no such consideration is necessary. Let anyone who comes to the door at noon be served forthwith. If lame, crippled, blind or diseased paupers come, they should be fed first, and then the able bodied persons and relations afterwards. The merit of feeding the former is much greater than that of feeding the latter. Other kinds of charity are imperfect, but anna-dana (giving of food) is most meritorious.

Now let us see how Baba prepared food and distributed it.

It has been stated in previous chapters that Baba required very little food for Himself, and that which He needed, was obtained by begging from a few houses. However, when Baba decided to distribute food to every one, He made all the preparations from beginning to end Himself. He depended on no one and troubled none in this matter.

First, He would go to the bazar and buy all the ingredients needed for cooking, (e.g. corn, flour, spices etc.) for cash. Then, in the open courtyard of the masjid, He would build a big hearth and, after lighting a fire underneath, He would place a handi over it containing the proper measure of water. (There were two handis. The small one could hold enough food to provide for 50 people, and the large handi could provide enough food for 100 people.) Sometimes Baba cooked 'mitthe chaval' (sweet rice) and at other times 'pulava' with meat. Frequently, while boiling varan (soup), He added small balls of thick or flat breads of wheat flour. (He did all the grinding Himself.) Baba would also pound spices on a stone slab and put the thin pulverized spices into the cooking pot. He took great pains to make the dishes very palatable. He prepared 'ambil' by boiling jawari flour in water and mixing it with buttermilk. He would then distribute this ambil along with the other food to everyone.

Baba had his own unusual method of checking to see if the food was properly cooked or not. He would roll up the sleeve of His kafni and put His bare arm directly into the boiling cauldron without the least fear and churn the whole mass from side to side and up and down. There was never any burn mark resulting from this method, nor did Baba ever show any fear or pain. When the cooking was over, Baba brought pots from the masjid and had them duly consecrated by the moulvi.



First, Baba sent part of the food as prasad to Mhalasapati and Tatya Patil, then He served the remaining contents with His own hand to all the poor and helpless people, allowing them to have their fill.

Blessed and fortunate indeed are those people who received food prepared by Baba and who were served by Him as well.

Someone may raise a doubt here and ask, “Did Baba distribute vegetable and animal food as prasad alike to all His devotees?” The answer is simple. Those who were accustomed to eat animal food were given food from the handi as prasad, and those who were not so accustomed, were not allowed to touch it. Baba never created in them any wish or desire to indulge in this food. There is a principle well established that when a guru gives anything as prasad, the disciple who thinks and doubts whether it is acceptable or otherwise, goes to perdition. In order to see how any disciple has absorbed this principle, Baba at times proposed tests. For instance, on an Ekadashi day, Baba gave some rupees to Dada Kelkar and asked him to go in person to Koralkha to buy some mutton. Dada Kelkar was an orthodox Brahmin and kept all orthodox manners in his life. He knew that offering wealth, grain and clothes etc. to a satguru was not enough because **implicit obedience to and prompt compliance with His order was the real dakshina** that pleased Him most. In view of this, Dada Kelkar dressed himself and started out for Koralkha to get the mutton. As he started to leave, Baba called him back and said, “Don’t go yourself, but send someone.” Dada then sent his servant Pandu for the purpose. Then, seeing Dada’s servant starting to leave, Baba asked Dada to call him back and cancelled the request.

On another occasion, Baba asked Dada Kelkar to see if the salty ‘pulava’ (mutton dish) was done. Dada replied casually that it was alright. Baba then said to him, “Neither have you seen it with your eyes, nor tasted it with your tongue, so how can you say it was good? Take the lid off the pot and have a look.” Saying this, Baba caught Dada’s arm and thrust it into the pot and added, “Take out your arm and use a ladle and put some of the pulava in the dish without caring for your orthodoxy and without blustering.” Thus, Baba’s ways were inscrutable, for in reality, He would never force His orthodox disciple to eat forbidden food and defile himself thereby.

The handi cooking went on for some time until 1910, at which time it stopped thereafter. As stated previously, Das Ganu, through his kirtans, spread the fame of Baba far and wide in the Bombay region and people from that part of the country began to flock

to Shirdi. Thus, Shirdi became a holy place of pilgrimage. The devotees brought with them various articles for presentation and offered various dishes of food as naivedya. There was such an abundance of naivedya offered by them that fakirs and paupers could eat their fill and there would still be some surplus left.

Before stating how naivedya was distributed, we shall refer to Nanasaheb Chandorkar's story describing Baba's regard and respect for local shrines and deities.

### **Nanasaheb's Disrespect of a Shrine**

People could only draw inferences or guess as to whether Sai Baba was a Brahmin or a Moslem. He actually belonged to no caste. No one knew definitely when He was born, what community He was from, or who His parents were. The question became, could He be a Moslem or a Brahmin? If He were a Moslem, why did He keep a dhuni fire ever burning in the masjid? Why was there a tulsi vrindavan? Why did He allow the blowing of conches and ringing of bells and the playing of musical instruments? Thus, if He were a Moslem, how could He have allowed all the different forms of Hindu worship? Furthermore, how could He have pierced ears and how could He have spent money from His pocket for repairing Hindu temples? Moreover, Baba never tolerated the slightest disrespect to Hindu shrines and deities.

Once Nanasaheb Chandorkar came to Shirdi with his 'sadu' (the husband of his sister-in-law), Mr. Biniwalle. They went to the masjid, sat before Baba, and while they were conversing, Baba suddenly became angry with Nanasaheb and said, "You have been with me for such a long time. How could you behave like this?" At first, Nanasaheb did not understand what Baba meant and so he humbly requested Him to explain. Baba then asked him what he did when he arrived in Kopergaon and afterward, how did he travel to Shirdi. Nanasaheb at once realized his mistake. Nana's brother-in-law, Mr. Biniwalle, a Datta bhakta, usually worshiped the shrine of Datta on the banks of the Godavari at Kopergaon on his way to Shirdi, but this time Nana dissuaded his relation from going to the shrine so as to avoid delay, thus allowing them to continue directly on to Shirdi. Nana confessed all this to Baba and then went on to tell Him that while bathing in the Godavari, a big thorn went into his foot and gave him quite a bit of trouble. Baba pointed out to Nana that the thorn was the slight punishment he met for his disregard of the Datta shrine and warned him to be more careful in the future.

Now to revert to the description of the distribution of naivedya.

### **Kala (hodge-podge)**

After the arati was over and Baba had sent all the people away with udi and blessings, He went inside the masjid and sat with His back to the nimbar for meals. A row of bhaktas sat on each side of Baba. The bhaktas who brought naivedya thrust their dishes containing a variety of food such as puri, mande, polis, basundi, sanza, fine rice etc. inside the masjid where Baba had sat down to partake of His meal. They hoped they would receive prasad from Baba that had been consecrated by His touch.

All the dishes of food received were mixed in a hodge podge and placed before Baba. He offered it all to God and consecrated it. Portions of this were then given to the people (bhaktas) who were waiting outside and the rest was served to the inner two rows of bhaktas, where Baba was seated at their center. Everyone ate as much as they wanted of the blessed food.

Every day Baba would ask Shama and Nanasaheb Nimonkar to serve the consecrated food to all the people sitting inside the masjid and to look after their individual needs and comforts. This task they did very carefully and willingly, and so every morsel of the food partaken provided nutrition and satisfaction. Such sweet and consecrated food it was - ever auspicious and ever holy.

### **Cup of Buttermilk**

Once when Hemadpant had just eaten his fill in the masjid, Baba offered him a cup of buttermilk. Its white appearance pleased him, but he was afraid there would be no space inside his stomach for it. He did, however, take a sip which proved very tasty. Seeing his faltering attitude, Baba said, "Drink it all. You won't get another such opportunity hereafter." Hemadpant drank the entire cup of buttermilk and later found Baba's words were prophetic, as He passed away soon after.

Ed. Note: Now readers, we certainly have Hemadpant to thank because he not only drank the cup of buttermilk, but he has supplied us with an abundance of nectar in the form of Baba's leelas. Let us drink cups and cups of this nectar and be satisfied and happy.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XXXIX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Baba's Knowledge of Sanskrit

### His Interpretation of a Verse from the *Bhagavad Gita* - Construction of the Samadhi Mandir

This chapter (39) deals with Baba's interpretation of a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita*. As some people objected that Baba did not know Sanskrit and the interpretation was Nanasaheb Chandorkar's, Hemadpant wrote another chapter (No. 50 in the original Marathi book) refuting that objection. The subject matter in that chapter 50, written in Marathi, is included here.

### Preliminary

Blessed is Shirdi and blessed is Dwarkamai where Shri Sai lived and moved until He took mahasamadhi. Blessed are the people of Shirdi whom He obliged and for whom He came such a long distance. Shirdi was a small village at first, but it attained great importance because of its contact with Baba, thus becoming a tirtha (holy place of pilgrimage). Equally blessed are the women of Shirdi and blessed is their whole and undivided faith in Sai Baba. They sang the glories of Baba while bathing, grinding, pounding corn and doing other household work. Blessed is their love, for they sang sweet songs which calmed and pacified the minds of the singers and listeners.

### Baba's Interpretation

No one believed that Baba knew Sanskrit. One day He surprised everyone by giving a fine interpretation of a verse from the *Bhagavad Gita* to Nanasaheb Chandorkar.

A brief account about this matter was written by Mr. B.V. Deo, retired mamlatdar, and this was published in Marathi in 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine, Volume IV, Sphuta Vishaya, page 563. Short accounts of the same are also published in *Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings* page 61, and in *The Wondrous Saint Sai Baba*, page 36, both of which were written by B.V. Narshimhaswami. Mr. B.V. Deo has also given an English version of this in his statement dated September 27, 1936 which was published on page 66 of *Devotee's Experiences, Part III*. This was also published by Narsimhaswami. As Mr. Deo received first hand information about this subject from Nanasaheb Chandorkar himself, that version will now be recounted.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar was a good student of Vedanta. He had read the *Bhagavad Gita* with commentaries and was proud of his knowledge of such. He fancied Baba knew nothing of Sanskrit and all of these matters. So one day Baba pricked his bubble. These were the days before crowds flocked to Baba, when Baba had solitary talks at the masjid with such devotees.

On one occasion, Nana was sitting near Baba massaging His legs and muttering something.

Baba: "Nana, what are you mumbling to yourself?"

Nana: "I am reciting a sholka in Sanskrit."

Baba: "What shloka?"

Nana: "From the *Bhagavad Gita*."

Baba: "Utter it loudly."

Nana then recited *Bhagavad Gita* IV-34 which is as follows:

Tadviddhi Pranipatena Pariprashnena Sevaya,

Upadekshyanti Te Jnanam Jnaninastattwadarshinah

Baba: "Nana, do you understand it?"

Nana: "Yes."

Baba: "If you do, then tell me."

Nana: "It means this: " By making sashtanga namaskar, i.e. prostration, questioning the guru, and serving him, one will learn about jnana. Then, those jnanis who have attained real knowledge of the Sadvastu (Brahma) will give you upadesha (instruction) in jnana."

Baba: "Nana, I do not want this sort of collected purport of the whole stanza. Give me each word, its grammatical force and meaning."

Then Nana explained it word by word.

Baba: "Nana, is it enough merely to make prostration?"

Nana: "I do not know any other meaning for the word 'pranipata' then making prostration."

Baba: "What is pariprashna?"

Nana: "Asking questions."

Baba: "What does 'prashna' mean?"

Nana: "The same (questioning)."

Baba: "If 'pariprashna' means the same as prashna (question), why did Vyasa add the prefix 'pari'?"

Was Vyasa off his head?"

Nana: "I do not know of any other meaning for the word 'pariprashna'."

Baba: "Seva, what sort of 'seva' is meant?"

Nana: "Just what we are always doing."

Baba: "Is it enough to render such service?"

Nana: "I do not know what more is signified by the word 'seva'."

Baba: "In the next line - 'upadekshyanti te jnanam' - can you read it so as to substitute any other word in lieu of jnanam?"

Nana: "Yes".

Baba: "What word?"

Nana: "Ajnanam".

Baba: "Taking that word (instead of jnana) - is any meaning made out of the verse?"

Nana: "No, Shankara Bhashya gives no such construction."

Baba: "Never mind if he does not. Is there any objection to using the word 'ajnana' if it gives a better sense?"

Nana: "I do not understand how to construe the sentence by placing 'ajnana' in it."

Baba: "And why does Krishna refer Arjuna to Jnanis or Tattwadarshis to do his prostration, interrogation and service? Was not Krishna a Tattwadarshi, in fact, jnana itself?"

Nana: "Yes, He was, but I do not understand why he referred Arjuna to Jnanis."

Baba: "Have you not understood this?"

Nana was humiliated. His pride was knocked on the head. Then Baba began to explain:

(1) **It is not enough merely to prostrate before the Jnanis.** We must make **SARVASWA SHARANAGATI** (complete surrender) to the satguru.

(2) **Prashna means questioning and pariprashna denotes proper questioning.** Mere questioning (prashna) is not enough. The question must not be asked with any improper motive to trap the guru and catch mistakes in the answer, or out of idle curiosity. Pariprashna, i.e. (proper questioning) out of a real quest for knowledge to

destroy doubt and ignorance,  
must be made with devotion, sincerity, humility and with a serious view to achieve  
spiritual  
progress and moksha.

(3) **Seva** is not rendering service while still retaining the feeling that one is free to offer or refuse service. One must feel that he is not the master of the body. The body is the guru's and exists merely to render service to him. If this is done, the satguru will then show the disciple what the jnana referred to in the previous stanza is.\*

Nana: "But what is meant by saying that a guru teaches ajnana?"

Baba: "How is jnana upadesha (i.e. imparting of realization) to be effected? Destroying ignorance is jnana. (Cf.verse - ovi 1396 of *Jnaneshwari* commenting on *Bhagavad Gita* 18-66 says, "Removal of ignorance is like this, Oh Arjuna, if dream and sleep disappear, you are yourself. It is like that." Also ovi 83 on *Bhagavad Gita* V - 16 says, "Is there anything different or independent in jnana besides the destruction of ignorance?" Expelling darkness means creating light. Destroying duality (dwaita) means nonduality (adwaita). Whenever we speak of destroying dwaita, we speak of adwaita. Whenever we talk of destroying darkness, we talk of creating light. If we are to realize the adwaita state, the feeling of dwaita in ourselves has to be removed. That is the realization of the adwaita state. Who can speak of adwaita, while remaining in dwaita? One must enter into the state of adwaita, to know it and realize it.

Again, the shishya (disciple), like the satguru, is really the embodiment of jnana. The difference between them lies in the level of consciousness, Self-realization, sattva (beingness) and aishwarya yoga (divine powers). The satguru is nirguna, sat-chit-ananda. Although he has indeed taken human form to elevate mankind and raise the world, his real nirguna nature is not destroyed thereby even a little bit. His beingness (or reality), divine power and wisdom remain undiminished. The disciple, too, is in fact, of the same swarupa. But his true nature is overlaid by the effect of the samskaras of innumerable births in the shape of ignorance, which hides from his view that he is Shuddha Chaitanya (see *Bhagavad Gita* Chapter V - 150). As stated therein, the disciple has the impression, "I am a jiva, a creature, humble and poor". The guru has to root out these offshoots of ignorance and has to give upadesha or instructions. To the disciple, held spell bound for endless generations by the ideas of his being a creature, humble and poor, the guru imparts in hundreds of births and teachings, "You are God. You are mighty and opulent." The disciple then begins to realize a bit that he is one with God. **The perpetual delusion**



**under which the disciple is laboring, that he is the body**, that he is a creature (jiva) or ego, **that God (Paramatma) and the world are different from him**, is an error inherited from innumerable past births. From actions based on these incorrect beliefs, the disciple has derived his joy, sorrows, and mixtures of both. To remove this delusion, this error, this root ignorance, he must start the inquiry shown him through the guru's upadesh. How did the ignorance arise? Where is it?

The following are instances of ajnana:

- 1 - I am a jiva (creature).
- 2 - The body is the soul (I am the body).
- 3 - God, world and jiva are different.
- 4 - I am not God.
- 5 - Not knowing that the body is not the soul.
- 6 - Not knowing that God, world and jiva are one.

Unless these errors in comprehension are exposed to his view, the disciple cannot learn the reality of what is God, jiva, the world, and the body, how they are inter-related, and whether they are different from each other, or are one and the same. To teach him the correct understanding and destroy his ignorance, the satguru imparts jnana or ajnana. Why should jnana be imparted to the jiva, (who is) a jnanamurti? **Upadesh is merely to show him his error and destroy his ignorance.**

Baba added: (1) Pranipata implies surrender. (2) Surrender must be of body, mind, and wealth. (3) Why should Krishna refer Arjuna to other jnanis? Satbhakta takes everything to be Vasudev (*Bhagavad Gita* VII - 19, i.e. any guru will be Krishna to the devotee) and the guru takes the disciple to be Vasudev. Krishna treats both as His prana and atma (*Bhagavad Gita* 7 - 18, commentary of Jnanadev on this). As Sri Krishna knows that there are such bhaktas and gurus, he refers Arjuna to them so that their greatness may increase and be known.

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\*ed. note: When the disciple rises to a level of all encompassing love for the satguru, body consciousness dissolves and there exists only a space of bliss and love in oneness with the satguru.

### **Construction of the Samadhi Mandir**

Baba never talked, nor ever made any fuss about the things which He wanted to accomplish, but He so skillfully arranged the circumstances and surroundings, that the people were surprised at the slow, but sure result attained. The construction of the samadhi mandir is an instance in point. Shriman Bapusaheb Booty, the famous multimillionaire of Nagpur, lived in Shirdi with his family. Once, an idea arose in his mind that he should have a building of his own there. Sometime after this, while he was sleeping in Dixit's Wada, he had a vision. Baba appeared in his dream and ordered him to build a wada of his own with a temple. Shama, who was sleeping there, had a similar vision. When Bapusaheb awoke, he saw Shama crying and asked him why he was crying. The latter replied that in his vision, Baba came close to him and ordered distinctly, "Build the wada with the temple. I shall fulfill the desires of all." Shama continued that upon hearing the sweet, loving words of Baba, he was over-powered with emotion. His throat was choked, his eyes were brimming with tears and he began to cry. Bapusaheb was surprised to see that both their visions tallied. Being a rich and capable man, he decided to build a wada there and drew up a plan with Madhavarao Deshpande (Shama). Kakasaheb Dixit also approved of it. When it was placed before Baba, He, too, sanctioned it immediately.

The construction work was then duly started and under the supervision of Shama, the ground floor, the cellar and the well were completed. Baba, on his way to and from Lendi, also suggested certain improvements. Further work was entrusted to Bapusaheb Jog, and while it was going on, an idea struck Bapusaheb Booty's mind that there should be an open room, or platform, in the center of which, the image of Murlidhar (Lord Krishna with flute) should be installed. Booty asked Shama to refer the matter to Baba and get His consent. Shama then asked Baba about the matter just as He was passing by the wada. Upon hearing Shama, Baba gave His consent saying, "After the temple is complete, I will come there to stay," and staring at the wada, He added, "After the wada is complete, we shall use it ourselves. We shall live, move and play there, embrace each other, and be very happy." Then Shama asked Baba whether this was the auspicious time to begin the foundation work of the central room of the shrine. Baba answered in the affirmative. Shama then got a cocoanut, broke it, and started the work.

In due time, the work was completed and an order was given for making a good image of Murlidhar. But before it was ready, a new thing turned up. Baba became seriously ill and was about to pass away. Bapusaheb became very sad and dejected, thinking that if Baba passed away, his wada would not be consecrated by the holy touch of Baba's feet and all his money (about a lac of rupees) would be wasted. But the words,

“Place Me in the wada,” which Baba uttered just before His passing away, consoled not only Bapusaheb, but one and all.

In due time Baba’s holy body was placed and preserved in the central shrine meant or designed for Murlidhar and Baba Himself became Murlidhar.

The wada thus became the samadhi mandir of Sai Baba. His wonderful life is unfathomable.

Blessed and fortunate is Bapusaheb Booty in whose wada lies the holy and pure body of Shri Sai Baba.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Prominent Devotees of Sai Baba



Abdollah  
Jan



narayan ashram



Rasane, savalram



nachne



Rasane, Dattatreya  
Damodar



Sagun Meru Naik

# Chapter XL

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Stories of Baba

#### **(1) Attending Mrs. Deo's Udyapan Ceremony as a Sannyasi with Two Others (2) Attending the Shimga party in Hemadpant's House in the Form of His Picture**

In this chapter we describe two stories: (1) How Baba attended the udyapan ceremony of Mr. B.V. Deo's mother at his house in Dahanu and (2) How Baba attended the Shimga dinner party in Hemadpant's house in Bandra.

### Preliminary

Blessed is Shri Sai Samartha, who gives instructions in both temporal and spiritual matters to His devotees and makes them happy by enabling them to achieve the goal of their life. Sai who, by placing His hand on His bhaktas' heads, transfers His powers to them, destroying their sense of differentiation and duality, thus making them attain Self-realization. Sai, with no sense of duality or difference, embraces the bhaktas who prostrate themselves before Him. For just as rivers merge into the sea and become one with the mighty ocean, so Sai becomes one with His bhaktas, giving them His power as He embraces them.

It follows from this, that he who sings the leelas of God's bhaktas is equally, or more dear to Him, than one who only sings the leelas of God. Now to revert to the stories of this chapter.

### Mrs. Deo's Udyapan Ceremony

Mr. B.V. Deo was the mamlatdar in Dahanu (Thana District). His mother had

observed twenty-five or thirty different vows and an udyapan (concluding) ceremony in connection with such was to be performed. This ceremony included the feeding of one to two hundred Brahmins. Mr. Deo set a date for the ceremony and wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog asking him to request Sai Baba to attend the ceremonial dinner, as without His attendance, the ceremony would not be duly completed. Bapusaheb Jog read the letter to Baba. Baba noted carefully the pure hearted invitation and said, **“I always think of he who remembers Me. I require no conveyance, carriage, tanga, train, nor airplane. I run and manifest Myself to him who lovingly calls Me.** Write him a pleasing reply that the three of us (the trio), Myself, you (Bapusaheb Jog) and a third person will go and attend the dinner.” Mr. Jog thus informed Mr. Deo of what Baba had said. Mr. Deo was extremely pleased, but knew Baba never went to any place except Rahata, Rui and Nimgaon in person. He also thought nothing was impossible for Baba, as He was all pervading and He might suddenly come in any form He likes to fulfill His words.

A day before this, a sannyasi with Bengali dress and professing to work for the cause of the protection of cows, came to the station master at Dahanu to collect subscriptions. The station master told him to go into town and see the mamlatdar (Mr. Deo) and with his help, collect funds. Just then, the mamlatdar happened to arrive. The station master then introduced the sannyasi to him. Both sat talking on the platform. Mr. Deo told him that a subscription list for some other charitable cause had already been opened by the leading citizen, Rao Saheb Narottam Shetti, and so it would not be good to start another subscription list at this time. It would be better if he would come back in two to four months. Hearing all this, the sannyasi left the place.

About a month later, the sannyasi arrived in a tanga and stopped in front of Mr. Deo's house at about 10 a.m. Deo thought he had come for subscriptions again. Seeing him busy with the preparations for the ceremony, the sannyasi said he had come not for money, but for meals. Deo responded, “Alright, I'm very glad. You are most welcome in my home.” The sannyasi then said, “Two lads are with me.” Deo replied, “Well, bring them too.” Then, as dinner would not be served for two hours, Deo inquired where he should send for them. The sannyasi replied that would not be necessary, as he would come at the proper time, and so Deo asked him to come at noon.

At exactly twelve noon, the trio came and joined the dinner party, then, after the meal, they left. After the udyapan ceremony was finished, Deo wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog complaining of Baba's breach of promise. Jog went to Baba with the letter, but before it was opened, Baba spoke, “Ah, he says I promised I would come, but did not keep My word. Inform him that I did attend his dinner, along with two others, but he failed to

recognize Me. Why then did he call Me at all? Tell him that he thought the sannyasi came to ask for subscription money. Did I not remove his doubt in that respect and did I not say that I would come with two others? Did the trio not come in time and take their meals? To keep My words, I would sacrifice My life. I would never be untrue to My words.” This reply gladdened Jog’s heart and he communicated the entire reply to Deo. As soon as Deo heard the explanation, he burst into tears of joy, but at the same time he took himself to task mentally for vainly charging Baba. Deo wondered how he was deceived by the sannyasi’s prior visit when he came for subscriptions, and too, how he failed to catch the significance of the sannyasi’s words that he would come with two others for meals.

This story clearly shows that when devotees surrender themselves completely to their satguru, He sees that the religious functions in their houses are duly executed and complied with all the necessary formalities.

### **Hemadpant’s Shimga Dinner**

Now let us take another story which shows how Baba appeared in the form of His picture and fulfilled the desire of His devotee.

In 1917 on the morning of the full moon day, Hemadpant had a vision. Baba appeared to him in his dream in the form of a well dressed sannyasi, woke him up, and said that He would come to his home for meals that day. This awakening constituted a part of the dream. When Hemadpant fully awoke, he saw no Sai nor any sannyasi, but when he began to recall the dream, he remembered every word the sannyasi uttered in his dream. Though he was in contact with Baba for seven years, and even though he always meditated on Baba, he never expected Baba to come to his house for meals. However, being quite pleased with Baba’s words, he informed his wife that on this holy day, a sannyasi guest was coming for meals and extra rice should be cooked. His wife then inquired as to who the guest was and from whence was he coming. Not to lead her astray or to cause any misunderstanding, Hemadpant told her the truth about the dream he had had. She doubtingly asked whether it was possible that Baba would go from Shirdi, where He had special food, to visit them in Bandra, where He would receive only coarse food. Hemadpant then assured her that Baba might not come in person, but He might attend in the form of a guest, and so they would lose nothing if they cooked some more rice.

Thus, after the discussion, preparations for the dinner went on and the meal was ready at noon. The Holika worship was completed and the leaves (dishes) were spread and

arranged with 'rangoli' marks around them. Two rows were set up with a central seat between them for the guest. All the members of the family - sons, grandsons, daughters and sons-in-law etc. came and occupied their proper seats and the serving of the various articles commenced. While that was being done, everyone was watching for the guest, but none turned up, even though it was past noon. The door was then closed and chained and the anna shuddhi (ghee) was served. This was a signal to start eating.

The formal offering to the vaishwadeva (fire) and naivedya to Shri Krishna were also over and the members were about to begin to eat, when foot steps in the staircase were distinctly heard. Hemadpant immediately opened the door and saw two men standing there: (1) Alli Mahomed and (2) Moulana Ismu Mujavar. These two gentlemen, seeing that meals were ready and all the family members were about to begin eating, apologized to Hemadpant and requested him to excuse their interference. They said, "You left your seat and came running to us while the others are waiting for you. Please take this package now and we will relate all the wonderful details about it to you later at your convenience." The package, which was wrapped in an old newspaper cover, was then placed on the table. Hemadpant uncovered the packet and saw, to his great wonder and surprise, a nice big picture of Sai Baba. Upon seeing it, Hemadpant was so moved, tears ran down his cheeks and his hair stood up all over his body. In reverence, he bent down and placed his head on the feet of Baba in the picture. He thought that Baba had blessed him by that miracle. Then, out of curiosity, he asked Alli Mahomed where the picture had come from. Mahomed replied he had bought it in a shop and that he would relate all the details about it at another time, because Hemadpant needed to go back and join his guests who were waiting for him in the dining hall.

Hemadpant thanked Alli Mahomed and Moulana Mujavar and bade them goodbye. He then placed the picture on the central seat reserved for the guest, and after offering naivedya, the whole party began to eat. Everyone was extremely pleased to see the beautiful form in the picture and all were filled with awe as to how it all happened.

Thus, this story described how Sai Baba kept and fulfilled His words which he had uttered to Hemadpant in a dream. Sai Baba's ways are inscrutable and help us develop nishta (faith) and saburi (patience).

\* \* \* \* \*

The story of Sai Baba's picture, with all its details, viz. how Alli Mahomed obtained it and why he bought it and gave it to Hemadpant, is reserved for the next chapter.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XLI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Story of the Picture - Stealing the Rags and Reading of Jnaneshwari

At the close of the last chapter, the account of Baba's picture being brought to Hemadpant's house just in time to be placed on the seat of the guest of honor during the Shimga dinner was depicted. Nine years after that incident, Alli Mahomed met Hemadpant and recounted the following story.

One day, while wandering in the streets of Bombay, he bought a picture of Sai Baba from a street hawker. He then framed it and hung it on a wall in his house in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay. As Alli Mahomed loved Baba greatly, he took darshan of the holy picture every day.

Then, three months before Alli brought this very picture to Hemadpant's home, he had an operation for an infected abscess on his leg. He went to his brother-in-law's home in Bombay, where he lay in pain while recuperating. Thus, for three months, Alli's house in Bandra was closed with no one living there. Only the pictures of the famous Baba Abdul Rahiman, Moulanasaheb Mahomed Hussain, Sai Baba, and Baba Tajudin were in the empty house, as well as some pictures of other living saints. Nevertheless, the wheel of time did not spare even these. (It would seem that holy pictures, too, have their ins and outs (births and deaths), for all the pictures in Alli Mahomed's home met their fate except Sai Baba's.) How Baba's picture escaped, no one has been able to explain until now. The following explanation shows the all pervasiveness and omnipresence of Sai and His inscrutable power.

Alli Mahomed received a small picture of Saint Baba Abdul Rahiman from Mahomed

Hussain Thariya many years ago. He gave it to his brother-in-law, Noor Mahomed Peerbhoy, who kept it on his table for eight years. After some time, Noor Mahomed took the picture to a photographer and had it enlarged to life size. He then distributed copies amongst his relations and friends, including Alli Mahomed, who placed the picture on a wall in his Bandra house.

Noor Mahomed, Alli's brother-in-law, was a disciple of Saint Abdul Rahiman, and when he went to present the picture to his guru in an open darbar, the guru became enraged and drove him out. Noor Mahomed felt very upset and dejected. He thought not only had he lost so much of his money in having the picture reproduced, but more importantly, he incurred his guru's displeasure and anger, as his guru did not like image worship.

Noor Mahomed then took the enlarged picture with him to Appolo Bunder, and, hiring a boat, took the picture out to sea and disposed of it. Afterward, he requested his friends and relations to return their copies, and after getting all six of them back, Noor had a fisherman throw them into the Bandra Sea.

At the time of this incident, Alli Mahomed was staying in his brother-in-law's house. He was told by Noor that his suffering would come to an end if he would dispose of all his pictures of the saints. Hearing this, Alli Mahomed sent his mehta (manager) to his Bandra house to pack up all the pictures of the saints and throw them into the sea.

Two months passed and Alli Mahomed recuperated and returned home. He was very surprised to find Baba's picture still on the wall in his house, just as it had been before. He did not understand how his mehta could have taken away all the holy pictures except this one. He immediately took it down and put it in his cabinet, fearing that if his brother-in-law saw it, he would do away with it. While he was thinking of who he would give the picture to for safe keeping, Sai Baba inspired him to consult the moulana Ismu Mujavar and abide by his opinion. Alli, therefore, saw the moulana and told him everything.

After mature consideration, they both decided the picture should be presented to Annasaheb (Hemadpant) and that he would protect it well. Having reached a decision, the two men set out for Hemadpant's home and presented him with the picture just in the nick of time during his Shimga dinner.

This story illustrates how Baba knew all the past, present, and future events and how skillfully He pulled the wires and fulfilled the desires of His devotees.

The following story shows how very much Baba liked those devotees who took real interest in spiritual matters and how He removed all their difficulties and made them happy.

### **Stealing the Rags and Reading of *Jnaneshwari***

Mr. B.V. Deo, who was mamlatdar of Dahanu, Thana District, wished for a long time to be able to read *Jnaneshwari*, (the well known Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* by Jnaneshwar), along with the other scriptures he read. Although he was able to read one chapter daily of the *Bhagavad Gita* and some portions of other spiritual books, he was fraught with obstacles whenever he would try to read *Jnaneshwari*. Thus, he took three months' leave, went to Shirdi, and from there went to his home at Poud for a rest. Although Deo had no difficulty reading his other spiritual books, when he opened *Jnaneshwari*, some evil or stray thoughts would crowd his mind and thwart his effort. Try however he might, he was not able to read even a few lines of *Jnaneshwari* with ease. He, therefore, mentally resolved to wait until Baba would create love for the book in him and would directly order him to read it. After receiving Baba's blessing, he would then begin the reading.

Then, in February of 1914, Deo and his family went to Shirdi. There, Babusaheb Jog asked him whether he was reading *Jnaneshwari* every day. Deo replied he was desirous of reading it, but had not been successful, so he decided to wait until Baba ordered him to read the book before commencing such. Babusaheb Jog then advised him to take a copy of the book and present it to Baba and to start the reading after it was consecrated and returned by Him. Deo replied he did not want to resort to this device. He explained that **as Baba knows his heart and inner thoughts**, would He not know of his desire, and satisfy it by giving him a clear order to read?

Later, Deo saw Baba and offered Him one rupee as dakshina. Baba asked for Rs. 20/, which Deo then gave. That night, Deo saw Balakram and inquired how he had secured Baba's devotion and grace. Balakram told him he would describe everything the next day after the arati.

When Deo went for darshan the next day, Baba asked for Rs. 20/, which he willingly gave. As the masjid was crowded, Deo went to the side and sat in a corner. Baba asked him to come close and sit with a calm mind, which Deo did. Then, after the arati was over and the men had dispersed, Deo again saw Balakram and asked him about his previous

history - what Baba had told him and how he had been taught meditation. Just as Balakram was going to reply, Baba sent Chandru, a leper devotee, to call Deo to Him. When Deo approached Baba, He asked him when and with whom and about what was he just talking. Deo replied he had spoken with Balakram who had described Baba's fame. Baba then asked for Rs. 25/ as dakshina, which Deo gladly gave. Next, Baba took Deo inside the masjid, and said vehemently, "You stole My rags without My knowledge." Deo denied all knowledge of the rags, but Baba asked him to make a search. He searched, but found none.

Baba became angry and said, "There is no one here. You are the only thief, so grey haired and old. You came here for stealing." Then, Baba lost His temper, became terribly wild, and shouted all sorts of abuses and scoldings. Deo remained silent as he watched Baba, all the while thinking he might get a beating as well. After about an hour or so, Baba asked Deo to go to the wada. Deo returned to the wada and told Jog and Balakram all that happened.

That afternoon, Baba sent for all three men and said that His words might have pained the old man (Deo), but as Deo had committed the theft, He could not but speak out. Baba then asked again for Rs.12/. Deo collected the amount, paid it, and prostrated before Baba.

Baba, looking directly at Deo, said, "Go on daily reading the Pothi (*Jnaneshwari*). Go and sit in the wada, read something regularly every day, and while reading, explain the portion read to all with love and devotion. I am sitting here ready to give you the whole gold embroidered shella (valuable cloth), but you go to others to steal rags. Why should you get into the habit of stealing?"

Deo was very pleased to hear these words, because Baba had directly ordered him to start to read Pothi (*Jnaneshwari*). Deo felt he got just what he wanted and that he would now be able to read the book with ease. He prostrated one more time before Baba, saying he surrendered himself to Him, and then asked to be treated like a child and given help with understanding the reading. Just at that point, Deo realized what Baba had meant by 'stealing the rags'. The questions he had asked Balakram constituted the 'rags' and Baba did not like this behavior. Baba was ready to answer any questions he had, but He did not like him making unnecessary inquiries of others. That is why He harassed and scolded him. Deo now thought that this scolding was really to teach him that Baba was ready to fulfill his desires and there was no use asking others for answers in vain. Thus, Deo took these scoldings as flowers and blessings and went home satisfied and contented.

The matter did not end here. Baba did not stop with only issuing an order to read. Within a year, Baba went to Deo and inquired about his progress. On Thursday morning, April 2, 1914, Baba gave Deo a dream vision in which Baba sat on the upper floor of Deo's home and asked him whether he understood the Pothi. Deo answered, "No." Baba replied, "Then when are you going to understand?" Deo burst into tears and said, "**Unless You shower Your grace, the reading is mere worry and the understanding is even more difficult.** I am certain of this." Baba then replied, "While doing your reading, you made haste. Read it before Me, in My presence." Deo answered, "What shall I read?" Baba said, "Read adhyatma (spiritualism)." Just as Deo went to get the book in the dream, he awakened, opened his eyes and felt ineffable joy and bliss. Deo treasured this vision.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XLII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Baba's Passing Away**

#### **Previous Indication - Averting Deaths of Ramachandra Dada Patil and Taty Kote Patil - Charity to Laxmibai Shinde - Last Moment**

This chapter describes the passing away of Sai Baba.

#### **Preliminary**

The stories given in the previous chapter have shown that the light of the guru's grace removes our fear of the mundane existence, opens the path of salvation, and turns our misery into happiness. If we always remember the feet of the satguru, our troubles come to an end, death loses its sting, and the misery of this mundane existence is obliterated. Therefore, those who care for their welfare should carefully listen to these stories of Sai Samarth, which will purify their minds.

#### **Previous Indication**

The readers up until now have learned the stories of Baba's life. Let them now read most attentively about Baba's passing away.

Baba got a slight attack of fever on September 28, 1918. The fever only lasted for two or three days, but afterward, Baba gave up His food and thereby grew weaker and weaker. On the 17<sup>th</sup> day, i.e. Tuesday, October 15, 1918, Baba left his mortal coil at about 2:30 p.m. (Vide Professor G.G. Narke's letter to Dadasaheb Khaparde dated November 5, 1918, published in 'Sai Leela' magazine, page 78, first year). Two years prior to this, i.e. in 1916, Baba gave an indication of His passing away, but no one understood it at that time. It was as follows:

On the Vijayadashami (Dasara) day, Baba went into a wild rage in the evening when people were returning from Seemollanghan (crossing the border or limits of the village). After taking off His headdress, kafni and langota etc., He tore them and threw them in the dhuni right in front of everyone present. Fed by this offering, the fire in the dhuni began to burn brighter and Baba shone brighter still. There He stood, stark naked. With His burning red eyes He shouted, "You fellows, now have a look and finally decide whether I am a Moslem or a Hindu." Everyone was trembling with fear and no one dared approach Baba. After some time, Bhagoji Shinde, the leper devotee of Baba, went boldly near Him and succeeded in tying a langota (waist band) around His waist while saying, "Baba, what is all this? Today is the Seemollanghan, i.e. Dasara Holiday." Baba, striking the ground with His satka said, "This is My Seemollanghan (crossing the border)."

Baba did not cool down til 11:00 p.m. and the people doubted whether the Chavadi procession would ever take place that night. After an hour, Baba resumed His normal condition and, dressing Himself as usual, attended the Chavadi procession as described before. By this incident, Baba gave a suggestion that Dasara was the proper time for Him to cross the border of life, but none understood its meaning.

Baba also gave another indication as follows:

### **Averting Deaths of Ramachandra and Tatya Patil**

Sometime after this, Ramchandra Patil became seriously ill. He suffered greatly. He tried all sorts of remedies, but finding no relief, despaired of his life and prepared himself for his last moment. Then one midnight, Baba suddenly stood near his pillow. Patil held His feet and said, "I have lost all hope of life. Please tell me definitely when I shall die." Merciful Baba said, "Don't be anxious. Your hundi (death warrant) has been withdrawn and you will soon recover, but I am afraid for Tatya Patil. He will pass away on Vijayadashami of shaka 1840. (1918 A.D.) Do not divulge this to anyone, nor to him, for he will be terribly frightened."

Ramachandra Dada Patil recovered, but he felt nervous about Tatya's life, for he knew that Baba's word was unalterable and that Tatya would breathe his last within two years. He kept this hint secret, telling no one except Bala Shimpi, the tailor. Only these two men, Ramachandra Dada Patil and Bala Shimpi, were in fear and suspense regarding Tatya's life.



Ramachandra Dada soon left his bed and was back on his feet again. Time passed quickly. The month of Bhadrapad of shaka 1840 (1918) was ending and Ashwin was in sight. True to Baba's word, Tatya fell sick and was bed ridden, so he could not come for Baba's darshan. Baba was also down with fever. Tatya had full faith in Baba and Baba in Lord Hari, who was His protector. Tatya's illness began to grow from bad to worse and he could not move at all, but he always remembered Baba. The predicament of Baba began to grow equally worse. The day which had been predicted by Baba for Tatya Patil's passing, i.e. Vijayadashami, was impending and both Ramachandra Dada and Bala Shimpi were terribly frightened about Tatya. With their bodies trembling and perspiring with fear, they thought that as predicted by Baba, Tatya's end was nigh. Vijayadashami dawned and Tatya's pulse began to beat very slow. He was expected to pass away shortly, but a curious thing happened. Tatya remained, his death was averted, and Baba passed away instead. It seemed as if there was an exchange. People said that Baba gave up His life for Tatya. Why did Baba do this? He alone knows, as His ways are inscrutable. It seems, however, that in this incident, Baba gave a hint of His passing away, substituting Tatya's name for His.

The next morning, October 16<sup>th</sup>, Baba appeared in a dream to Das Ganu at Pandharpur and said to him, "The masjid collapsed. All the oilmen and grocers of Shirdi\* teased me a lot, so I left the place. I came here to inform you. Please go to Shirdi quickly and cover Me with ample flowers." Das Ganu also learned of Baba's passing from some letters from Shirdi. Thus, Das Ganu and his disciples went to Shirdi to do bhajan and kirtan, singing the Lord's name throughout the day in front of Baba's samadhi. Das Ganu wove a beautiful garland of flowers studded with Lord Hari's name and placed it on Baba's samadhi. A mass feast was given in Baba's name.

### **Charity to Laxmibai**

Dasara or Vijayadashami is regarded by all Hindus as the most auspicious time of the year and it is befitting that Baba should choose this time for His crossing over from the physical world. He was ailing for two weeks before that, but He was ever conscious internally. Just before the last moment, He sat up erect, without anyone's aid, and looked better. People thought the danger had passed and He was getting well, but Baba knew He was to pass away soon and therefore He wanted to give some money as charity to Laxmibai Shinde.

## **Baba Pervading All Creatures**

Laxmibai Shinde was a good and well-to-do woman who worked in the masjid day and night. Only Bhagat Mhalasapati, Tatya and Laxmibai were allowed to step into the masjid at night. Once, while Baba was sitting in the masjid with Tatya in the evening, Laxmibai came and greeted Baba. Baba said to her, "Oh Laxmi, I am very hungry." Off she went, saying, "Baba, wait a bit. I will return immediately with bread." She returned with bread and vegetables and placed them before Baba. He picked up the freshly prepared food and gave it to a dog. Laxmibai then asked, "What is this, Baba? I ran in haste, prepared bread with my own hands for You, and You threw it to a dog without eating even a morsel of it? You gave me trouble unnecessarily." Baba replied, "Why are you complaining for nothing? The appeasement of the dog's hunger is the same as Mine. The dog has a soul. Creatures may be different, but the hunger of all is the same. Though some speak and others do not, know for certain that he who feeds the hungry really serves Me with food. Regard this as an axiomatic truth." This is a trifling incident, but Baba thereby propounded a great spiritual truth by showing the example of this practical application in daily life, which did not hurt anyone's feelings.

From that time onward, Laxmibai began to offer Baba bread and milk with love and devotion every day. Baba accepted this with appreciation and ate it. Having taken some food for Himself, He gave the remainder to Laxmibai, requesting that she give it to Radha Krishna Mai, who always relished and ate Baba's remnant prasada.

This story should not be considered as a digression. It shows how Sai Baba pervaded all the creatures and transcended them. He is omnipresent, birthless, deathless, and immortal.

\* \* \* \* \*

Baba remembered Laxmibai's service. How could He forget her? Just before leaving His body, Baba put His hand in His pocket and gave her Rs. 5/ and then Rs. 4/, thus, in all, nine rupees. This figure (9) is indicative of the nine types of devotion described in chapter 21 or it may represent the dakshina offered at the time of Seemollanghan. Laxmibai was a well-to-do woman and so she was not in want of any money, so perhaps Baba might have suggested to her symbolically through the nine rupees, the nine

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\* Ed. Note: Reference to chapter V - story of banias (shop keepers & grocers) refusing to give Baba oil to light his panatis (earthen dishes with wicks in them used for burning oil).

characteristics of a good disciple mentioned in the 6<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter ten, skandha eleven of the *Bhagavad Gita*, wherein first five, and then four characteristics are mentioned in the first and second couplets. Baba followed the order, by first paying Rs. 5/ and then Rs. 4/, nine rupees in all. Not only nine, but many times nine rupees passed through Laxmibai's hand, but Baba's gift of nine rupees at the time of His passing was something she would always remember.

Baba, being watchful and conscious in His last moments, also took other precautions. In order not to be entangled with love and affection for His devotees, Baba ordered them to all clear out. Kakasaheb Dixit, Bapusaheb Booty and others were in the masjid anxiously waiting upon Baba, but He asked them to go to the wada and to return after their meal. They did not want to leave Baba's presence, but they could not disobey Him. So, with heavy hearts and heavy feet, they all went to the wada. They knew Baba's case was very serious and that they could not forget Him. They sat for meals, but their mind was elsewhere, it was with Baba. Before they finished their meals, news came to them of Baba's leaving the mortal coil. Leaving their dishes, they ran to the masjid and found Baba's body resting on Bayaji's lap. He did not fall down on the ground, nor did He lie on His bed, but sitting quietly on His seat and doing charity with His own hands, He threw off the mortal coil. Saints embody themselves and come into this world with a definite mission. After that mission is fulfilled, they pass away as quietly and easily as they came.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Lendi Bagh



## Chapter XLIII & XLIV

### Shri Sai Satcharita

**Baba's Passing Away (continued) Preparation - Samadhi Mandir -  
Breaking of the Brick - 72 Hours' Samadhi - Jog's Sannyas -  
Baba's Nectar like Words**

Chapters 43 and 44 continue the story of Baba's passing away and are therefore presented together.

#### **Previous Preparation**

It is the general practice amongst the Hindus that when a man is about to die, fine religious scripture is read to him with the object that his mind should be withdrawn from worldly things and be fixed in spiritual matters so that his future progress will be natural and easy. For example, when King Parikshiti was cursed by the son of a Brahmin Rishi and was about to die in a week, the great sage Shuka expounded the famous *Bhagavad Puran* to him during that week. This practice has continued to be followed, as *Bhagavad Gita* and other sacred books are read to dying persons.

Baba, being an incarnation of God, needed no such help, but just to set an example to the people, He followed this practice. When He knew that He was to pass away soon, He ordered Mr. Vaze to read *Ramavijay* to Him. Mr. Vaze read the book once in the week. Then Baba asked him to read the same again, day and night, and he finished the second reading in three days. Thus, eleven days passed. Then, again, he read for three days and was exhausted, so Baba let him go and kept Himself quiet. He abided in His Self and was waiting for the last moment.



Two or three days before, Baba had stopped His morning peregrinations and begging rounds and just sat in the masjid. He was conscious to the last and was advising the devotees not to lose heart. He let no one know the exact time of His departure. Kakasaheb Dixit and Shriman Booty were dining with Him every day in the masjid. Then, on October 15<sup>th</sup>, after arati, He asked them to go to their residence for dining. Shama remained seated on the steps and a few, viz. Laxmibai Shinde, Bhagoji Shinde, Bayaji, Laxman Bala Shimpi and Nanasaheb Nimonkar remained there. After giving Rs. 9/ to Laxmibai Shinde, Baba said that He did not feel well there in the masjid and that He should be taken to the dagadi (stone) wada of Booty where He would be alright. Saying these last words, He leaned on Bayaji's body and breathed His last. Bhagoji noticed Baba's breathing had stopped and immediately told Nanasaheb Nimonkar, who was sitting below. Nanasaheb brought some water and poured it into Baba's mouth, but it dribbled back out. Then he cried out loudly, "Oh Deva!" At that moment, Baba appeared to open His eyes and say "Ah" in a low tone, but it soon became evident that Baba had left His body for good.

The news of Baba's passing away spread like wild fire in the village of Shirdi and everyone, men, women and children, ran to the masjid and began to mourn their loss in various ways. Some cried out loudly, others wallowed in the streets, and some fell down senseless. Tears ran down everyone's eyes and everyone was smitten with sorrow.

People started remembering the words of Sai Baba. Someone said that Maharaj (Sai Baba) told His devotees that in a time to come, He would appear as a lad of eight years. These are the words of a saint and hence, no one should doubt them. In the Krishna Avatar, Chakrapani (Lord Vishnu) performed this very deed. Krishna, as a lad of eight years with a bright complexion and wielding weapons in His four arms, appeared before Dewaki who was in prison. In that incarnation Lord Krishna lightened the burden of the earth. In this incarnation, the Lord, in the form of Sai Baba, came to uplift His devotees. There is no reason for doubt. The ways of the saints are inscrutable.

This contact of Sai Baba with His devotees has not only been in this generation, but it has existed for the last seventy-two generations, thus, generating ties of great love. Maharaj (Sai Baba) has only temporarily gone. His devotees hold the firm belief He will incarnate again.

The question then arose, how to dispose of Baba's body? Some Mohammedans said the body should be interred in an open space and a tomb built over it. Even

Khushalchand and Amir Shakkar shared this opinion. But Ramachandra Patil, the village officer, declared with a firm and determined voice, “Your proposal is not acceptable to us. Baba’s body should be placed in the wada.” The people were divided on this issue and discussion regarding this point went on for thirty- six hours.

Paying due respect to Baba’s words, the people decided to place His body in the wada and started digging the central portion there. The Sub-inspector came from Rahata on Tuesday evening and others came from other places. All agreed to the proposal.

The next morning, Amirbhai came from Bombay and the mamlatdar from Kopergaon arrived as well. The people seemed divided in their opinion. Some insisted on interring His body in the open field. The mamlatdar then took a general plebiscite and found that the proposal to use the wada secured double the number of votes. He, however, wanted to refer the matter to the collector in Ahmednagar, so Kakasaheb Dixit prepared to go.

That same Wednesday morning Baba appeared to Laxman Mama Joshi in his dream, and drawing him by His hand said, “Get up! Bapusaheb thinks I am dead and so he won’t come. You do the worship and the kakad (morning) arati.” Laxman Mama was the village astrologer and was the maternal uncle of Shama. He was an orthodox Brahmin and worshiped Baba daily every morning, after which he worshiped all the village deities. He had full faith in Baba. After the vision, he came with all the needed puja materials and, not minding the protests of the moulvis, did the puja and the kakad arati with all due formalities. After Laxman finished, he left. Then at noon, Bapusaheb Jog came with all the others and went through the noon arati as usual. In the meanwhile, through Baba’s inspiration, there was a change in the opinion of the other people and everyone unanimously voted for the proposal that Baba’s body should be brought to the wada.

By Wednesday evening, Baba’s body was taken in procession and brought to the wada where it was interred with due formalities in the garbha, i.e. the central portion reserved for Murlidhar. In fact, Baba became Murlidhar and the wada became a temple and a holy shrine. All the obsequies of Baba were duly performed by Balasheb Bhate and Upasani, a great devotee of Baba. Thus, Shriman Booty’s wada became the tirtha blessed with Baba’s body. Many devotees found peace and rest at this holy place and it continues so to the present.

It may be noted here that as observed by Professor Narke, Baba’s body did not get stiff, though it was exposed for thirty-six hours. All the limbs remained elastic, so His kafni could be removed without being torn to pieces.

## **Breaking of the Brick**

A few days before Baba's departure, an ominous event occurred which foreboded Baba's passing. There was an old brick in the masjid on which Baba rested His hand. At night, He leaned against it and had His asan. This went on for many years. One day during Baba's absence, a boy who was sweeping the floor, picked it up in his hand. Unfortunately, it slipped from his grip, fell down, and broke in two pieces. When Baba found out about it, He bemoaned its loss crying, "It is not the brick, but My fate that has been broken into pieces. It was My life long companion; with it, I always meditated on the Self. It was as dear to Me as My life. It has left Me today." Some people upon hearing this, might raise a question, "Why should Baba express sorrow for a brick, an inanimate object." In answer to this query, Hemadpant replies that saints incarnate in this world with the express mission of saving poor helpless people. Thus, they embody themselves, mixing and acting like common folk, i.e. outwardly laughing, playing, crying and so forth, while inwardly remaining ever awake to their duties and mission.

## **72 Hours' Samadhi**

Thirty two years before this, i.e. in 1886, Baba made an attempt to cross the border line. On a Margashirsha Pournima (full moon) day, Baba suffered from a severe attack of asthma. To get rid of it, Baba decided to take His prana high up and go into samadhi. He told Bhagat Mhalasapati, "Protect My body for three days. If I return, it will be alright. If I do not, bury My body in that open land (pointing to it) and fix two flags there as a mark." So Saying, Baba fell down at about 10 p.m. His breathing stopped, as well as His pulse. It seemed as if His prana left His body. Everyone, including the villagers, came and unanimously wanted to hold an inquest and bury the body in the place pointed out by Baba. But Mhalasapati prevented that. With Baba's body on his lap, he sat for three full days guarding it. After three days had passed, Baba showed signs of life at 3:00 a.m. His breathing commenced and His abdomen began to move. He opened His eyes and, stretching His limbs, Baba returned to consciousness (life) again.

From this and other accounts, let all who read this account consider whether Sai Baba was the three and a half cubits' body that He occupied for some eighty years and which He left thereafter, or was He the immortal Self, one with the Absolute?

The body, composed of five elements, is perishable and transient, but the Self within is the Absolute Reality which is immortal. This pure being, consciousness, Brahma, ruler



and controller of the senses and mind, is the essence of Sai. It is sat-chit-ananda, pervading all things in the universe and filling all space. To fulfill His mission on Earth, Baba assumed a body. Having fulfilled His mission, He cast off the body (the finite aspect) and assumed His infinite aspect. Sai ever lives, as too, does the previous incarnation of God Datta, Shri Narsimha Saraswati of Ganagpur. Baba's passing away is only an outward aspect, but in reality, He pervades all animate and inanimate things and is their inner controller and ruler. This is so, and it is experienced by those who surrender themselves completely to Him and worship Him with wholehearted devotion.

Though it is not possible for us to see Baba's form now, His beautiful life-like portrait adorning the masjid is in Shirdi for all to see. This image has been drawn by Shamrao Jayakar, a famous artist and well known devotee of Baba. To an imaginative and devout spectator, this portrait bestows Sai Baba's blessings and darshan.

Although Baba left His body, His consciousness, as pure being, continues ever to exist as His true Self, protecting the welfare of devotees, just as He did when He was embodied. Saints like Baba never die. Even though they look like men, they are, in reality, God Himself.

### **Bapusaheb Jog's Sannyas**

Hemadpant closes this chapter with an account of Bapusaheb Jog's sannyas. Sakharam Hari, alias Bapusaheb Jog, was the uncle of the famous Varkari Vishnubuva Jog of Poona. After his retirement from government service as a supervisor in the P.W. Department, he came to live in Shirdi with his wife in 1909. He had no issue. Both husband and wife loved Baba and spent all their time in worshiping and serving Baba. After Megha's death, Bapusaheb did the arati daily in the masjid and the Chavadi until Baba's mahasamadhi. He was also entrusted with the work of reading and explaining *Jnaneshwari* and *Ekanathi Bhagwat* to the audience in Sathe's wada. After serving for many years, Jog asked Baba, "I have served You for so long and yet my mind is still not calm and composed. How is it that my contact with saints has not improved me? When will You bless me?" Hearing the bhakta's prayer, Baba replied, **In due time your bad actions (their fruit or result) will be destroyed. Your merits and demerits will be reduced to ashes, and I shall consider you blessed when you will renounce all attachments, conquer lust and palate, and, getting rid of all impediments, serve God wholeheartedly and resort to the begging bowl (accept sannyas).**

After some time, Baba's words came true. Bapusaheb Jog's wife predeceased him,

and as he had no other attachment, he became free, accepted sannyas before his death, and realized the goal of his life.

### **Baba's Nectar-like words**

The kind and merciful Sai Baba said many a time the following sweet words in the masjid, **He who loves Me most, always sees Me. The whole world is desolate to him without Me. He tells no stories, but Mine. He ceaselessly meditates upon Me and always chants My name. I feel indebted to him, who surrenders himself completely to Me and ever remembers Me. I shall repay his debt by giving him salvation (Self-realization). I am dependent on he who thinks and hungers after Me, and who does not eat anything without first offering it to Me. He who thus comes to Me, becomes one with Me, just as a river reaches the sea and becomes merged (one) with it. So, leaving out pride and egoism and with no trace of them, you should surrender yourself to Me, who am seated in Your heart.**

### **Who is this Me?**

Sai Baba expounded many a time who this ME (or I) is. He said, "You need not go far or anywhere in search of Me. Barring your name and form, there exists in you, as well as in all beings, a sense of being or consciousness of existence. **That is Myself.** Knowing this, you see Me inside yourself, as well as in all beings. If you practice this, you will realize all pervasiveness, and thus attain oneness with Me."

Hemadpant, therefore, makes a bow to the readers and requests them humbly and lovingly to love and respect God, the Father Almighty, and to love and respect God in the form of His saints and devotees. Baba often said, "He who carps and cavils at others, pierces Me in the heart, but he who suffers and endures, pleases Me most." Baba thus pervades all beings and creatures and besets them on all sides. He wants only to love all beings. Such nectar, such pure auspicious ambrosia, always flowed from Baba's lips. Hemadpant continues and concludes stating that those who lovingly sing Baba's fame and those who hear the same with devotion, shall become one with Sai, who is one with the Absolute.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XLV

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision - Wooden Plank - Baba's Bedsted and Bhagat Mhalasapati**

#### **Preliminary**

In the last three chapters, we have described Baba's passing away. No doubt, His physical, or finite form, has disappeared from our view, but His infinite, or spiritual form, which is immortal, lives on. The leelas which occurred during His lifetime in the physical body have been described in detail throughout the preceding chapters of this book, but ever since His passing, new leelas continue to occur, showing clearly that Baba is ever present and continues to help His devotees as before. Those devotees who had the grace to be with Him while he lived in His physical form were greatly blessed, but if any of them did not develop a dispassion for sense enjoyments and material things of this world, it was their sheer bad fortune. What was wanted then, and is wanted now, is wholehearted devotion to Baba. All our senses, body and mind, should cooperate in worshiping and serving Baba. It is not beneficial to engage in only some aspects of worship and practice. Meditation and worship should be done wholeheartedly with all of the mind and body and soul.

The love a disciple has for his guru is incomparable. No one, whether he be father, mother, brother or any other relation, comes to our aid in attaining the goal of life, which is Self-realization. One has to chalk out, or traverse, the path of Self-realization oneself, discriminating between the real and the unreal, renouncing desires, controlling the senses and mind, and aspiring for liberation. Instead of depending on others, one must have full faith in the God within, remembering that God and guru are one.

With the practice of discrimination, the consciousness changes and the world is perceived as transient and unreal. Passion for worldly enticements gradually lessens and ultimately, dispassion, or non-attachment for things of the world, develops. When a solid understanding that the Self-realized guru is one with God, Brahma, and is in all, of all and through all, a reverence for all creatures develops and with this, worship of the God within them. Thus, with the wholehearted worship of Brahma, or guru, **the devotee becomes one with Him and attains Self-realization.** By always chanting the name of the guru and meditating on Him, one is enabled to see Him in all beings and, in turn, eternal bliss is conferred.

### **Kakasaheb's Doubt and Anandrao's Vision**

It is well known that Sai Baba had enjoined Kakasaheb Dixit to read two works of Shri Ekanath daily: (1) *Bhagawat* and (2) *Bhawartha Ramayan*. Kakasaheb read these daily while Baba was living and he followed the practice even after Baba's passing away.

One morning, while Kakasaheb was in Kaka Mahajani's house in Choupati, Bombay, he was performing his daily reading of *Ekanathi Bhagawat*. Madhavarao Deshpande, alias Shama, and Kaka Mahajani were present and listened attentively to the portion read, viz. the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the 11<sup>th</sup> skandha of the book. Therein, the nine nathas or siddhas of the Rishabha family, viz. Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayan, Avirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhajan expounded the principles of the Bhagawat dharma to King Janak. The king asked all nine nathas most important questions and each of them answered satisfactorily. The first, i.e. Kavi, explained what is Bhagawat Dharma. The next, Hari, the characteristics of a bhakta (devotee). The third, Antariksha, described maya. Prabuddha answered how to cross maya and Pippalayan described what is Para-Brahma. The sixth natha, Avirhotra, responded with a description of karma. The seventh natha, Drumil, described the incarnations of God and their deeds. Chamas, the eighth natha, related how a non-devotee fares after death and lastly, Karabhajan, the ninth natha, spoke of the different modes of worship of God in different ages. **The crux of all the commentaries was that in this Kali age, the only means of liberation is the remembrance of Hari's (Lord's) name and guru's feet.**

After the reading was over, Kakasaheb said in a despondent tone to Madhavarao and others, "This discourse of the nine nathas on bhakti (devotion) is wonderful, but at the same time, how difficult to put it into practice! The nathas were perfect, but is it possible for fools like us to attain the devotion as delineated by them? We won't get it straight even after several births, so how then will we get salvation? It seems there is no hope for us."

Madhavarao (Shama) did not like this pessimistic attitude of Kakasaheb and retorted, "It is a pity that one, who by his good fortune has such a jewel as Baba, should cry out so disparagingly. If he has unwavering faith in Baba, why should he feel restless? The bhakti of the nathas may be strong and powerful, but isn't ours loving and affectionate too? Hasn't Baba told us authoritatively that remembering and chanting Hari's and guru's name confers salvation? What then is the cause for fear and anxiety? Kakasaheb was not satisfied with Madhavarao's explanation. He continued to be anxious and restless the entire day, thinking and brooding over how to develop the powerful bhakti of the nathas. The next morning, the following miracle took place.

A gentleman named Anandrao Pakhade came to Shirdi in search of Madhavarao (Shama). The reading of the *Bhagawat* was going on then. Mr. Pakhade sat near Shama and began to whisper to him in a low tone about his dream vision. As the hushed voice caused disruption, Kakasaheb stopped the reading and asked Shama what was the matter. Shama replied, "Yesterday you expressed your doubts as to whether we could attain devotion like the nathas, but Mr. Pakhade had a vision in which he was shown that worship of the guru's feet is sufficient." Everyone then became quite anxious to hear about the vision, especially Kakasaheb, so they invited Mr. Pakhade to relate all the details.

Mr. Pakhade began: "I was standing in a deep sea, in waist deep water. There, I suddenly saw Sai Baba. He was sitting on a beautiful throne, studded with diamonds, with His feet in the water. I was enormously pleased to see this vision of Baba, which was so realistic, I scarcely thought it was a dream. Interestingly, Madhavarao (Shama) was also standing there. He said to me with great feeling, "Anandrao, fall at Baba's feet." I responded, "I wish to do so, but His feet are under water. How can I place my head on them? I am helpless." Upon hearing this, Shama spoke out to Baba, "Oh Deva, take Your feet out of the water." Baba immediately lifted His feet out of the water. I quickly caught them and bowed to them. Seeing all this, Baba blessed me saying, "Go now. You will attain your welfare. There is no cause for fear and anxiety." He then added, "Give a silk bordered dhotar to My Shama. You will profit thereby."

In compliance with Baba's order, Mr. Pakhade bought a dhotar and brought it with him to Shirdi, requesting Kakasaheb to give it to Shama (Madhavarao). Shama, however, refused to accept it, saying he would not accept it unless Baba gave His approval. Following a discussion, Kakasaheb decided to cast lots. It was the invariable practice of Kakasaheb to cast lots in all dubious matters and to abide by the decision as shown by the picked up chit or lot. In this particular case, two chits, on one of which was written "to

accept” and on the other “to reject” were placed at the feet of Baba’s picture and an infant was asked to pick one of them. The “accept” chit was picked and so the dhotar was handed to, and accepted by, Madhavarao (Shama). In this way, both Anandrao and Madhavarao were satisfied and Kakasaheb’s difficulty was solved.

This story exhorts us to respect the words of other saints, but at the same time, asks us to have full faith in our guru and abide by His instructions, for the guru knows our welfare better than any other person. Imprint the following words of Baba in your heart:

**There are innumerable saints in this world, but our father (guru) is God the Father (real guru). Whereas we may hear good words from others, we should NEVER FORGET OUR GURU’S WORDS. In short, LOVE YOUR GURU HOLEHEARTEDLY. SURRENDER TO HIM COMPLETELY AND PROSTRATE YOURSELVES BEFORE HIM REVERENTIALLY. Then you will see there is no sea of the mundane existence for you to cross, as there is no darkness before the sun. Wooden Plank - Baba’s Bedstead and Bhagat Mhalasapati**

In His earlier days, Baba slept on a wooden plank, 4 cubits in length and only a span in breadth with panatis (earthen lamps) burning at the four corners. Later on, He broke the plank into pieces and threw it away (vide Chapter X). Once, Baba was describing the greatness and importance of that plank to Kakasaheb. Hearing that, the latter said to Baba, “If you still love the wooden plank, I will suspend another one in the masjid for You, so You may sleep at ease.” Baba then replied, “I would not want to sleep up high, leaving Mhalasapati down on the ground.” Hearing this, Kakasaheb responded, “Then I will provide another plank for Mhalasapati.” Baba immediately replied, “How can he sleep on the plank? It is not easy to sleep high up on the plank. He, who has many good qualities in him, can do so. Only He, who can sleep ‘with his eyes wide open’, can effect that. When I go to sleep, I often ask Mhalasapati to sit by My side, place his hand on My heart, and watch the chanting of the Lord’s name there, and if he finds Me sleepy, to wake Me up. He can’t even do this. He gets drowsy and begins to nod his head. When I feel his hand heavy as a stone on My heart and cry out, “Oh Bhagat,” he moves and opens his eyes. How can he, who can’t sit and whose asan (posture) is not steady and who is a slave to sleep, sleep high up on a plank?”

On many other occasions Baba said out of love for His devotees, “What is ours, whether good or bad, is with us, and what is another’s, is with him.”

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XLVI

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Baba's Gaya Trip - Story of Two Goats**

This chapter describes Shama's trip to Kashi, Prayag and Gaya and how Baba, in the form of His portrait, was there ahead of him. It also describes Baba's reminiscences of the past birth of two goats.

#### **Preliminary**

Blessed, Oh Sai, are Your feet. Blessed is Your remembrance and blessed is Your darshan, which frees us from the bond of karma. Though Your form is invisible to us now, still, devotees who believe in You get living experiences from You. By an invisible and subtle thread, You draw Your devotees from far and near to Your feet and embrace them. The devotees do not know where You are, but You so skillfully pull the wires, that they ultimately realize You are very close to them and support them. The intelligent, wise and learned folk fall into the pit of samsar on account of their egoism, but You save the poor, simple and devout people with Your power. You play the game inwardly and invisibly, but at the same time, demonstrate that you are not concerned with it. You do things, but pose as a nondoer. No one ever knows or understands Your life. The best course for us is to surrender our body, speech, and mind to Your feet and always chant Your name for destroying our sins. You fulfill the wishes of the devotees and to those who are without any desire, You give supreme bliss. Chanting Your sweet name is the easiest sadhana for devotees. By this sadhana, our sins, rajas and tamas, will vanish. The sattwic qualities and righteousness will gain predominance and along with that, discrimination, dispassion and knowledge will follow. Then, we shall abide in our Self and our guru, who are one and the same. This is what is called complete surrender to the guru. The only sure sign of this is the mind becoming peaceful and calm. The greatness of this surrender, devotion and



knowledge is unique, for peace, non-attachment, fame and salvation etc. come in its train.

If Baba accepts a devotee, He follows him and stands by him day and night, at his home and abroad. Let the devotee go anywhere he likes, Baba is there ahead of him in some form in an inconceivable manner. The following story illustrates this.

### **Gaya Trip**

Sometime after Kakasaheb Dixit was introduced to Sai Baba, he decided to perform the thread (Upanayan) ceremony of his eldest son, Bapu, at Nagpur. At about the same time, Nanasaheb Chandorkar decided to perform the marriage ceremony of his eldest son at Gwalior. Both Dixit and Chandorkar came to Shirdi and lovingly invited Baba to these functions, but Baba asked them to take Shama as His representative. When they persisted and begged Him to come in person, Baba again told them to take Shama and added, “after doing Banares and Prayag, we will be ahead of Shama.” Now mark these words for they show Baba’s all pervasiveness.

Having received Baba’s permission, Shama planned to go to Nagpur for the Upanayan and then to Gwalior for the marriage ceremony, after which, he planned to travel to Kashi, Prayag and Gaya. Appa Kote made up his mind to accompany Shama and so they both went first to Nagpur for the thread ceremony. Kakasaheb Dixit gave Shama Rs. 200/ for his expenses. They then went to Gwalior for the marriage ceremony. There, Nanasaheb Chandorkar gave Shama Rs.100/ and his vyahih (relation), Mr. Jathar, gave him Rs. 100/ as well.

After the marriage ceremony at Gwalior, Shama went to Kashi, (Banares) where he stayed for two months. He was well received there by Jathar’s manager in Jathar’s beautiful temple of Laxmi-Naraya. Following this, they visited the Rama Mandir at Ayodhya. Shama and Kote stayed in Ayodhya for twenty-one days and then left for Gaya by train.

During the train ride, they felt a little uneasy on hearing that plague was prevailing in Gaya. When they reached Gaya station it was night time, so they stayed in the Dharmashala. In the morning, the gayawala (the priest who arranges and provides for the lodging and boarding of the pilgrims) came and told them, “The pilgrims have already started, you better make haste.” Shama casually asked whether there was plague in Gaya. The gayawala responded, “No” and continued, “Please come without any fear or anxiety and see for yourself.” Shama and Kote went with the priest and stayed in his



house, which was a large and commodious wada. Shama was pleased with the accommodation provided for him, but what pleased him most, was the beautiful big portrait of Baba hanging in the central front portion of the building. He then remembered Baba's words: "After doing Kashi and Prayag, we will be ahead of Shama," and burst into tears. His hairs stood on end, his throat was choked, and he began to sob. The gayawala thought Shama was crying because he was afraid the plague might be prevailing there, but just then, Shama inquired where he had gotten Baba's portrait. The priest replied he had two or three hundred agents working at Manmad and Punatambe who were looking after the comforts of the pilgrims going to Gaya and that he heard of Baba's fame from them. He continued, saying that about twelve years ago, he went to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan. There, in Shama's house, he saw a portrait of Baba which he wanted. Having received Baba's permission, Shama gave him the portrait. This was that very portrait. Shama then remembered the incident and the gayawala's joy knew no bounds when he learnt that the same Shama who obliged him before, was now his guest. Both Shama and the priest were delighted and amazed.

The gayawala, who was a very rich man, gave Shama a royal welcome. He saw to it that all Shama's comforts and conveniences were provided for. The gayawala sat in a palanquin and gave Shama a fine elephant to ride.

The moral of the story is that Baba's words came out true to the letter and He has unbounded love towards His devotees. Beyond this, Baba loves all creatures equally, for being in all, of all and through all, He is one with them. The following story will illustrate this.

## **Two Goats**

Once, as Baba was returning from Lendi, He saw a flock of goats. Two of them attracted His attention. Baba went over to them, caressed and fondled them, and bought them for Rs. 32/. The devotees were surprised at this conduct of Baba. They felt Baba was duped in such a bargain, as the goats would fetch Rs. 2/ each, at the most Rs. 3/ or Rs. 4/ each, i.e., Rs. 8/ for both. They began to take Baba to task for that, but Baba kept calm and cool. Shama and Taty Kote asked Baba for an explanation and He told them that as He had no home nor family to look after, He should not store money. He asked them to purchase at His own expense, 4 seers of 'dal' (lentil), and to feed the goats. After that was done, Baba returned the goats to the owner of the flock and described the following reminiscences and story of the goats.

“Oh Shama and Tatya, you think I have been deceived in this bargain. No. Listen to their story. In their former birth, they were human beings and had the good fortune to be My companions and sit by My side. They were brothers, loving each other at first, but later on, they became enemies. The elder brother was an idle fellow, while the younger one was always active and earned a lot of money. The elder brother became greedy and jealous and wanted to kill his brother and take his money. They forgot their fraternal relations and began to quarrel with each other. The elder brother resorted to many devices to kill his younger brother, but all his attempts failed. Thus, they became deadly enemies and finally, on one occasion, the elder struck the younger on the head with a deadly blow with a big stick, while the latter struck the former with an ax. As a result, both brothers died of the injuries they each had sustained and, because of their evil actions, both were re-born as goats. As they passed by Me, I recognized them at once and remembered their past history. Taking pity on them, I wanted to feed them and give them rest and comfort and for this reason, I spent all the money for which you reprove me. As you did not like My bargain, I sent them back to their shepherd.”

Such was Sai's love for the goats.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

# Chapter XLVII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### **Baba's Reminiscences**

#### **Story of Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa (snake and frog)**

The last chapter described Baba's reminiscences about two goats. This chapter depicts more recollections and relates the story of Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa.

#### **Preliminary**

Blessed is the face of Sai. If we cast a glance at Him for even a moment, He destroys the sorrow of many past births and confers great bliss on us. If He looks at us with grace, our bondage of karma is immediately snapped away and we are led to happiness.

The river Ganges washes away the dirt and sins of all the people who go to her for a bath, but she longs intently for saints to come to her and bless her with their holy feet, thereby removing all the dirt (sins) accumulated in her. She knows with certainty that this accumulation can be removed only in this way.

Sai is the crest jewel of the saints. Baba tells the following purifying story.

#### **The snake and the frog**

Sai Baba told a story about a snake and a frog in this manner: "One morning after taking My breakfast, I strolled along until I came to a small river bank. As I was tired, I rested there, washed My hands and feet, had a bath, and felt refreshed. The breeze was blowing gently. I noticed a foot path and cart track sheltered by shady trees. I sat down and as I was preparing to smoke chillim (pipe), I heard the croaking of a frog. As I was

striking a flint to light a fire, a traveler turned up, sat by My side, bowed to Me and politely invited Me to his house for meals and rest. He lit his pipe and handed it to Me. Just then, the croaking was heard again and the traveler wanted to know what it was. I told him that a frog was in trouble and was tasting the bitter fruit of its own karma. We have to reap the fruit of what we sow (do) in our past life, and there is no use crying about it. He then smoked and handed the pipe to Me and said he would go in person and see for himself what was the matter.

I told him that a frog was caught by a big snake and was crying. Both were very wicked in their past life and were now reaping the fruit of their actions in these bodies. The traveler went off and found that a huge black serpent was holding a big frog in its mouth.

He returned to Me and said that in about ten or twelve minutes, the frog would be eaten up by the snake. I said, "No, this cannot be allowed to happen. I am its father (protector) and I am here now. I will not allow the snake to eat the frog. Just see how I release it."

After smoking again, we walked back to where the helpless frog was meeting his fate. The traveler was afraid and asked Me not to proceed further as the snake might attack us. Not minding him, I went ahead and addressed the creatures thus, "Oh Veerbhadrappa, has your enemy, Chenbassappa, still not repented even though he has been born as a frog? And you, too, though born as a serpent, still maintain bitter enmity against him? Fie upon you! Be ashamed! Give up your hatred now and rest in peace."

Hearing these words, the snake dropped the frog quickly and dove into the river and disappeared. The frog also jumped away and hid in the bushes.

The traveler was very surprised to hear this story. He said he could not understand how the snake dropped the frog and disappeared when I uttered those words. Who was Veerbhadrappa and who was Chenbassappa? What was the cause of their enmity? The traveler was perplexed.

I then returned with him to the foot of the tree where we originally met and after sharing a few puffs of smoke with him, I explained the whole mystery as follows:

There was an ancient holy place sanctified by a temple of Mahadev about four or five miles from My place. The temple was old and dilapidated. The residents of the place

collected funds for its repair. After a large amount was collected, arrangements for worship were made and plans with estimates for repairs were prepared. A rich local man was appointed the treasurer and the whole work was entrusted to him. He was to keep regular accounts and be honest in all his dealings. He was, however, a first class miser, and spent very little for the repairs, which, consequently, made very little progress. He spent all the funds, swallowed some amount himself, and spent nothing from his own pocket. He had a sweet tongue and was very clever in offering plausible explanations regarding the poor and tardy progress of the work.

The people went to him again and said that unless he lent his helping hand and tried his best, the work would not be complete. They requested him to work out the plans, and again, collected subscriptions and sent the amount to him. He received it, but acted as before. Thus, no progress was made on the temple repairs.

After a few days, God (Mahadev) appeared in his wife's dream and said to her, "You must get up and have the dome of the temple built. I will give you a hundred fold of what you spend." She related the vision to her husband. He was afraid it would involve him in some expenses and therefore laughed about it saying it was a mere dream, something not to be relied and acted upon. After all, why didn't God appear to him and tell him? Was he far off from her? He continued that it all appears to have been a bad dream, having for its object the creation of ill feeling between husband and wife. Hearing this, the wife remained quiet."

God does not like big subscriptions and donations collected against the wishes of the donors, but He likes even trifling amounts given with love, devotion and appreciation. Some days after, God again appeared in the wife's dream and said, "Do not concern yourself with your husband's attitude and the collections he manages. Do not press him to spend any money for the temple. What I want is feeling and devotion. So give, if you like, anything of your own." She consulted her husband about the vision and decided to give God the jewelry her father had given her. The miser felt disconcerted by this and decided to cheat even God. He undervalued the ornaments at Rs. 1,000/ and bought them himself, but in lieu of money, he gave a field to God as an endowment (security). His wife agreed to this. The field (land), however, did not belong to the miser. Rather, it belonged to a poor woman named Dubaki, who mortgaged it to him for Rs. 200/. Thus, the cunning miser cheated every one - his wife, Dubaki and even God! The land was sterile, uncultivated and yielded nothing, even in the best seasons. It was virtually worthless, but the transaction was completed and the land was given to a poor priest who was pleased with the endowment.

Sometime later, strange things happened. There was a terrific storm with a heavy down pour of rain. Lightening struck the miser's house, killing both he and his wife. Dubaki also passed away.

In the next life, the rich miser was born in a Brahmin family in Mathura and was named Veerbhadrappa. His devout wife of his past life was born as the daughter of the priest of the temple and was named Gouri. Dubaki, the mortgagor of the barren land, was born as a male in the family of the temple's gurav, and was named Chenbassappa. The priest was a friend of Mine. He often came to chat and have a smoke with Me. His daughter, Gouri, was also devoted to Me. She was growing fast and her father was seeking a good husband for her. I told him not to worry about that as the bridegroom himself would come seeking her.

In time, a poor boy named Veerbhadrappa, of their caste, came wandering to the priest's home, begging for bread. With My consent, Gouri was given to him in marriage.

At first, the young man was devoted to Me, as I recommended his marriage with Gouri. Yet even in this new life, he was hankering after money and asked Me to help him get some, as he was leading a married man's life.

Then, strange things happened. There was a sudden rise in prices. By Gouri's good luck, there was a great demand for land and the endowment land was sold for one lac of rupees (one hundred times the worth of her jewelry). Half the amount was paid in cash and the remaining was to be paid in twenty-five installments of Rs. 2,000/ each. Although all agreed to this transaction, they began to quarrel over the money. They came to Me for consultation. I told them that the property belonged to God and was vested in the priest, and Gouri was his sole heiress and proprietress. I said no amount of money should be spent without her consent and that her husband had no right whatsoever to the amount.

Hearing My opinion, Veerbhadrappa was wroth with Me and said that I wanted to establish Gouri's claim and embezzle her property. Hearing his words, I remembered God and kept quiet. Veerbhadrappa scolded his wife (Gouri) and she came to Me at noon requesting Me not to mind the words of others and not to discard her, as she was My daughter. As she thus sought My protection, I gave her a pledge that I would cross seven seas to help her. Then, that night, Gouri had a vision. Mahadev appeared in her dream and said, "The whole amount of the money is yours. Do not give anything to anyone. Spend some of it for temple purposes in consultation with Chenbassappa, and if you want to use it for some other purpose, consult Baba in the masjid (Myself)."

Gouri described her dream to Me and I gave her the proper advice in the matter. I told her to take the principal, or capital, amount for herself and to give half the amount of the interest to Chenbassappa. Veerbhadrappa should have nothing to do in the matter whatsoever. While I was thus talking, both Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa, who were quarreling with each other, came in. Veerbhadrappa became angry and wild and threatened to kill Chenbassappa by cutting him to pieces. The latter was timid. He caught My feet and sought My refuge. I then pledged Myself to save him from the wrath of his foe. Then, after some time, Veerbhadrappa died and was born as a snake and Chenbassappa died and, according to his karma, was born as a frog. Hearing the croaking of Chenbassappa and remembering My pledge, I came here, saved him, and kept My word. God runs to His devotees to help in times of danger. He saved Chenbassappa (the frog) by sending Me here. All this is God's leela or sport."

### **The Moral**

The moral of this story is that one has to reap what one sows, and there is no escape unless one suffers and squares up one's old debts and dealings with others. **Greed for money drags the greedy man to the lowest level and ultimately brings destruction on him and others.**

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



## Palaki Yatra





# Chapter XLVIII

## Shri Sai Satcharita

### Warding off Devotees' Calamities Stories of (1) Shevade and (2) Sapatnekar

Someone asked Hemadpant whether Sai Baba was a guru or a satguru. In order to answer the question, Hemadpant describes the signs of a satguru in this chapter as follows:

#### Signs which determine a satguru

Hemadpant begins by describing certain characteristics which satgurus *may* exhibit, *but which by themselves individually, do not determine if a holy man is a satguru.*

He who teaches us Veda and Vedanta or the six Shastra (systems). He who controls the breath, or brands his body with mudras (metallic marks of Vishnu's weapons), or gives pleasing discourses regarding Brahma. Hemadpant then continues to define characteristics which do *not* determine a satguru. For example: he who gives mantras (sacred syllables) to the disciples and orders them to chant the same a certain number of times, but does not assure them any result in a definite time; he, who by his spacious worldly knowledge, explains beautifully the Ultimate Principle, but has himself no experience of Self-realization, is *not* a satguru.

Hemadpant then describes the *virtuous characteristics* of a satguru: But he, who by his discourse, creates in us a distaste for the enjoyments of this world and the next, and gives us a taste of Self-realization, who is well versed in both theoretical and practical knowledge (Self-realization), deserves to be called a satguru. How can he, who is himself

devoid of Self-realization, give it to his disciples? A satguru does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciples. On the contrary, he wishes to serve them. He does not think that he is great and the disciple small. Not only does he love the devotee as a son or daughter, but he also regards him as equal to himself or as to Brahma. *The main characteristic of a satguru is that he is the abode of peace. He is never restless, nor ruffled. He has no pride of his learning. The poor and the rich, the small and the great, are the same to him.*

Hemadpant thinks that on account of the store or accumulations of merits in his past births, he had the good fortune of meeting and being blessed by Sai Baba, a great satguru. Even in His youth, Sai Baba hoarded nothing (except perhaps his chillim). He had no family, no friend, no home, nor any support. Since He was eighteen, His control of mind was perfect and extraordinary. He lived in a secluded place, was fearless, and always abided in His Self. Seeing the pure devotion of His devotees, He always acted in their interests and hence, He was, in a way, dependent on them. The experiences he gave His devotees while He was living in the flesh, are even now, after His mahasamadhi, obtained by those who attach themselves to Him. Thus, devotees must do the following: trim their heart lamp of faith and devotion, and burn in it wicks of love, and when this is done, the flame of knowledge (Self-realization) will be lit up and shine brighter. **Mere knowledge without love is dry.** No one wants such knowledge. Without love, there is no contentment, so we should have unbroken and unbounded love. How can we praise love? Everything is insignificant before it. **Without love, our reading, hearing, and study are of no avail.** In the wake of love, follows devotion, dispassion, peace and liberation with all their treasures. We do not develop love for anything unless we feel earnestly about it. So where there is real yearning and feeling permeated with love, God manifests Himself, and this is the means of liberation.

Now let us revert to the main story of this chapter. Let a man go to a true saint with a pure mind, and hold his feet; ultimately he is sure to be saved. This is illustrated by the following stories:

### **Mr. Shevade**

Mr. Sapatnekar of Akkalkot (Sholapur District) was studying law. A co-student, Mr. Shevade, met him. Other fellow students also gathered together and compared notes regarding their studies. It was found by the questions and answers amongst themselves, that Mr. Shevade was the least prepared of all for the examination, and therefore, all the students derided him. But Mr. Shevade said that although he was not prepared, he was

sure to pass the examination, as his Sai Baba was there to get him through it successfully.

Mr. Sapatnekar was surprised at this remark. He took Mr. Shevade aside and asked him who this Sai Baba was, whom he extolled so highly. Shevade replied, "There lives in a masjid in Shirdi (Ahmednagar District), a fakir. He is a great satpurush. There may be other saints, but this one is unique. Unless there is a great store of merit in one's account, one can't see Him. I fully believe in Him, and what He says will never be untrue. He has assured me that I will definitely pass next year and I am confident that I will get through the final examination with His grace." Mr. Sapatnekar laughed at his friend's confidence and jeered at him and Baba.

### **Sapatnekar**

Mr. Sapatnekar passed his examination, settled at Akkalkot, and practiced as a pleader there. Ten years after that, i.e., in 1913, he lost his only son due to a throat disease. He was broken-hearted. He sought relief by making a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, Ganagapur, and other holy places, but he found no peace of mind. He then read Vedanta, which also did not help him. In the meanwhile, he remembered Mr. Shevade's remarks and his faith in Baba, and so Sapatnekar thought he, too, should go to Shirdi and see Baba.

Sapatnekar then went to Shirdi with his younger brother, Panditrao, and was very pleased to see Baba from a distance. When he was able to get near Baba, he prostrated himself and placed a coconut before Baba with pure feeling and devotion. Baba immediately cried out, "Go away!" Sapatnekar hung down his head, moved back, and sat to the side. He wanted to consult someone who could advise him as to how to proceed. Someone then mentioned Bala Shimpi's name. Sapatnekar searched and found him and sought his help. They bought some pictures of Baba and brought them to the masjid. Bala Shimpi took a photo in his hand, gave it to Baba, and asked Him whose photo it was. Baba said that the photo was the 'yara' (lover) of Him, pointing to Sapatnekar. Saying this, Baba laughed and all the others joined. Bala asked Baba the significance of the laugh and then beckoned Sapatnekar to come forward and take darshan. When Sapatnekar began to prostrate himself, Baba again cried out, "Get out!" Sapatnekar did not know what to do. Then he and Bala Shimpi joined hands and sat before Baba praying, but Baba ordered Sapatnekar to clear out immediately. Both men were sad and dejected, but as Baba's order had to be obeyed, Sapatnekar left Shirdi with a heavy heart, praying he should be allowed to take darshan next time.

### **Mrs. Sapatnekar**

One year elapsed. Still, Sapatnekar's mind was not at peace. He went to Ganagapur where he felt even more restless. He then went to Madhegaon for rest and finally decided to go to Kashi. Two days before starting, his wife had a vision. In her dream, she was carrying a pitcher to Lakadsha's well. There, a fakir with a piece of cloth around his head, who was sitting at the foot of a neem tree, came close to her and said, "My dear lassie, why get exhausted needlessly? I'll get your pitcher filled with pure water for you." She was afraid of the fakir and hastened back with the empty pitcher. The fakir followed her. Just then she awoke from the dream. When she told her husband about the vision, they both thought the dream was an auspicious sign and decided to go to Shirdi.

When they reached the masjid, Baba was not there. He had gone to Lendi. Both husband and wife decided to wait until He returned. When Baba returned, Mrs. Sapatnekar was surprised to see that He resembled exactly the fakir seen in her vision. She reverently prostrated before Baba and sat gazing at him. Seeing her humility, Baba was very pleased and began to tell a story in His peculiar characteristic fashion as a third party. He said, "My arms, abdomen and waist are causing Me pain for a long time. I took various types of medicine, but the pain did not abate. I became dissatisfied with all the medicine, as everything was ineffective, but now I am surprised to see how all the pain disappeared at once." Though no name was actually mentioned, it was the very story of Mrs. Sapatnekar. Her pain, as described by Baba, soon left her and she was very happy.

Then Mr. Sapatnekar went ahead to take darshan. He was, once again, welcomed with the former, "Get out!" This time, however, Mr. Sapatnekar was more penitent and persevering, for he acknowledged that Baba's displeasure was due to his past deeds. He then resolved to make amends for such. He determined to see Baba alone and ask His pardon for his past actions. As he did this, he placed his head on Baba's feet and Baba placed His hand on his head. Sapatnekar then began to massage and stroke Baba's leg. A shepherdess came along, sat down, and began to massage Baba's waist. Baba, in his characteristic way, then began to tell the story of a bania. He related the various vicissitudes of Sapatnekar's entire life, including the death of his only son. Sapatnekar was quite surprised that Baba's story was exactly that of his very own life and he wondered how Baba knew every detail. Thus, Sapatnekar learned that Baba was omniscient and knew the hearts of all. Just as that thought crossed his mind, Baba, while still addressing the shepherdess, pointed to Sapatnekar and said, "This fellow blames Me and charges Me with killing his son. Do I kill people's children? Why does this fellow come to the masjid and cry? Now then, this is what I will do. I will bring that very child who died back into his wife's womb." With these words, He placed His blessing hand on Sapatnekar's head and

comforted him saying, “These feet are old and holy. You are care free now. **Place your entire faith in Me and you will soon receive that which you wish.**” Sapatnekar was extremely moved with emotion. He bathed Baba’s feet with his tears and then returned to his residence.

Sapatnekar made preparations of worship and naivedya and then he and his wife went to the masjid. He offered everything to Baba every day and accepted prasad from Him. There was a crowd in the masjid, but Sapatnekar went there again and again. Seeing heads clashing against heads, Baba said to Sapatnekar, “Oh, why do you prostrate yourself again and again? One namaskar offered with love and humility is enough.”

That night, Sapatnekar witnessed the Chavadi procession (described in a previous chapter). In the procession, Baba looked like a veritable Pandurang (Vitthal).

The following day, before Sapatnekar left to go back home, he thought he should pay one rupee as dakshina to Baba, and, if He asked again, instead of saying no, he should pay one more, reserving for himself sufficient money to cover the expenses of the journey back home. Thus, when he went to the masjid and offered one rupee, Baba, being omniscient, asked for another as per his intention, and when it was paid, Baba blessed him saying, “Take the cocoanut, put it in your wife’s oti (upper fold of her sari) and be at ease, with no anxiety.” Sapatnekar did as he was told and within a year, a son was born to him, whom they named Murlidhar. When the infant was eight months old, they went back to Shirdi and placed the infant at Baba’s feet, praying, “Oh Sainath, we do not know how to redeem Your obligations, therefore we prostrate ourselves before You. Bless us, please, we who are helpless. Henceforth, let Your holy feet be our sole refuge. Please turn our thoughts away from worry and troubled ideas, that our minds may dwell only on Your bhajan and the great absolute. Please bless us, Baba.” Baba blessed them.

In time, the Sapatnekars had two more sons, Bhaskar and Dinkar. Thus, they realized that Sai Baba’s words were always true and brought fulfillment.

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**



# Chapter XLIX

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Stories of: Hari Kanoba - Somadev Swami - Nanasaheb Chandorkar**

### Preliminary

The Vedas and the Puranas cannot sufficiently praise (describe) Brahma or the satguru. How then can we, who are ignorant, describe our satguru, Shri Sai Baba? We think it is better to keep quiet in this matter. **In reality, the observance of the vow of silence is the best way of praising the satguru.** The good qualities of Sai Baba, however, make us forget our vow of silence and inspire us to speak. Delicious dishes taste flat if there be no company of friends and relations to partake of them with us, but when they join us, the dishes acquire additional flavor. The same is true of the Sai Leelamrit - the nectar in the form of Sai's leelas. This nectar should be enjoyed in the company of our friends and relations - the more, the better.

It is Sai, Himself, that inspires these stories and gets them written as He desires. Our duty is to surrender completely to Him and meditate on Him. Practicing penance is better than vows, sacrifices, charity, or making pilgrimages, and worshiping the Lord is better than penance. Meditation on the satguru is the best of all. We have, therefore, to chant Sai's name, ponder His sayings, meditate on His form and feel real love for Him in our heart. All these actions must be done for His sake. There is no better means than this for snapping the bondage of samsar. If we do our duty in accordance to this, Sai is bound to help and liberate us.

We now revert to the stories of this chapter.

## **Hari Kanoba**

A gentleman from Bombay named Hari Kanoba heard of Sai Baba's leelas from his friends and relations. He did not believe in them, as he was a doubting Thomas. Since he wanted to test Baba himself, he went to Shirdi with some of his friends from Bombay. He wore a jari bordered turban on his head and a new pair of sandals on his feet. Seeing Baba from a distance, he thought of going over to Him and prostrating himself before Him, however, he did not know what to do with his new sandals. He decided to place them in a corner of the open courtyard and then return to the masjid to receive Baba's darshan.

Having done so, Hari Kanoba made a reverential bow to Baba, took udi and prasad from Him, and returned to the open courtyard. When Hari reached the corner wherein he had placed his new sandals, he was shocked to find they had disappeared. He searched for them in vain and returned to his lodging very dejected.

He bathed, offered worship and naivedya, and sat for meals, but all the while, he was thinking only about his missing sandals. Upon finishing his meal, he went out to wash his hands and saw a Maratha boy coming toward him. The boy had a stick in his hand, on top of which was suspended a new pair of sandals. The youngster told the men who had come out to wash their hands that Baba had sent him with this stick and sandals and had asked him to go about the streets crying, "Hari Ka Beta. Jarika Pheta." He continued that Baba told him, "If anyone claims these sandals, first assure yourself that his name is Hari and he is the son of Ka, i.e., Kanoba, and that he wears a jari bordered turban. Only then, give the sandals." Upon hearing this, Hari Kanoba was pleasantly surprised. He went over to the boy, claimed the sandals as his own, explaining that his name was Hari and he was the son of Ka (Kanoba). He then showed the child his jari bordered turban. The boy was satisfied and returned the sandals to him.

In rethinking what had happened, Hari Kanoba realized that his jari bordered turban was visible to everyone and Baba might have seen it, but how could He know his name was Hari and that he was the son of Kanoba, as this was his first trip to Shirdi? After all, he came to Shirdi with the sole object in mind of testing Baba, and with no other motive. Thus, he came to know by this incident, that Baba was a great satpurush. Hari Kanoba got exactly the proof he wanted and returned home well pleased with Sai Baba.

## **Somadeva Swami**



Now hear the story of another man who came to test Baba. Bhaiji, brother of Kakasaheb Dixit, was staying in Nagpur. When he had gone to the Himalayas in 1906, he made the acquaintance of Somadeva Swami of Haradwar at Uttarkashi in the Gangotri valley. Both took down each other's names in their diaries. Five years later, Somadeva Swami came to Nagpur as Bhaiji's guest. There, he was pleased to hear of Sai Baba's leelas, and a strong desire arose in his mind to go to Shirdi to see Him. He got a letter of introduction from Bhaiji and left for Shirdi.

After passing Manmad and Kopergaon, the swami took a tanga and drove to Shirdi. As he approached Shirdi, he saw two flags waving high up over the masjid. Generally, various paraphernalia are associated with different saints, as well as different modes of behavior and styles of living, but these outward signs should never be a standard with which to judge the worth of a saint. Somadeva Swami, however, was influenced by such. When he saw the flags flying over the masjid, he thought, "Why should a saint take a liking for these flags? Does this denote sainthood? It simply implies the saint's hankering after fame." Thinking in this manner, he then wished to cancel his Shirdi trip and told his fellow travelers that he would go back. They immediately replied to him, "Then why did you come so far? If your mind becomes restless at the sight of flags, how much more agitated would you be on seeing the ratha (car), the palanquin, the horse and all the other paraphernalia?" The swami became more confounded and said, "I have seen so many sadhus with horses, palanquins and tom-toms that it is better for me to return than see any more such sadhus." So saying, he started to leave.

The swami's fellow travelers pressed him not to go back, and urged him to proceed with them. They asked him to stop his crooked way of thinking and told him that the sadhu, i.e., Baba, did not care a bit for flags, fame or paraphernalia. It was the people, His devotees, who displayed all the paraphernalia out of love and devotion to Him. Finally, the swami was persuaded to continue his journey, go to Shirdi, and see Baba.

When he went and saw Baba in the courtyard, he melted inside, his eyes filled with tears, his throat constricted and all his evil and crooked thoughts vanished. He remembered his guru's saying, "Our abode and place of rest is where the mind is most pleased and charmed." The swami wished to roll himself in the dust of Baba's feet, but when he approached Baba, he was startled as Baba became wild and cried aloud, "Let all our humbug (paraphernalia) be with us. Go back to your home! Beware if you come back to this masjid! Why take darshan from one who flies a flag over His masjid? Is this a sign of sainthood? Do not remain here for even one moment!" The swami was taken aback by surprise. He realized Baba could read his mind. The swami recognized Baba was

omniscient, pure and noble and that, he, himself, was least intelligent.

The swami looked on as Baba was embracing devotees, touching someone with His hand of grace, comforting others, staring kindly at some, laughing with others, giving udi and prasad and pleasing and satisfying all. The swami wondered why he alone should be dealt with so harshly. Thinking seriously about the matter, he came to realize that Baba's conduct responded exactly to his inner thoughts and that he should take a lesson from that and improve. The swami realized that Baba's remote conduct and wrath was a blessing in disguise. It is needless to say that later on his faith in Baba was confirmed and he became a staunch devotee of Baba.

### **Nanasaheb Chandorkar**

Hemadpant concludes this chapter with a story of Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Once, when Nanasaheb was sitting in the masjid with Mhalasapati and others, a Mohammedan gentleman from Bijapur came with his family to see Baba. When Nanasaheb saw the gosha ladies who accompanied the gentleman, he became anxious and wanted to go away, but Baba prevented him from doing so.

The ladies came and received darshan from Baba. When one of the ladies removed her veil before honoring Baba's feet, Nanasaheb, who saw her face, was so smitten with her rare beauty that he wished to see her face again. Knowing Nana's restlessness of mind, Baba spoke to him after the lady had gone and said, "Nana, why are you getting agitated in vain? Let the senses do their allotted work. We should not meddle with their work. God has created this beautiful world and it is our duty to appreciate its beauty. The mind will become steady and will gradually calm itself. When the front door is open, why use the back one? When the heart is pure, there is no difficulty whatsoever. Why should one be afraid of anyone, if there be no evil thought in his mind? Let the eyes do their work. Why should you feel shy and tottering?"

Shama was present while Baba was speaking to Nana, but he could not follow the meaning of what Baba said, so he asked Nana about it on their way home. Nana told him about his restlessness at the sight of the beautiful lady, how Baba knew it and advised him about it. Nana explained Baba's meaning as follows, "Our mind is fickle by nature, but it should not be allowed to run wild. The senses may get restless, but the body should be held in check and not be allowed to be impatient. Senses run after objects, but we should not follow them and crave those objects. By slow and gradual practice, restlessness can be conquered. We should not be swayed by the senses, but at the same time, they cannot

be completely controlled. We should curb them rightly and properly according to the need of the occasion. Beauty is the subject of sight. We should look fearlessly at the beauty of objects. There is no room for shyness or fear and we should never entertain any evil thoughts. Making the mind desireless, we should observe God's works of beauty. In this way, the senses will be easily and naturally controlled and even in enjoying objects, you will be reminded of God. If the outer senses are not held in check and if the mind be allowed to run after objects and be attached to them, the cycle of births and deaths will not come to an end. Objects of the senses are harmful and take us away from the spiritual goal of Self-realization. With viveka (discrimination) as our charioteer, we should control the mind and not allow the senses to go astray. With such a charioteer, we reach the Vishnu-pada, the final abode, our real home from which there is no return."

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Baba's Charan



# Chapter L

## Shri Sai Satcharita

**Stories of: Kakasaheb Dixit - Shri Tembye Swami - Balaram Dhurandhar**

Chapter 50 of the original *Shri Sai Satcharita* has been incorporated in Chapter 39 as it dealt with the same subject matter. Now Chapter 51 of the *Satcharita* has been treated here as Chapter 50. This chapter gives the stories of (1) Kakasaheb Dixit (2) Shri Tembye Swami and (3) Balaram Dhurandhar.

### Preliminary

Victory be unto Sai who is the main stay of the bhaktas, who is our satguru, who expounds the meaning of the *Bhagavad Gita* and who showers us with grace. Oh Sai, look favorably on us and bless us all.

The sandal wood trees grow on the Malaya mountains and ward off heat. The clouds pour rain and thereby cool and refresh everyone. The flowers blossom in the spring and remind us to worship God. As such, the stories of Sai Baba come forth in order to give solace and comfort to the readers. Both those who tell, and those who hear the stories of Baba, are blessed and holy.

It is a well established fact that **though we try hundreds of means or sadhanas, we do not attain the spiritual goal of life unless a satguru blesses us with His grace.** The following story is an illustration of this statement.

### **Kakasaheb Dixit (1864 - 1926)**

Mr. Hari Sitaram, alias Kakasaheb Dixit, was born in 1864 in a Vadnagara Nagar Brahmin family in Khandwa (C.P.). His primary education was in Khandwa, Hinganghat, and his secondary education was in Nagpur. He came to Bombay for higher education and studied first in Wilson College and afterward, in Elphinstone College. After graduation in 1883, he passed his L.L.B. and solicitor's examinations. First, he served in the firm of the Government Solicitors, Messrs. Little and Col, and some time later, started a solicitors' firm of his own.

Whereas Kakasaheb Dixit later became a great devotee of Sai Baba, before 1909, Sai Baba's name was not familiar to him. Once, while Dixit was staying at Lonavla, he happened to see his old friend, Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Both spent some time talking about various things. Kakasaheb described how, when he was boarding a train in London, he had an accident, slipped, and injured his foot. Hundreds of remedies gave him no relief. Nanasaheb then told him that if he wished to get rid of the lameness and pain in his leg, he should go to his satguru - Sai Baba. He also gave him all the particulars of Sai Baba and mentioned to him Sai Baba's dictum, "I draw to Me My man from far off or even across the seven seas, like a sparrow with a string fastened to it's feet." Nanasaheb made it clear to Dixit that if he was not Baba's man, he would not be attracted to Him and be given a darshan. Kakasaheb was pleased to hear Nanasaheb's words and replied that he would go to see Baba and pray to Him to cure not so much his lame leg, but bring round his lame, fickle mind and give him eternal bliss.

Some time after this conversation with Nanasaheb, Kakasaheb went to Ahmednagar and stayed with Sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar in connection with securing votes for a seat in the Bombay Legislative Council. Mr. Balasaheb Mirikar, son of Kakasaheb Mirikar, who was mamlatdar of Kopergaon, came to Ahmednagar at that time as well, in connection with a horse exhibition being held there. After the election business was over, Kakasaheb Dixit wanted to go to Shirdi and both Mirikars, father and son, were thinking about a proper guide who could accompany Dixit.

Meanwhile, Sai Baba was arranging things for Dixit's reception. Shama received a telegram from his father-in-law at Ahmednagar stating that his wife was seriously ill and that Shama should come with his own wife to see her. Having received Baba's permission, Shama left for Ahmednagar. When he arrived there, he found his mother-in-law improving and feeling better.



Then, Nanasaheb Panshe and Appasaheb Gadre happened to see Shama on their way to the horse exhibition in Ahmednagar and told him to go to Mirikar's house, meet Kakasaheb Dixit, and take him to Shirdi.

Kakasaheb Dixit and the Mirikars were informed of Shama's arrival. In the evening, Shama went to the Mirikar's home and introduced himself to Kakasaheb. Then, arrangements were made for Shama to leave for Kopergaon with Kakasaheb on the ten o'clock night train. When all the plans were settled, a curious thing happened. Balasaheb Mirikar threw aside the veil on Baba's big portrait and showed it to Kakasaheb. He was surprised to see that Baba, whom he was going to meet in Shirdi, was already there in the form of His portrait to greet him at that juncture. He was quite moved and prostrated before the portrait, which belonged to Megha. The glass over the portrait had been broken and had been sent to the Mirikars for repairs. Thus, the necessary repairs had been completed and it was then decided to give the portrait to Kakasaheb, who could return it to Shama.

They booked their passage a little before ten p.m., but when the train arrived, they found the second class to be overcrowded, consequently there was no room for them. Fortunately, the guard on the train happened to be an acquaintance of Kakasaheb and he put them up in first class. Thus, they traveled comfortably and alighted at Kopergaon. Their joy knew no bounds when they saw Nanasaheb Chandorkar there. He, too, was bound for Shirdi. They embraced one another and then bathed in the sacred Godavari River. After bathing, they started out for Shirdi.

Upon arrival in Shirdi, Kakasaheb received Baba's darshan. When Kaka received Baba's grace, his mind melted, his eyes filled with tears, and his entire being overflowed with joy. Baba told him that He was waiting for him and had sent Shama ahead to receive him.

Kakasaheb decided to stay with Baba in Shirdi and passed many happy years in His company. He built a wada in Shirdi which he made his more or less permanent home. The experiences he had with Baba are so manifold, it is not possible to relate them all here. The readers are advised to read Vol 12, No. 6 - 9 from 'Shri Sai Leela' magazine regarding Kakasaheb Dixit's experiences. Thus, we close this account with the mention of one fact only. Baba had comforted Kakasaheb by telling him that in the end, "He will take him in a balloon," (i.e. secure for him a happy death). Baba's words proved true, for on July 5, 1926, Kakasaheb was traveling in a train with Hemadpant and talking about Sai Baba. All

of a sudden, he threw his neck on Hemadpant's shoulder and breathed his last with no trace of pain or uneasiness.

### **Shri Tembye Swami**

The following story shows how saints love each other with fraternal affection. Once, Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati, known as Shri Tembye Swami encamped at Rajamahendri (Andra County) on the banks of the Godavari. He was a devout, orthodox jnani and bhakti yogi of God Dattatreya. Mr. Pundalikrao, a pleader of Nanded (Nizam State), went to see him with some friends. While they were talking with him, the names of Sai Baba and Shirdi were casually mentioned. Hearing Baba's name, the swami bowed with his hands and, taking a cocoanut, gave it to Pundalikrao saying, "Offer this to my brother, Sai, with my pranam and request Him not to forget me, but ever love me." He also added that swamis do not generally bow to others, but in this case, an exception had to be made. Mr. Pundalikrao consented to take the fruit and message to Baba. The swami was right in calling Baba a brother, for as he maintained an agnihotra (sacred fire) day and night in his orthodox fashion, Baba, too, kept His agnihotra (dhuni) ever burning in the masjid.

After a month had passed, Pundalikrao and the others left for Shirdi with the special cocoanut. They came to Manmad, felt thirsty, and went to a rivulet to get drinking water. As water should not be drunk on an empty stomach, they took out some refreshments, i.e. chivda (flattened rice mixed with spice). The chivda tasted very pungent, and in order to soften it, some one suggested and broke a cocoanut and mixed the scraping with the chivda. Thus, they made the chivda more tasty and palatable. Unfortunately, the fruit broken and eaten turned out to be the same one entrusted to Pundalikrao by the swami.

As they neared Shirdi, Pundalikrao remembered the swami's gift, i.e. the cocoanut, and became quite upset when he realized it was the very same cocoanut which they had broken and utilized for the chivda. Filled with fear and trembling, Pundalikrao arrived in Shirdi and saw Baba. Baba had already received a wireless message regarding the cocoanut from Tembye Swami, so He immediately asked Pundalikrao to give Him the gift sent by His brother. Pundalikrao grasped Baba's feet, confessed his guilt and negligence, repented, and asked for Baba's pardon. He offered to give Baba another fruit as a substitute, but Baba refused his offer saying that the worth of that cocoanut was by far many times more valuable than an ordinary one and that it could not be replaced by another. But then Baba added, "Now you need not worry yourself any more about the matter. It was on account of My wish that the cocoanut was entrusted to you and ultimately broken on the way. Why should you take the doership of these actions on yourself? **Do**



**not entertain the sense of doership in doing good or bad deeds. Be entirely without pride and without ego in all things and your spiritual progress will be rapid.”**

Thus, what an exceptional and profound spiritual instruction Baba gave!

### **Balaram Dhurandhar (1878-1925)**

Mr. Balaram Dhurandhar belonged to the Pathare Prabhu community of Santa Cruz, Bombay. He was an advocate of the Bombay High Court and part-time Principal of the Government Law School, Bombay. The whole Dhurandhar family was pious and religious.

Mr. Balaram served his community and wrote and published an account of it. He then turned his attention to spiritual and religious matters. He carefully studied the *Bhagavad Gita* and its commentary, *Jnaneshwari*, and other philosophical and metaphysical works. He was a devotee of Vithoba of Phandharpur. He came in contact with Sai Baba in 1912. Six months previously, his two brothers, Babulji and Vamanarao, had gone to Shirdi and received Baba's darshan. They returned home and had mentioned their sweet experiences to Balaram and other family members. Then, everyone decided to go and see Sai Baba

Before the Dhurandhar brothers went to Shirdi, Baba openly declared, "Today, many of my Darbar people are coming." The Dhurandhar brothers were astonished to hear that remark from others, as they had not given any previous intimation of their trip. While all the other devotees prostrated themselves before Baba and sat talking with Him, Baba said, "These are my Darbar people to whom I referred before." He then said to the Dhurandhar brothers, "We are acquainted with each other for the last sixty generations." All the brothers were meek and modest. They stood with joined hands, staring at Baba's feet. They experienced all the sattwic emotions, and were quite happy. Then, they went to their lodging, took their meals, and after resting a bit, went to the masjid. Balaram sat near Baba and massaged His legs. Baba, who was smoking the chillim, offered it to Balaram. Balaram was not accustomed to smoking, but he reverently accepted the pipe, smoked it with great difficulty, and returned it with a bow. This was a most auspicious moment for Balaram. He had suffered from asthma for the past six years and this smoke completely cured him of his illness. The disease did not trouble him again until six years later, when he suffered an asthmatic attack at precisely the same time Baba entered mahasamadhi.

The day the Dhurandhar brothers visited Shirdi was a Thursday, thus, the brothers

had the good fortune of witnessing the Chavadi procession that night. At the arati function in the Chavadi, Balaram saw the luster of Pandurang on Baba's face and the next morning at the kakad arati, the same phenomenon - the luster of his beloved deity Pandurang - again manifested on Baba's face.

Mr. Balaram Dhurandhar wrote in Marathi an account of the life of the Maharashtra saint, Tukaram, but he did not survive to see its publication. It was published later on by his brothers in 1928. In a short note on Balaram's life given in the beginning of the book, the above account of Balaram's visit has been fully corroborated therein (vide page 6 of the book).

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Epilogue

Having completed Chapter 51, treated as chapter 50, we will proceed with the last chapter (no.52 in the original text). It is here that Hemadpant wrote his concluding remarks and promised to provide an index, giving the contents of all the chapters in verse as is given in Marathi sacred books. Unfortunately, the index was not found in Hemadpant's papers. It was therefore composed and supplied by an able and worthy devotee of Sai Baba, Mr. B.V. Deo (retired mamlatdar of Thana). As English books provide an index in the beginning with contents of each chapter described at the beginning of each chapter, we will not consider the last index chapter here. Thus, the final chapter shall be regarded as the epilogue.

Unfortunately, Hemadpant did not survive to revise the last chapter's manuscript to prepare it for the press. When it was sent to the press, Mr. Deo found it to be incomplete and unintelligible in certain places, but it had to be published as it was found. The main topics dealt therein are briefly given below.

### Greatness of Satguru Sai

We prostrate ourselves before Sai and take refuge in His grace, for it is He who besets all animate and inanimate things in the universe. It is He who pervades all creatures equally without differentiation. It is He to whom all devotees are alike and who knows not honor nor dishonor, like nor dislike. If we remember Him and surrender to Him, He fulfills all our desires and leads us to the goal of life, Self-realization.

**The ocean of mundane existence is very hard to cross.** Waves of infatuation beat high against the banks of bad thoughts, causing trees of fortitude to fall down. The breeze of egoism blows forcibly and makes the ocean rough and agitated. Crocodiles in the form of anger and hatred move there fearlessly and eddies in the form of the ideas "I and mine" whirl there incessantly. Innumerable fish in the form of censure, hatred and jealousy swim about. Although this ocean is so fierce and terrible, Satguru Sai is its agasti (destroyer) and the devotees of Sai have no fear of it.

**Our satguru is the boat which will safely take us across this ocean.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Prayer

Let us worship Sai Baba, bow to His lotus feet, and make the following prayer:

Let not our mind wander and wish for anything but Thee. Let this work, *Shri Sai Satcharita*, be in every house and let it be studied daily. Ward off the calamities of those who study it regularly.

Om Shri Sai Ram.

## Fala Shruti (reward of study)

Now a few words about the reward you get from a study of this work. After bathing in the sacred Godavari, and after taking the darshan of the samadhi in the samadhi mandir in Shirdi, you should read, or listen to the reading, of the *Shri Sai Satcharita*. If you do this, all your threefold afflictions will vanish. Casually thinking about the stories of Sai, you will become interested in spiritual life and if you continue to read and study this work with love, all your sins will be destroyed. If you wish to be free from the cycle of births and deaths, read Sai's stories and always remember Him.

If you dive into the sea of Sai's stories and then tell them to others, you will receive an ever new flavor of them and save the hearers from perdition.

If you go on meditating on Sai's form, it will, in the course of time, disappear and lead you to Self-realization. It is very hard to realize the nature of Self or Brahma, but if you approach sagun (form) Brahma through the form of Sai, your progress will be easy.

If the devotee completely surrenders himself to Him, he will lose his individuality and become merged in Him in all of the three states, viz. waking, dream and sleep. Thus, he will be rid of the bond of samsara.

**If anyone, after bathing, reads *Shri Sai Satcharita* with love and faith, and completes it within a week (saptaha), his calamities will disappear.** If he hears or reads it daily and regularly, all his dangers will be warded off. By its study, a man striving for success in his life will achieve it, and the devotee striving for Self-realization, shall attain his goal. The reward will be according to the faith and devotion of the individual.

If *Shri Sai Satcharita* is read respectfully, Sai will be pleased, and will remove your ignorance and poverty, blessing you with knowledge, serenity and prosperity. If you read a chapter daily with concentrated mind, it will give you unbounded happiness. One, who has his welfare at heart, should study it carefully and then he will ever remember Sai gratefully and joyfully, in birth after birth.

This work should be read at home, especially on Guru Pournima (Ashada full moon day), Gokul Ashtami, Rama Navami and Dasara (Baba's anniversary day). If you study this one book carefully, all your desires will be satisfied, and if, in your heart and mind, you always remember Sai's holy feet, you will easily cross the bhava (samsar) sagar. By its study, the diseased and sick will receive health, - the poor, wealth, - the mean and afflicted, prosperity, - and the mind will be rid of all ideas and gain steadiness.

Dear good and devoted readers and listeners, we bow to you all and make a special request. Never forget Him whose stories you have read day by day and month by month. The more fervently you read or listen to these stories, the more encouragement and blessings Sai bestows on you.

### **Prasad Yachana**

We close this book with a prayer to the Almighty for the following prasad or favor:

May the readers and devotees develop complete and wholehearted devotion to Sai's feet. May His form be ever fixed in their eyes and may they see Sai (the Lord) in all beings. Amen!

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## **Arati**

Oh, Sai Baba, we wave lights before You, the bestower of happiness to the jivas. Give us, Your servants and devotees, rest under the dust of Your feet. Burning (destroying) desire, You remain absorbed in the Self and show the Lord (God) to aspirants. As one feels intently, You give Your devotees experiences or realizations accordingly. Oh kind hearted, Your power is such! Meditation on Your name removes our fear of samsar. Your method of work is really unfathomable, as You always help the poor and helpless. In this Kali age, You, the all pervasive Datta, have really incarnated as Saguna Brahma. Ward off the fear of samsar of the devotees who come to You so as to enable them to see the holy feet of the Lord. Oh beloved Sai, may our treasure be the service of Your holy feet. Bless we who sing Your praise. Amen!

**Bow to Shri Sai - Peace be to all**

## Mahasamadhi





# SHRI SAI SATCHARITA

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