

SRI SATCITANAND SATGURU SAINATH MAHARAJ KI JAI

SRI SAI SATCHARITA

CHAPTER 1

Hemadpant begins the work of Sri Sai Satcharita by making his obeisance to Lord Ganesh, Goddess Saraswati, Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, His deity Narayan Adinath. He also gives his salutations to Bharadwaj Muni, his ancestors, to his future readers and lastly to his Guru Shri Sainath. The Author goes on to relate the following story.

The Story Of Grinding Wheat And It's Philosophical Significance

One fine morning around 1910 when I went to the Masjid in Shridhi to take the Sai Baba's Darshan I was wonderstruck to see Baba making preparations for grinding wheat. He spread sack on the floor and he put few handfuls of wheat in the upper opening of the mill and started rotating by hand. None had the courage to ask Baba, not even me why he was doing so. Immediately this news spread in the village and at once villagers flocked to the Masjid to see Baba's act. Suddenly four women came out from the crowd; pushing Baba forcibly aside then took over the handle and started grinding wheat, while singing Baba's Leelas.

At first Baba was very angry, but seeing the women's love and devotion he was much pleased and gave a beautiful smile. While the women were grinding various thoughts came in their mind about why Baba was doing such an act as he needed nothing? Maybe they thought that he would distribute the flour amongst them. Finally they completed the grinding and divided the flour into four portions amongst themselves. Seeing this Baba got very angry and scolded them for being so selfish. Baba ordered them to take the flour and throw in The outskirts of the village. The women religiously followed the instructions of Baba and completed the work.

When I asked the people of Shirdi why Baba did this they told me that it was Baba's remedy to protect the village from Cholera epidemic. It was not the wheat but the Cholera epidemic itself was ground to pieces and pulled out of the Village. As time passed by the epidemic subsided and the villagers were happy. I kept thinking what earthly connection was there between wheat flour and Cholera. I was very contented and my heart was filled with joy. This incident inspired me to write Baba's life - The Sai Satcharita.

Philosophical Significance of Grinding

Apart from the above meaning of grinding wheat there is also a philosophical significance to it. Baba lived in Shirdi for about 60 years and during this period he did grinding everyday, not of wheat alone but the sins, mental and physical afflictions and the miseries of his innumerable devotees. The significance of his two stones are Karma which is the lower and Bhakti which is the upper one. The significance of the handle is dhyana. Baba firmly believed that knowledge of self realization is not possible unless the grinding of our sins, consisting of three Gunas Sattava, Rajas , Tamas and Ahankar is done.

This reminds me of Sant Kabir who once told his Guru “I am sad because I have been crushed under the wheel of worldly existence like the corn in the Hand mill’ to this his Guru replied “Do not be afraid hold to the handle of knowledge of this mill and don’t let it go instead look inwards to the centre and you are sure to be saved.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

CHAPTER 2

In this Chapter the Author Hemadpant mentions the reason why he undertook to write the life of Baba and narrates his ambitious thoughts.

The Object of writing This Work

In my first Chapter I described how Baba grinded the wheat to save the village from the cholera epidemic, similarly I heard many miracles of Baba which I truly believed would be interesting and instructive for Baba's devotees and help them to remove their sins. This very essence of philosophy inspired me to write the sacred life and teachings of Sai Baba. I truly believe that the life of saints always shows us the true path to salvation.

Incapacity And Boldness In Undertaking The Work

Hemadpant expresses that he had no confidence to undertake this divine work And further said "I do not know my myself very well, then how can I write the life of a Saint or describe the nature of incarnations which even the Vedas were unable to do? Although to write a life of a Saint is extremely difficult and therefore took Sai Baba's blessings.

According to Saint Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, Lord loves those who write the lives of Saints, and saints also have their peculiar method of assigning the service. In the year 1700 the poet Mahipati was inspired to write the lives of saints. Similarly in 1800 Das Ganu wrote 4 works – Bhakta Vijay, Sant Vijay, Bhakta Leelamrut and Saint Leelamrut beside's that he also composed sweet poems on Sai Baba. Other names worth mentioning are Mrs. S Raghunath Tendukar author of Sainath Bhajan Mala and Mr. Amidas Bhavani Mehta who has written some books on Baba in Gujarati and also published his work in Magazines. When so much is written on Baba what is the necessity of Satcharita?

The answer is very simple. The life of Sai Baba is like a vast ocean of knowledge wisdom and Bhakti, his stories and teachings give immense peace and happiness to people who are drowned in worldly sorrows and miseries. If the teachings of Sai Baba are listened to and meditated upon devotees desired will be fulfilled both spiritually and materially. So I thought I should collect these stories together, which would benefit all those who have never seen nor had the opportunity to have Baba's Darshan. My inspiration was to surrender my entire ego at Baba's feet so that my path is clear and happy for this world and the next world.

I did not have the courage to take permission of Baba myself, so I asked Shama Baba's closest devotee to speak to him on my behalf. Shama told Baba that "Annasaheb wishes to write your biography if you bless him with your grace because without your consent no work can be accomplished".

When Baba heard this he was very overwhelmed gave me his divine blessings. Baba told me to keep collection of his stories and experiences. Baba explained to me that, I was just an instrument but the actual work of writing his autobiography will be done by he himself thus satisfying the wishes of his devotees. Baba also told me to surrender myself totally at his sacred feet, and therefore he would help me in every way. Baba also mentioned that “I myself shall enter into you and write my own life. This will evolve faith in my devotees and they will easily get self realization and eternal bliss”.

Significance Of Prophetic Title

The word “Discussion” provoked me to tell the story how I got my title Hemadpant.

It so happened that I was in friendly terms with Kakkasaheb Dixit and Nanasahed Chandorkar who were pressing me to go to Sirdhi and have Baba’s darshan, which I promised to do. But circumstances prevented me to go to Shirdi. At that time my friend’s son fell sick with very high fever. My friend tried all possible treatments but his fever would not abate. He even asked his Guru to come and bless his son but nothing seemed to work. I began to have all negative thoughts about Gurus in general that they were of no use. This prevented me from postponing my Shirdi trip.

But the inevitable happened for me. Mr. Nanasahed Chandorkar was on a tour to Bassein, did not go there, instead came to see me in Bandra and convinced me to go to Shirdi. I was so delighted that I decided to start for Sirdhi the same night. I planned to go to Dadar and then catch the train to Manmad from there. As I boarded the train for Dadar suddenly a Mohammeden came hastily to my compartment and asked me where I was going. I told him my plan. He suggested I go straight to Borribunder instead, as the Manmad mail did not stop at Dadar. If this miracle had not happened I would not have reached Shirdi the next day, my fortune favoured me. Bhausahed Dixit came to receive me and I went to Sathé Wada .

While getting down from the tonga a great devotee of Baba Tatyasaheb Noolkar told me that Sai Baba was at the corner of the Wada and that I must go and have his darshan now and then after bath see him at leisure.

Hearing this, my joy had no bounds and I went and took Baba’s darshan. The moment I touched Baba’s feet my thoughts changed, I felt an attitude of gratitude of all those people who inspired me to take the darshan of Baba. Soon I began to feel detached to the worldly things. I truly believed that the good Karmas of my past lives have helped me to receive the divine darshan of Sai Baba.

Hot Discussion

The day I arrived in Shirdi, I was having a discussion with Balasaheb Bhate about the importance of a Guru in one’s life. My point was “Why should we submit to others and loose our freedom.” To this Mr. Bhate started talking about

Destiny. He said “Whatever is destined to happen will happen, man proposes God disposes at this point our knowledge, pride nor egoism works”. This discussion went for hours but the net result was a big zero. Later on I came to a conclusion that egoism breeds discussion.

Then we went to the Masjid with others, Baba asked Kakasaheb Dixit about what discussion was going on in Sate Wada and what did Hemadpant say? Hearing this I was very surprised and started thinking how could Baba know our discussion?

I began to think why Baba called me by the name of Hemadpant. this word is a distorted form of “Hemadripant”. I knew that Hemadripant was a well-known minister of kings in the Yadav Dynasty. He was very learned, good natured and a famous author. He also invented accounts and shorthand in Marathi, comparing him I was just the opposite, this puzzled me immensely. Then a thought came to my mind this title was given to me to destroy my ego.

Looking back we see that Hemadpant went on to manage Sai Sansthan, maintained accounts and became the author of Sai Satcharita which leads to salvation in all walks of life. Thus the name Hemadpant was the most appropriate to him.

About The Necessity Of A Guru

Hemadpant left no notes about the above topic but Kakasaheb Dixit Has published his own notes regarding this matter.

Kakasaheb asked Baba to show him the way to go to his destination. To this Baba replied that there are many ways, but there is one way from Shirdi which is difficult as there are many tigers and lions.

To this Kaka asked Baba “What if we take a guide.” To this Baba answered “Then there is no problem as the guide will take straight to your destination avoiding all obstacles.” Mr. Dobholkar who was present at that occasion also realised that it was Baba’s way of answering about the necessity of a Guru. He came to a conclusion It is the Guru alone who shows the true path to self-realization, and the only virtues necessary for such a progress are faith and patience.

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CHAPTER 3

Sai Baba's Sanction And Promise

As mentioned in the previous chapter Baba already had given permission to Hemadpant for writing the Satcharita and said the following “ I give all my support for writing of the Satcharita, all you have to do is do your duty, don't be afraid. Steady your mind and have faith in my words. If my Leelas are written, the ignorance will vanish. If my leelas are devotedly listened to detachment will come about and devotion will rise and if one dives deep into it he would get precious jewels of knowledge.”

Hearing these words of Baba Hemadpant was much pleased and gained confidence and thought positively that this work would be a success. Then turning to Shama, Baba said “Whoever takes my name with love I shall fulfil all his desires and increase his devotion. Those devotees who are attached to me solely will feel inner peace and happiness by listening to my stories, and those who sing my leelas will receive infinite joy and contentment. I will free any person who surrenders completely to me, worships and meditates on me with all devotion. I shall draw out all my devotees from the jaws of death and all diseases will be got rid of. This is a way of Happiness and contentment. The pride and egoism of my devotees will vanish and they will attain supreme consciousness. Just by chanting my name one can do away with sins of speech and hearing.

Different Works Assigned to Different Devotees

The Lord assigns different jobs to different devotees. Some are given the work to built temples, some make ghats and there are some who sing glories of Lord, some are send on a pilgrimage, but I was allotted the work to write the Satcharita. I knew very well that I was unqualified for this job, but with Baba's grace alone I could accomplish this difficult task. Being a Brahman I had neither sight nor vision to do this task. When I took my pen to write, Baba took away all my egoism and he himself started writing his stories. He alone knows all ways of getting things done. Thus in any work the Grace of Lord is needed to accomplish any work.

Baba's Stories As Beacon As Light

Lighthouses are constructed in the sea to enable ships to sail safely avoiding any dangers, similarly Baba's stories protect us in the ocean of worldly existence and show us smooth spiritual path. When the stories of Saints enter our hearts egoism will vanish, doubts will disappear, pride will fall and wisdom will accumulate in abundance. Baba's name alone will destroy the sins of his devotees, a simple sadhana for attaining salvation.

Sadhana can be done in many ways like sacrifice, meditation and concentration, which is difficult to achieve, but singing and hearing the stories of Sai Baba is very easy only full attention is needed which in turn will give self realization. With these beautiful thoughts I was very fortunate that Sai Baba chose me to write his stories as Satcharita and thus will be beneficial to all his devotees with the divine grace of Sri Sainath.

Motherly Love Of Sai Baba

The way the cow loves her calf, similarly a human mother loves and takes . particular care of her child and looks after her/him in every possible way. This gives immense joy to the mother as the love of the mother is extraordinary. Similarly Satgurus feel this motherly love towards their disciples. Sai Baba had the same love for me too, I give an instance of it below.

In 1916 when I retired from the government service my pension was not sufficient to maintain my family. On Gurupurnima day when I went to Shirdi for Baba's darshan, Mr. Anna Chinchankar who was very concerned about me spoke to Baba "Please kindly look into him, his pension is not enough to maintain his growing family, kindly give him other job and remove all his worries. To this Baba replied " He will get some job later but for the moment he should serve me and avoid the company of atheists and wicked people. Should be modest and humble to all and worship whole heartedly. If he does this he will get eternal happiness and he will live in abundance.

Rahila's Story

One day a person named Rahila came to Shirdi. Day and night he recited the holy Koran and shout Allah O Akbar. The people of Shirdi got fed up of his harsh cries and shouts. They could not even have a proper sleep at night and felt much trouble and inconvenience. They suffered this nuisance for some days in silence but could not stand it anymore. Baba did not attend to their complain, instead asked the villagers to mind their own business.

Baba explained to the villagers that Rahila had a very bad wife to tried to trouble Rahila and himself, but hearing his prayers she dare not enter and they were at peace. Infact Rahila had no wife, by his wife Baba meant evil thoughts. As Baba love prayers of God he took Rahila's side and asked the villagers to bear the nuisance, which would abate in due course.

Baba's Sweet And Nectar Like Words

One day after the noon Arti when the villagers were returning home Baba gave the following beautiful advice:

“Be wherever you like. Do whatever you chose, but remember one thing all that you do is known to me. I am your inner ruler and is seated in your heart, I envelope all creature movable and immovable and the wirepuller of the show of this Universe. I am the mother of all beings. Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Nothing will harm those who turn their attention towards me or else the Maya will whip and lash those who forget me. All beings living or nonliving are my form.

Hearing these precious words I decided to serve no one but my Guru only, but one question was constantly in my mind about Baba’s reply about my job, wether it would come true or not.

But future events showed Baba’s words did come true, I did get a government job for a short duration and then I became free and devoted myself solely to the service of Sai Baba.

Before concluding this chapter I request the readers to give their whole undivided attention in the service of Sai Baba . Let them develop natural love and divine devotion and stick to the simple remedy of listening stories of Sainath. This alone will destroy their ignorance and lead them to the path of salvation. Let Sai Baba enthroned in the hearts of all.

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CHAPTER 4

Mission Of The Saints

Lord Krishna said in the Gita that “whenever the sins increase in the world I manifest myself age after age to protect the Dharma and to destroy injustice.”

This divine mission of Lord is represented by Saints and Sages who appear at appropriate times and work their own way to fulfil that mission. When people of all casts neglect their duties, when religious teachings are disrespected and humiliated. When people began to take forbidden food and intoxicating drinks, when people engage in various malpractices, when people fight among themselves, when Brahmins fail to do their duty, yogis neglect meditation, when people go in wrong direction and turn away from salvation, at that point saints appear and try to turn matters right by their words and action. They serve us in the beacon light and show us the true path of salvation. There have been many saints who appeared at various times to show us the right path, but the most recent one is Sai Baba Of Shirdi.

Shirdi The Holy Tirth

The Banks of the Godavari has given refuge to many saints, among them was Sant Dnyaneshwar. Shirdi also falls in Kopargoan or Ahmednagar district. After crossing the Godavari River in Kopergoan, travelling 9 miles to Nimgoan Shirdi is visible a well known holy place blessed and flourished by Sri Sainath.

Personality Of Sai Baba

It is because of SaiBaba Shirdi gained its importance. He conquered the world and attained wisdom. Peace was his mental ornament. He had no love for worldly things and was always engrossed in self realization. His heart was crystal clear and his speech rained nectar. He did not distinguish between rich and poor and nor did he care about honour or dishonour. He was lord of all beings. He spoke freely and mixed with people of all ages. Although he witnessed the worldly pleasures, he always remained in a meditative state and the name of Allah was always on his lips. While the world was awoken he slept, and while the world slept he was awake. He was as calm as the sea and his actions could not be determined. Although he sat in one place he knew what was happening around in the world. He told lot of stories each day but remained in silence. Baba leaned against the wall in the Masjid, walked 3 times a day in Lendi and Chavadi. He was meek, humble, and egoless and pleased all. He was truly a sadhak. The soil of Shirdi was trodden by Sai Baba’s feet and gained extraordinary importance. Thus Shirdi became the important Tirthasthan.

Darshan of Shri Sai was our yog sadhana, and rendered self realisation. Talking to him removed our sins, shampooing his legs was like our bath in the Tribeni River, and drinking the holy water of his feet destroyed our sins. To us his commands were Vedas, and having Udhi and Prasad was purifying. He gave us solace and was our absolute reality. He was always engrossed in knowledge and bliss. Shirdi was his centre but his actions extended far and beyond, thus the fame of Sai Baba spread and people from everywhere came to take his Darshan and be blessed. By mere darshan peoples mind became pure and were filled with immense joy. Examples what the devotees have said in this respect has been given below.

Dictum Of Goulibua

A 95 year old devotee of Baba He spent 8 months in Pandharpur and 4 months in on the Banks of the Ganges. He had a donkey for carrying his luggage and a disciple as his companion. Every year he came to Shirdi to see Sai Baba, whom he loved the most. He use to gaze at Baba saying “This is Pandharninath incarnation of Lord Vithal” the merciful Lord of the poor and helpless. This Goulibua was an old devotee of Vitthoba and testified that Sai Baba was a real Pandharinath.

Vithal Himself Appeared

Sai Baba was very fond of singing God’s name. He always uttered Allah Malik (God is Lord) and in his presence made others sing God’s name continuously day and night, all 7 days a week. This is called Namsaptah.

Once Baba asked Das Ganu to do the Naamsaptah, to this Das Ganu replied that me would only do it if provided he got the surety that Vithal would appear at the end of the 7th day. Baba assured him that certainly Vithal would appear but for that the devotee must be earnest and devout. Everything is in Shirdi one need not go to Dwarka to see Vitthal, he is here. Only when a devotee is bursting with love and devotion, Vitthal will manifest here.

After the Saptah was over Vithal did manifest himself. It so happened when Kaka Saheb Dixit was sitting for his morning meditation he saw Vitthal in a vision. When he saw Baba at noon Baba advised him to catch hold of Vitthal very firmly as he could escape from his hands. Then a hawker came to sell 30 pictures of Vitthoba. One of the pictures looked exactly the same as what Kaka saw in his vision. On seeing this he remembered Baba’s words and he was much surprised and delighted. He bought one picture of Vitthoba and placed it in his shrine of worship.

Bhagwantrao Kshirsagar’s Story

How fond was Baba of Vitthal worship was described in Bhagwantrao’s story.

Bhagwantrao's father was a great devotee of Vithoba. He worshipped Vithoba at home and from time to time also visited Phandarpur. After his father died Bhagwantrao stopped all worship. When Bhagwantrao came to Shirdi to meet Baba, Baba told him, that he bought him to Shirdi to tell him, He never offered food so he starved me and Vitthal, I shall now convince him to worship Vitthal" Said Baba.

Immaculate Conception Of Baba and His First Advent In Shirdi

Nobody knew the parents nor the birthplace of Sai Baba. Baba was first seen as a young lad of 16 sitting under a neem tree in Shirdi. Although he had full knowledge of Brahma he had no desire of worldly things and only believed in Mukti. Old women of Shirdi described him as a young, smart, fair and very handsome lad sitting on an asana under the neem tree. The people in the village were wonderstruck such a young lad in deep meditation, day and night. He was indeed a great soul.

One day god Khandova poised the body of some devotee. Then people of Shirdi began to ask him about Baba. At this Lord Khandova asked him to bring a big axe and dig at a particular place. When it was dug bricks were found underneath the flat stone. When the stone was removed a corridor was seen underneath 4 lights were burning, the corridor lead to the cellar where cow mouth shaped structure, wooden boards and rosaries were seen. Khandoba said that this lad practiced penance for 12 years. Then the people began to questions the lad, but he put them off by telling them that it was his Guru's place, and requested them to guard this place. The people then close the corridor as before. Sai Baba regarded the Neem tree as sacred. Mansapati and other devotees regard this site as a resting place of Sai Baba's Guru and pay their respects to it.

Three Wadas

[1] The site of the neem tree and its surrounding place was bought by Mr. Hari Vinayak and on this site a building Sathe Wada was built. This Wada was the sole resting place for pilgrims. A platform was built around the neem tree with lot of steps. There was a niche facing south and devotees sit at the platform facing north. It is believed that he who burns incense every Thursday and Friday evenings will attain eternal happiness. The Wada had become old, but necessary repairs and alterations have been made by the Sansthan.

{2} Then after few years another Wada was built by Kakasaheb Dixit and named Dixit Wada. KakaSaheb Dixit was a solicitor of Mumbai. When he went to England he injured his leg in an accident, so Nanasaheb Chandorkar advised him to see Baba. He went to see Baba in 1909 and requested to cure his lameness of the mind rather than the body. He was so pleased with Baba's darshan that he decided to stay in Shirdi. He built a Wada for himself and other devotees. The foundation stone of the Wada was laid on 10-12-1910. On that day 2 important events took place. Mr Dadasaheb Khapandwe was given the permission to return

home and the first night arti in Chavadi was started. The Wada was completed in 1911 on RamNavmi day with due rites and formalities.

(3) Then another Palacial Wada was put up by a millionaire of Nagpur Mr. Buti. Lot of money was spent on this Wada and it was well utilized as Sai Baba's body is laid to rest there. This is called the Samadhi Mandir. The site of the mandir had a garden which was watered and looked after by Baba himself. Out of the three Wadas Sathe Wada was the most useful to all, in the early days.

Hemadpant says that the other stories of Baba and other incidents will be described in the next Chapter.

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Chapter 5

Return With Chand Patil's Marriage Party

Chand Patil a well to do Mohammeden lived in a village called Dhoop. He was a village officer there. Since two months he lost his mare. He made a good search but his efforts were all in vain. Disappointed he returned home with a saddle, on his back. While travelling four and a half kilometres he came across a mango tree where a fakir was sitting. He had a cap on his head and was preparing to smoke a pipe. On seeing Chand Patil pass by he called him to join him for a smoke and asked him to take rest for a while before heading on. The fakir asked him about the saddle and to this Chand Patil explained him about his lost mare how upset he was not to find it back. Then the Fakir told him to search in the Nala close by. Chand Patil was surprised to see his mare there. He thought that the fakir was not any ordinary person but a great saint and returned with the mare. In the meantime the fakir prepared the Chillum and both of them took turns to smoke. On seeing all this Chand Patil was wonderstruck and invited the fakir to come to his house and accept his hospitality. Next day the fakir went to his house and stayed there for a while. That time Chand Patil's sister's son was to get married to the bride from Shirdi, so Patil made preparations to start for Shirdi for the marriage. The Fakir also accompanied the marriage party. The marriage went of peacefully and the party returned to Dhoop, except for the fakir who stayed back in Shirdi and remained there forever.

How The Fakir Got The Name Sai

When the marriage party arrived at Shirdi it stopped near the Khandoba temple at Bhagat Mhalsapati's field. The members of the party including the fakir descended one by one. Mhalsapati saw the fakir get down addressed him

“Welcome Sai” seeing this others also started addressing the same, and henceforth he became Sai Baba.

Contact With Other Saints

Sai Baba began to stay in the deserted Masjid. A saint named Devidas became who was living in Shirdi for many years became a good friend of Baba and even spend time at the Chavadi. Baba enjoyed his company. Another saint by the name of Jankidas also enjoyed the company of Baba. Another Saint named Gangagir also use to come and visit Baba at Shirdi. Whenever he saw Baba carrying the pitcher of water to water the garden he always said “Blessed is Shirdi that has got this precious jewel and that Baba was no ordinary person but a jewel of Shirdi. Even Saint Anandnath a disciple of Akalkot Maharaj described Baba as Precious Diamond, and said that one day the people of Shirdi will come to know this.

Baba’s Dress and Daily Routine

In young days Baba grew long hair and never shaved his beard. He dressed like an athlete. He went to Rahata carrying plants of Marigold, Jui and Jai which he planted there. A devotee named Vaman Tatiya supplied him daily two earthen pitches which Baba used for watering the plants by drawing water from the nearby well. After watering the garden when Baba put the pitcure down near the neem tree they would break, as they were unbaked. So Tatya supplied 2 fresh pitchers everyday and continued for 3 years. With Sai Baba’s effort a beautiful garden was created. At present day on this site stands the Samadhi Mandir which is visited by many devotees.

The Story Of Paduka (foot prints) under the neem tree

A Devotee of Akalkot Maharaj by the name of Bhai Krishnaji Alibagkar once thought of going to Sholapur district to offer prayers and take the darshan of Paduka of his guru. Before going he got a dream where Akalkot Maharaj appeared and told him that Shirdi was his resting place and therefore he must go there and offer his worship. So Bhai changed his plan and came to Shirdi, worshipped Baba, stayed there for 6 months and installed a Paduka under the neem tree on the auspicious day of Sharvan Shakain 1912 with all rite and rituals conducted by Dada Kelkar and Upasani. Worship was done by a Dixit Brahman and devotee Shagun managed the whole programme.

Complete Version Of This Story

Mr. B.V.Dev has described in detail about the Padukas by collecting information from Shagun and Dixit, and published the full version in Sai Leela.

In 1912 a Doctor from Bombay, Ramroa Kothare came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan accompanied by his compounder and his friend Bhai Krishna raj. The compounder and Bhai became friendly with Shagun Naik and Dixit. While sitting under the Neem tree and discussing common topics, they came up with the idea to construct a memorial of Sai Baba's first advent to Shirdi, it is then they came up with the idea of installing Baba's Paduka under the Neem tree made of rough stone. To this compounder suggested if he told his master Dr. Kothare about this then he would prepare the padukas.

All liked the idea. Dr. Ramaroa went to Upasani Maharaj of Khandoba and took his ideas and opinion about the project. At this Upasani Mharaj advised him to inscribe a sholaka as well as Baba's yogic powers. Upasani's suggestions were accepted and carried out. The Padukas were made in Mumbai and sent to Shirdi with the compounder, and was installed on Pournima day at 11am as instructed by Baba.

The paduka was carried on the head by Dixit from Khandoba temple to Dwarkamai in a procession. Baba touched the Paduka and said that they were the feet of the lord and asked them to install them at the foot of the Neem tree. All the instructions were carried out.

A day earlier a Parsi devotee Mr. Pastha Seth donated Rs.25 which was given by Baba for the installation of the Paduka. The total expenses for installation came to Rs.100 of which Rs.75 was collected as subscription. For the first 5 years Dixit worshipped the padukas and Dr. Kothare paid Rs.2 per month for lightening the lamp. And also send the railing round the Padukas which costed Rs.7.50 to bring. Shagun Naik paid for the roofing and offered Naivaidya and light the evening lamp, and Nana Pujari did the worship.

Krishnaraj was a devotee of Akalkot Maharaj, but he had come to Shirdi to install the Paduka. After taking Baba's darshan in Shirdi he took Baba's permission to go and see Akalkot Maharaj. At this Baba said to him "the Maharaj of that place is here, I. Hearing this Bhai did not go to Akalkot, but inturn came and visited Shirdi of and on.

Mr.B.V.Dev concluded that knew these details about the Paduka then he would not have failed to depict them in the Satcharita.

Wrestling Bout With Mohiddin Tamboli And Change in Life Style

There was a wrestler in Shirdi by the name of Mohiddin Tamboli. Baba and he did not agree on some points and at times both would have a fight, in which Baba would be defeated. Henceforth Baba changed his dress and mode of living. He discarded the kafni, wore a langot and covered his head with a piece of cloth. He took a piece of sack cloth for his bed and was contending to wear torn and worn rags. He always said that poverty was better than kingship and far better than Lordship.

A wrestler by the name of Ganganir also had similar feeling of detachment, and so he gave up everything and turned towards God realization. He established a Math at the banks of the river Pitambe and lived there with his disciples.

Sai Baba did not mix nor speak with people by only gave answers when he was questioned. By day he sat under the Neem tree or sometimes under the Babool Tree or near the stream in the outskirts of the village. In the afternoon Baba would walk a long way to Nimgoan to the house of Balasaheb Denge whom Baba loved dearly. Balasaheb's younger brother had no son even after his second marriage, so he advised his younger brother to take the darshan of Baba, which he religiously followed. After a while with Baba's grace he was blessed with a son. From that time onwards Baba fame spread everywhere and people began to Flock in Shirdi to take Baba's darshan.

During the day Baba was always surrounded by devotees, and at night he would sleep in old and dilapidated Masjid. Baba had very few things with him which he carried they were chillum. Tobacco, tin pot, kafni, and short stick. Baba wore no shoes or sandals. A piece of sack cloth was his seat. He wore a waist cloth band and whenever he felt cold he would sit near the sacred fire the Dhuni. He always said Allah Malik. The Masjid where Baba sat with his devotees was only a 2 room dimension and lived with Takia. It was only after 1912 when the Masjid was repaired and new pavement were constructed, Baba came to live there.

Turning Water Into Oil

Baba was very fond of lights. He used to borrow oil from the shopkeepers and used to keep the lamp burning the whole night in the Masjid and in the temple. This went on for quiet sometime, till one day the Baniyas gathered together and decided to stop giving oil to Baba. When Baba did not get oil from them he returned to the Masjid, and kept the dry wicks in the lamp and took water from the tin pot and filled all the lamps and lighted them. Baniyas were watching closely at what Baba was doing. They were surprised to see the lamps burning the whole night. The Baniyas repented and asked Baba to forgiveness, and promised Baba that they would be more truthful in the future.

The Pseudo Guru Javhar Ali

Five years after the wrestling bout a fakir named Javhar Ali along with his disciples came and stayed in Rahata in Bakhal near Virbhadra temple. The fakir was learned, new the Koran and had a sweet tongue. Many religious people came to him and gave their respects. He wanted to build and Idgah near the Vir bhadra temple, but there was a quarrel about this so the fakir left Rahata and came to Shirdi and lived in the Masjid with Baba. People were attracted by his sweet talk and he started calling Baba his disciple which Baba merrily accepted. Then both Guru and Disciple decided to go to Rahata and live there, which they finally did.

Baba used to come off and on with the fakir to Shirdi, but their main stay was in Rahata. Baba's devotees in Shirdi did not like the idea of Baba staying in Rahata, so they went to bring Baba back to Shirdi. When they met Baba they told him their purpose of coming, but to this Baba replied that the fakir was an angry man and would not leave him, so they should better go back. Fakir indeed did get angry at them because they were trying to take away his disciple. Then after a heated discussion it was finally decided that both Guru and Chela would return to Shirdi, which they finally did. After a few days the Guru was tested by Devidas a dhyani, as many people regarded him as a Guru. The Guru lost in a discussion and fled from Shirdi and stayed many years in Bijapur. When he returned to Shirdi and he bowed before Baba. The illusion of that he was a Guru faded and he repented, but Baba treated him with respect.

In this case Sai Bbab showed his conduct how one should get rid of his egoism and do his duties as a disciple to attain self realization. This story is told according to the version given by Mhalsapati (a great devotee of Baba).

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 6

Ram Navami Festival And Masjid Repairs

Efficacy Of The Touch Of The Guru's Hand

Sad guru is sure to carry us safely and easily beyond the worldly ocean. This brings to mind Sai Baba the perfect master. He appears to me applying Udhi on my forehead and placing his blessings hands on my head. This fills my heart with joy and my eyes with tears and love. Such is the power of a Guru. All

our thoughts and desires get destroyed by the mere touch of Guru's hand and sins of past lives are cleaned and washed away, even the speech attain calmness. Looking at Sai Baba overwhelms our heart with emotions and gives us immense joy. It awakens in us the consciousness, self realization and makes us one with the supreme. When I read scriptures I am always been reminded of my Sat guru, Sai Baba who takes the form of Rama and Krishna and makes me listen to his life stories. For example in Bhagwat Gita Sai becomes Krishna. I cannot write the Satcharita myself but Baba makes me write and so I go on writing. Whoever, bows and surrenders totally with body, mind and soul to Sai Baba to them righteousness, wealth, desire and salvation is easily attained. No matter how much difficult the path maybe the Sat Guru will take you to your destination safely says Sai Baba.

The Author quotes Sai Baba's words guaranteeing the welfare of the Bhaktas. "There will never be any scarcity of food and clothes in my devotees' home. It is my special characteristic that I always look after and provide for the welfare of those devotees who worship me wholeheartedly with their mind ever fixed on me."

After quoting these words the author goes on to relate the story of Ram Navami festival which is the most celebrated festival in Shirdi.

Origin

A devotee of Baba Mr Gopalroa Gund a surveyor in the survey department of Kopergoan had 3 wives but no children. By the blessings of Baba a son was born to him. He was so overjoyed that came up with the idea of having a fair or Urus. He discussed this matter with the other Shirdi devotees namely Tatiya, Kote and Shama . They all approved the idea and obtained Sai Baba's blessings and permission. Then the application was made to the collector for holding the fair, but unfortunately it was refused because Kulkarni did not want it. But because Baba blessed it they were finally successful in getting the collectors sanction. The day of the Urus was finally fixed on Ram Navami day. This combined festival had a purpose, the unification of Hindus and Muslims.

Though the permission of holding the event was attained Shirdi yet faced another problem the scarcity of water. There were two wells in the village one had dried up and the other had brackish water. Sai Baba turned the brackish water into sweet water by putting flowers into it. As the water was insufficient Tatiya arranged to get water from outside. Temporary shops were constructed and wrestling bouts were arranged. Gopalroa Gund's friend Danu Anna who was blessed with a son with Baba's grace prepared and supplied a flag for the procession of the fair, and so did Nanasaheb Nimonkar. Both the flags were taken out in the procession and finally fixed at the two corners of the Masjid, which is named Dwarkamai by Sai Baba. This ceremony is been done even today.

The Sandal Procession

The idea of the sandal procession was originated by Mr. Amir Shakkar Dalal a Muslim from Korhla. This procession is held in honour of great Muslim saints where sandal paste, scrapping and burning incense is put in a Thali and carried in a procession with band and music throughout the village and then finally thrown on the wall of the Masjid by hand. The whole procession was managed by Mr. Amir for the first 3 years and then his wife took over. So on the same day both the processions the flag of the Hindus and Sandal of the Muslim go side by side. These processions are carried out even today without any problems.

Arrangement

The devotees of Sai Baba considered this day to be very sacred. Most of them took part in the management of the fair. Tatya looked into outward affairs and Radhakrishnamai handled the entire internal management. Her resident was full of guests and she looked after their needs and also arranged for goods for the fair and also took the responsibility of cleaning and white washing the Masjid., which she did every alternate night when Sai Baba had gone to sleep in the Chavadi. Feeding the poor was also an important item in the fair and for this purpose cooking was done in a mass scale and various sweets were prepared in Radhakrishnamai's lodge and various rich and wealthy devotees contributed for the food items.

Transformation Of Urus Into Ram Navami Festival

Over the year the fair gained increasing importance till 1912 when a change took place. A devotee named Krishnaroa Jogeshwar Bhishm who attended the fair came up with the idea, of converting the fair into a Ram Navami festival.

Kaka Mahajani liked this idea and went to get Baba's permission. But the main difficulty arose that who would do the Kirtan and sing the glories of Lord Rama, but Bhishm solved the problem by saying that he would do Kirtan himself and Kaka Mahajani would play the harmonium. They also made arrangements for the Prasad, mixing ginger power with sugar prepared by Radhakrishnamai. When everything was arranged all went to Baba to take permission. Baba who knew everything asked Mahajani what was happening in the Wada. Mahajani did not understand and remained silent. Then Baba asked Bhishm the same question, at this Bhishm explained to Baba that they had an idea to celebrate the Ram Navami festival and needed Baba's permission. Baba gladly gave the permission. At this everyone rejoiced and made preparations for the Jayanti festival. Next Day the Masjid was decorated with buntings etc. A cradle was placed in front of Baba's seat supplied by Radhakrishnamai and the proceedings started. Initially Mahajani hesitated and doubted whether Baba would allow the festival to go on. But when he went to Baba all his doubts were cleared. Then Baba put one garland round Mahajani's neck and another on

Bhishm's neck and then the kirtan commenced. Bhishm stood up for the kirtan and Mahajani played the harmonium. The kirtan came to a close with loud sounds of victory to Rama and gulal was thrown all around and everyone was overjoyed, but suddenly a loud roar was heard. The red powder fell into Baba's eyes and Baba started scolding and abusing loudly. Many people in the crowd left the Masjid but only a few intimate devotees of Baba stood there took the scolding as blessings in disguise. They thought it was proper for Baba to get angry as it will help destroy egoism and wicked thoughts. Besides they knew that whenever a new thing was undertaken in Shirdi it was usual for Baba to get angry and so they kept quiet. Radhakrishnamai was afraid that Baba would break her cradle so she asked Mahajani to pull the cradle back. When Mahajani went to loosen the cradle Baba became calm and the day's programme including the Mahapuja and the Arati was completed. Later Mahajani asked Baba's permission to remove the cradle; Baba refused and said that the festival is not over yet. Next day the kirtan and the Gopal kala ceremony of hanging the earthen pot containing parched rice mixed with curd, to be broken after the kirtan and distributed to all as done by Lord Krishna was held. Baba allowed the cradle to be removed while the festival was going on. The procession of two flags by day and sandal by night went off with pomp and show and from that time onwards the Urs of Baba was transformed into a Ram Navami festival.

In the next year (1913) the items in the programme of the Ram Navami began to increase. Radhakrishnamai introduced the Naam-saptah (Singing God's Glory continuously day and night for 7 days) from 11th day of Chaitra. In this all devotees took part by turn including her. As Ram Navami festival was celebrated in different parts of the country it was difficult to get a Haridas. Luckily Mahajani met Balabua who did the kirtan that year. In 1914 Balabua again came to Shirdi performed the kirtan as because there was plague in his home town. Finally the difficulty of getting a new haridas was over as Baba finally entrusted the function to Das Ganu Maharaj permanently to conduct the function until now.

Since 1912 the festival began to grow gradually year after year. Shops began to increase; celebrated wrestlers took part in wrestling competitions, and there was mass feeding of the poor. Hard work and sincere efforts of Radhakrishnamai turned Shirdi into Sans than. Many things including the horse, palanquin, chariot, many silver items, utensils, pots, buckets, mirrors etc. were presented. Elephants were also sent for the procession. Although items increased enormously Sai Baba maintained his simplicity and modesty as before. It was noted that both the Hindus and the Muslims had no quarrel whatsoever. Initially 5000-7000 people gathered, but the figure went up to 75,000 people. There was no out break of any disease and peace prevailed during all these years.

Repairs Of The Masjid

Besides the idea of the fair, Gopal Gund had another idea, to repair and renovate the Masjid. Stones were collected by Nanasaheb and pavement work was done by Kakasaheb Dixit. Initially Baba did not allow them to have any jobs done but with Mhalsapati's intervention Baba's permission was secured. Baba

took a small gadi for his seat, discarding the usual piece of sack cloth. The Sabha Mandap (courtyard) was also renovated. The open space in front of the Masjid was extended and roofing put on it. Iron posts, pillars and trusses were also erected. Devotees worked hard at night to fix the posts. But Baba when he came from Chadvi next morning uprooted and threw them down.

Once Baba caught a pole and began to uproot it and with the other hand caught Tatya Patil's neck. Then he took by force Tatya's Petha set in on fire and threw it in the pit. At that time Baba's eyes flashed like burning embers and all including Tatya got terribly frightened. Baba then took out a rupee and threw it there as if making an offering for the auspicious occasion. No body knew what would happen to Tatya and none dared to interfere. Bhagoji Shinde a leper devotee along with Madhavroa Shinde made bold advances but were pushed aside by Baba. After sometime Baba's anger cooled down, got an embroidered petha and tied it on Tatya's head. All were wonderstruck to see Baba's behaviour. Baba had mood swings of such kind many times, but I do not know which to choose, therefore I refer them as they occur to me.

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Chapter 7

Wonderful Incarnation

Sai Baba had a good knowledge of Yogic Practices. No body knew wether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. He celebrated the Hindu festival Ram Navami and at the same time supported the sandal procession of Muslims. He encouraged wrestling and got the Gopal kala ceremony duly performed. During Id festival he allowed Muslims to say their prayers in the Masjid. He even allowed the Muslims to hold Tazia procession in Shirdi. He lived in the Masjid but he kept the sacred fire (Dhuni) burning. Grinding of the hand mill, blowing of conch and bells, Bhajans,

giving food, worshipping Baba's feet were all allowed there. Even the Brahmins bow to Sai Baba feet. Those who tried to inquire about his caste were captured by his darshan. So none could definitely decide whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. "It is true that one who completely surrenders to the Lord becomes one with him." Baba did not differentiate between caste and nationality, he even took meat and fish with the fakirs and did not grumble if the dishes were touched by dogs.

Such a unique and wonderful incarnation was Sai Baba. Due to the merits of my past life I had the good fortune to be with Baba and had his blessed company. Sai Baba was pure Anand and consciousness. Many Sanyasis, Sadhaks and all those aspiring for salvation came to Sai Baba. He always uttered Allah Malik (God is the sole owner). He never liked discussion, remained calm, though irritable at times always preached Vedanta, but nobody knew who Baba was. He treated all alike, and knew everyone's inner secret and was full of knowledge and disliked honour. Though Baba had a human body, all people considered him as God in Shirdi.

Behaviour Of Sai Baba

Baba's miracles could not be described. He got almost all the temples in Shirdi repaired through Tatyapa Patil. The temples of Shani, Ganapati, Shivji, village deity, and Maruti were put in order. He collected Dakshina and distributed different amounts among his devotees.

People benefitted immensely by having Baba's darshan. Some recovered from bad health, wicked people turned good, leprosy, blindness. Lameness was completely cured by his grace. His fame spread far and wide and pilgrims flocked to Shirdi in great numbers. Baba had his Asan near the dhuni and always rested there. He sat there in meditation sometimes without a bath.

Baba tied a small white turban on his head, and wore a clean dhoti round his waist and a shirt on his body. This was his attire. In the beginning he first practiced medicine, and because of his success became a famous doctor in the village. A curious case is narrated here. Once a devotee had swollen red eyes. As no doctors were available in Shirdi he was taken to Baba. Baba's remedy was very unique. He pounded some Beba, made two balls and thrust them in each eye of the patient and wrapped a cloth around them. Next day when the bandage was removed and water poured on them the inflammation subsided and the pupils became clear. The Beba did not hurt the delicate eyes but cured the disease of the eye. Many such cases were cured.

Baba's Yogic Practices

Baba knew all practices and processes of Yoga. The two yoga practices will be described here:

Dhauti Kriya or Cleansing Process :- Every third day Baba went to the well near the Banyan tree and had a bath. On one occasion Baba was seen throwing up his intestines, cleaning them inside out and placing them on the tree for drying. Ordinarily Dhuti Kriya is not done this way but Baba's method was unique.

Khanda Yoga :- In this practice Baba extracted the limbs from his body and left them separately at different places in the Masjid. Once a gentleman went to the Masjid and was terrified to see the limbs of Baba lying in separate places. He thought of informing the village officers that Baba was hacked to pieces and murdered. But he was afraid that he would be blamed for it so he kept silent. But the next day when he went to the Masjid he saw Baba hail and hearty and thought to himself that it was only a dream.

Baba practiced yoga from his childhood; he charged no fees for his cures and became famous by virtue of his merits. He did not care for himself but worked for welfare of others and suffered terrible pain many a times. I will relate now the most merciful character of Sai Baba.

Baba's All-Pervasiveness And Money

In 1910 on Diwali day Baba was sitting near the Dhuni warming himself. He kept putting wood in the Dhuni which kept the fire burning. A little later Baba put his hand in the dhuni which was scorched and burnt. This was noticed by Boy Madhav and Shama. They at once came to Baba's aid. Madhavroa caught Baba from behind by his waist and dragged him forcibly backwards, and asked Baba why he had done this. Then Baba came to his senses and replied "The wife of a

Blacksmith was working the bellows of the furnace. Her husband called her. Forgetting that her child was on her lap she got up 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 hand being burnt, but I am glad I saved the child."

Leper Devotee Service

On hearing the news that Baba's arm was burnt from Shama Mr. Nanasaheb Chandorkar accompanied by the famous doctor Parmanand of Mumbai came to Shirdi to examine and dress the wound of Baba's arm all equipped with medicines and ointments. Baba refused all treatment as his burnt arm was dressed by Bhagoji Shinde a leper devotee. His treatment consisted of messaging the burnt part with ghee, placing the leaf over it and bandaging it tightly. Nanasaheb requested Baba many a times to unfasten the bandage and get the wound examined, dressed and treated by Dr. Paramanand, but Baba did not allow by saying that Allah was his doctor.

Although Dr. Paraanand was not allowed to treat Baba he was very fortunate to have Baba's darshan. Every day Bhagoji treated Baba's hand and bandaged it. After some days the armed was healed and all were happy.

Every day Bhagoji put ghee on his arm and tightly bandaged it. This went on till Sai Baba's Samadhi. Actually Baba did not need any treatment but out of love of his devotee he allowed the service of Bhagoji to go uninterrupted. When Baba went to Lendi Bhagoji held an umbrella over him and accompanied him. Every morning when Baba sat near the Dhuni Bhagoji started his service. Bhagoji was a sinner in his past life and suffered from leprosy. Although he seemed unfortunate outwardly, he was very lucky and happy to be the servant of Sai Baba and got the benefits of his company.

Master Khaparde's Plague Case

I shall now relate another incident of Baba's wonderful Leelas.

Mrs. Khapande of Amravati was staying in Shirdi for some days with her younger son. Suddenly one day her son got high fever and developed bubonic plague. The mother was frightened and decided to leave Shirdi and came in the evening to take permission of Baba to leave, and described to Baba about her son suffering from plague. At this Baba spoke softly to her and assured her that everything will be alright for her. Saying this he lifted up his kafni and showed all a fully developed bubo as big as an egg and said I have to suffer for my devotees, their difficulties are mine. Seeing this, people were convinced how the saints suffer pains for their devotees. The heart of the saint is soft like butter. They love their devotees without any idea of gain and regard them as their true relatives.

Going To Pandharpur

I shall now close this chapter by illustrating a story how Sai Baba loved his devotees and fulfilled their wishes. Nanasaheb a great devotee of Baba was a revenue officer at Nandurbar in Khandesh. He got a transfer to Pandharpur which is regarded as heaven on earth. Nanasaheb had to take immediate charge so he left for Pandharpur without informing anybody. On the way Nanasaheb planned to give a surprise visit to Shirdi. None knew about his departure for Shirdi except Sai Baba. As soon as Nanasaheb approached Nimgoan there was a stir in the Masjid at Shirdi. At that moment Baba was talking to Mhalsapati. Appa Shinde and Kashiram, when he at once said let us all four do some bhajan, the doors of phandari are open. Then they began to sing in chorus "I have to go to Pandharpur and I have to stay on there, for it is the house of my lord." Baba sang and the devotees followed him. After a short while Nanasaheb came there with his family and bowed before Baba and requested him to accompany them to Pandharpur and stay with them, which Baba agreed because he was already in a mood to go to Pandharpur and stay there. Hearing this Nanasaheb was much moved. After taking the permission and blessings of Baba Nanasaheb left for Pandharpur.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 8

Importance Of Human Birth

In this wonderful earth God created billions of creatures inhabiting heaven, hell, earth, ocean, sky and other intermediate regions. Of those creatures or souls those having merits go to heaven and live there till they enjoy fruits of their past actions, when this is over they cast down. While those souls having demerits go to hell and suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. When the 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 their merits and

demerits are worked out completely, they become free from the cycle of birth and death. To put in a nutshell souls get their birth according their Karmas.

Special Value Of The Human Body

Four things are common to all living creatures. Food, sleep, fear and sexual union. But as for man he has a special faculty knowledge, by which he can attain God vision, which is impossible for other species. That is the reason Gods envy human species and aspire to be born as humans so that they can attain their final deliverance.

Some say that there is nothing worse than a human body which is full of filth, mucus, phlegm and dirt which is subject to decay, disease and death. This is partially true but apart from this a human body has a capacity to acquire knowledge. It is because of the human body one can have aversion for sense enjoyments and discriminate between real and unreal world and thus attain self realization. Therefore the body should be neither neglected nor fondled but properly cared for and engage to attain self realization.

It is said that God created various creatures, but none was able to know and appreciate his work and leelas, and so he created a human being. The most satisfying creation of God. But the best thing is to be at the feet of Sainath.

Man's Endeavour

Realizing the value of human life and knowing that death is inevitable and can come at any time, one should be ever prepared to achieve the objects of our lives. So with utmost earnestness we should work towards attaining self realization giving up laziness and drowsiness. If we fail to do so we reduce ourselves to the level of beasts.

How To Proceed

The most effective way to attain a spiritual path is to find a Guru. What cannot be attained by hearing religious discourses and reading religious books can easily be obtained in the company of a Sad guru. The Sad guru alone can impart spiritual wisdom which cannot otherwise be gained.. His movements are simple and talk a silent advice. The virtue of forgiveness, calmness, detachment, charity, egolessness and control of the mind enlighten a deciple's mind and lifts him spiritually. Sai Baba was such a Sad guru. Though he acted as a fakir he loved all beings and saw God in them. He did not feel any pleasure or pain and was very balanced in mind body and soul. He treated everyone equally.

He whose glance could turn a beggar into a king, but Baba himself went begging for food door to door in Shirdi.

Baba Begging Food

Blessed are the people of Shirdi in whose houses Baba begged for food. Baba visited certain houses daily and called out “Mai, give me a piece of bread,” and received with both hands. He had a tin pot for liquid and semi liquid foods, and for solid food he had a Zoli. Baba’s tongue knew no taste as he acquired control over it. Whatever food he got in the tin pot and Zoli he would mix together and beat with his heart content. Baba’s begging was very irregular. Someday he would beg till noon, and other days he would only go a few rounds. The food he collected was kept in an earthen. Dogs, cats, and crows freely ate from it and Baba never drove them away. A woman who swept the floor of the Masjid also took 10 to 12 pieces of bread for her family and nobody prevented her from doing so. Baba always helped the poor and the needy. Baba was very liberal hearted, detached and charitable. Though he looked restless from outside he was firm and steady from inside. His ways were unique and there were a few blessed people who regarded him as a great soul. One such person’s account is given below.

Baijabai’s brilliant service

Tatya Kote’s mother Baijabai was a very pious lady. Every noon she would go in the jungle with a basket on her head carrying bread and vegetables in search of a Fakir who was doing meditation in the jungles. She would fall at his feet and spreading a leaf would give him bread and vegetables and fed him with his heart’s content. Wonderful was her faith and service. Her service was never been forgotten by Baba till the end. Remembering her services to him, Baba benefitted her son greatly. Both the son and mother had great faith in Baba. Baba always said “Fakiri was real and Lordship was illusion.” After some years Baba stopped going in the woods and began to live in the village Masjid, thus Baijabai’s trouble of going in the jungles ended.

Dormitory Of Trio

The saints in whose heart Vasudev dwells are blessed, and so are the devotees who benefit in the company of such saints. Among them were two fortunate fellows, Tatya Kote Patil and Bhagat Mhalsapati who shared Baba’s company. These three persons slept together in the Masjid, use to gossip till late at night, and if anyone of them went to sleep, they would wake each other. Tatya left his parents and went to sleep every night with Baba whom he loved deeply. Those were such happy days never to be forgotten. But after the death of his father Tatya took over the household duties and began to sleep at home.

Khushalchand Of Rahata

Baba loved Ganpat Kote Patil of Shirdi and Chandrabhansheth Marwadi of Rahata, but his dearest was Khushalchand nephew of Chandrabhansheth. After the demise of Sheth Baba sometimes paid visit to Rahata along with his intimate devotees. People of the village would greet him with band and music. Khushalchand would take Baba to his house and give him a good meal. Then they talked freely and merrily for sometime after which Baba returned to Shirdi. Shirdi was midway between Rahata and Nimgoan. During his lifetime Baba never went beyond these places. He never travelled by train and nor did he see one. But he knew the exact timings of all trains. Devotees who acted on Baba's instructions fared well, but those who disregarded them suffered from accidents and mishaps. More is explained about it in the next chapter.

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Chapter 9

Characteristic Of Shirdi – Pilgrimage

A speciality of Shirdi pilgrimage was that none could leave without Baba's permission, because they would invite troubles. On the other hand if someone was asked to quit Shirdi, they had to go. Baba gave certain hints when devotees came to take leave. These suggestions had to be followed, and if not followed than accidents and mishaps would occur. Certain examples are given below.

Tatya Kote Patil

Tatya Kote was going to Kppargoan bazaar in his Tonga. On his way he came hastily to the Masjid to take Baba's darshan, and told Baba that he was in a hurry to go to Kopargaon Bazaar. Baba advised him not to go out of the village and forget going to the bazaar today. On seeing Tatya's anxiousness Baba advised him to take Shama with him. Not minding the direction Tatya immediately drove off in his Tonga. After going a certain distance and passing Sawli Vahir one of his horses got a sprain on the waist and fell down. Tatya was not hurt much but he remembered Baba's advice. On another occasion he did not listen to Baba's advice and suffered more or less the same consequences while proceeding to Kolhar Village.

European Gentleman

A European gentleman came to Shirdi from Mumbai with a note from Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He was accommodated with comfort in a tent. He wanted to take Baba's darshan by going in the Masjid, but Baba prevented him from doing so and was asked to sit in the open courtyard and take Baba's darshan. Not happy with the reception he decided to leave Shirdi at once and came to say goodbye. Baba advised him to go next day and not to be in a hurry, people also requested him to stay back. Not listening to anyone he drove away in a Tonga. After crossing the Sawli Vahir a bicycle came in front of the tonga and turned it topsy turvy. The gentleman fell down and was hurt badly and stayed few days in Kopargoan hospital for the treatment of his injuries. People learnt lessons from these incidents. Those who obeyed Baba were safe, while those who did not suffered ill consequences.

The Necessity Of Mendicancy

The question came in the minds of the few that if Baba was God himself why did he take up begging bowl for all his life? The question to this answer is in our Shastras. Those who give up three main desires namely wealth, progeny and fame and accept Sanyaas are the fit person to live by begging alms, as they cannot make cooking arrangements nor dine at home. Sai Baba was a Sanyaasi from his boyhood His firm conviction was that universe was his home and Lord Vasudev himself and had full rights to take to begging. We all know that in order to prepare food the household goes through 5 processes which involves pounding, grinding, washing pots, cleaning and sweeping and lighting hearths. These activities involve destruction of small insects, therefore the householder incurs sin. In order to reduce our sins our Shastras prescribed six sacrifices which is done would purify the mind and help us get self realization. Babas went from house to house reminding the inmates of their sacred duties and fortunate were those people who got the lesson at their homes from Baba.

Devotees Experiences

Lord Krishna said in the Bhagvat Gita anything with a pure heart, I accept that pious offering." In Sai Baba's case if a devotee forgot to offer what he promised to Baba, he/she would be reminded by Baba or through a friend and finally made to bring the offering to Baba and be blessed for the same. A few instances are given below.

Tarkhad Family (Father and Son)

Mr. Babasaheb Tarkhad of Bandra was a staunch devotee of Baba and so were his wife and son. It was once planned that Master Tarkhad along with his mother would go and spend his summer vacation in Shirdi. But the son was unwilling to go as he thought that the worship of Baba will not be properly attended by his father. But his father assured him that he would worship Baba exactly the way his son did.

On these words mother and son left for Shirdi Friday night. The next day, Tarkhad performed the worship of Baba the way his son did and promised the same to Baba. He also offered a few pieces of lump sugar and distributed during lunch time. Till Monday all went smoothly, but on a Tuesday he forgot to give sugar offering to Baba. At noon when Mr. Tarkhad sat down for meals he did not find the sugar on his plate. That moment the cook reminded him that he had forgotten to give offering of sugar to Baba. At this he bowed before Baba and asked for forgiveness from him. He even wrote a letter to his son explaining the facts and asks his pardon from Baba for such a mistake.

At about noon time just before the arti was to commence Baba told Mrs. Tarkhad “he had gone to her house with a view of something to eat. The door was locked but somehow I went in. But to my regret Mr. Tarkhad had left nothing for me to eat, so I returned home hungry.” The lady did not understand anything, but her son immediately came to know that there was something wrong with the Puja in Bandra. At once the son requested Baba to let him go home, but Baba refused, and allowed him to perform the puja there. Then the son wrote a letter to his father describing all that happened in Shirdi, and firmly advised him not to neglect the puja at home. Both these letter were delivered to respective parties the next day. Is this not wonderful?

Mr. Tarkhad

Once a great devotee of Baba Mr. Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare was preparing to come to Shirdi with his family. At that time Mrs. Tarkhad gave 2 brinjal to Mrs. Purandare and asked her to prepare 2 dishes for Baba namely Bharit and Kacharya and take to the Masjid for Baba, which she agreed to do. After reaching Shirdi Mrs. Purandare went with her dish Bharit to the Masjid. Baba was sitting for his meals and he found the Bharit very tasty and distributed to all. Then he asked for Kacharya. The word was sent to Radhakrishnamai who was in a fix as brinjals were not available in that season. When an inquiry was made it was found Mrs. Purandare was entrusted with the duty of serving Kacharya to Baba. Everyone was wonderstruck to know this.

In December 1915 Mr. Govind Balaram Mankar planned to go to Shirdi perform obsequies of his father. Before he left he met Mr. Tarkhad. Mrs. Tarkhad, out of great devotion to Baba send some pedha with him for Baba. Govind went to Shirdi met Baba in the morning and afternoon but forgot to take the Pedha for him which Baba was so much waiting for. Baba could not wait anymore and asked him “What did you bring for me.” Nothing said Govind. Then Baba asked him” Did Mrs. Tarkhad not give some sweets to you for me.” The boy then immediately remembered felt abashed and ask for pardon from Baba. Ran immediately to his lodge and brought and handed over the Pedhas to Baba. Baba put the Pedha into his mouth and gulped it down. Such was the devotion of Mrs. Tarkhad.

Baba Fed Sumptuously How?

While Mrs. Tarkhad was in Shirdi, this incident occurred. It was noon and meals were ready and been served, when a hungry dog began to bark. Mrs. Tarkhad immediately threw a piece of bread which the dog gulped with great relish. In the afternoon when she visited the Masjid SaiBaba told her “Mother you fed me sumptuously, I am so satisfied. Ever act like this and this will stand by you in good stead. Sitting in the Masjid I shall never speak the untruth, take pity on me like this, first give bread to the hungry and then eat yourself. At this Mrs. Tarkhad said “Baba how can I feed you when I myself is dependent.” To this Baba replied, that the dog which she gave the bread before her meals was Baba himself. I am roaming in all forms. He who sees me in all creatures is my beloved, so abandon duality and distinction and serve me as you did today. Hearing these words of Baba she was so moved, her eyes were full of tears her throat choked and her joy knew no bounds.

Moral

“See god in all beings.” is the moral of the chapter.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 10

Always remember Sai Baba with love, because he alone can solve the riddle of life and death. This is the best and the easiest of Sadhanas and it involves no expenditure. A little exertion brings great rewards. Guru is the only God, and if we believe in our Sad guru wholeheartedly he can change our fortune for the better. We have to trust our Sad guru to get over the ocean of worldly existence. The Sad guru looks into the intense feeling and devotion of his devotees, endows them with knowledge and eternal bliss.

Baba’s Wonderful Bed-stead

Mr. Nanasaheb Denge brought Baba a plank, 4 arms length and only a span in breadth for sleeping upon. Baba tied it like a swing with old rags and began to sleep on it. The rags were so thin that it was a wonder how they could support the planks as well as Baba. But it was sheer Baba’s leela that even the worn out rags sustained plank along with Baba’s weight. On all four corners of the plank Baba lighted lamps which kept burning the whole night. It was wonderful to see Baba sitting and sleeping on the plank. Many observers kept watching the process of mounting and dismounting from the plank but none succeeded. As crowds began to grow Baba broke the plank into pieces and threw it away. Baba had all 8 Mahasiddhis but he neither practiced nor craved for them. They came to him naturally because of his spiritual perfection.

Manifestation Of Brahma

Though Sai Baba looked like a human being, he was unattached and indifferent, but cared for mass welfare. Though inwardly an abode of peace, he looked restless, although he was in a state of Brahma, outwardly he was engrossed in the world, He had lot of affection at the same time when angry threw stones. Sometimes he got angry, and other times remained calm, composed, tolerant and well balanced. He always sat on an asana and carried a small stick in his hand. He always said “Allah Malik” and loved his Bhaktas. He was very knowledgeable and full of divine bliss. Only the people who understood Baba were fortunate and benefitted immensely, while the others who took Baba as a mere human being were indeed unfortunate in every respect.

His Stay In Shirdi And Probable Birth Date

Nobody knew the parents or the birth date of Sai Baba. Baba first came to Shirdi when he was 16 years old. Then all of a sudden he disappeared, then again he reappeared in Nizam state and came with the marriage party of Chand Patil to Shirdi at the age of 20. Thereafter Baba stayed in Shirdi for 60 years. Baba took his Mahasamadhi, in the year 1918. So Baba’s birth is approximately calculated at 1838 A.D.

Baba’s Mission and Advice

In the 17th century Saint Ramdas fulfilled his mission of protecting cows and Brahmans from Muslims, which resulted in a widening gaps between the Hindus and the Muslims, then Sai Baba came to bridge the gap. Baba’s constant advice to his devotees was not to argue as Ram and Rahim were same and therefore the devotees should not quarrel among themselves. He removed their ignorance and joined both communities together. Baba said Yoga, sacrifice, penance and knowledge are the means to attain God. If you don’t succeed in this your birth is in vain. If anybody harms you don’t retaliate, if you can do well unto others. This will stand us in good stead both in the material and spiritual matters.

There are false Gurus, who show spirituality and give mantras to their disciples and extract money. Although they teach religion and piety, they themselves are not impious and do not follow religions. Baba was different he just loved his disciples and never showed his piety. There are 2 kinds of Gurus niyat (fixed) and aniyat (general). There are various kinds of Gurus who impart worldly knowledge but he who carries us beyond the ocean of worldly existence, is a Sad guru. Sai Baba was such a Sad guru. He saw divinity in all beings. Friends and foes were alike to him. He was very balanced and nothing ever touched him, and he was very detached.

The people of Shirdi worshipped and remembered Sai Baba and sang his glory all the time. They were so blessed indeed. They knew no other God except Sai.

The women of Shirdi out of pure love for Baba composed poems and sang in their simple rustic language. These folk songs should be collected and given in the Sai Leela or in a book separately.

Baba's Humility

Baba had all the six qualities of Lord which is fame, wealth, nonattachment, knowledge, grandeur and liberality. Baba incarnated in the human body for the sake of his bhaktas. Baba spoke very humbly as follows "I am your slave and debtor and is satisfied with your darshan. It is a great favour I saw your feet, I consider myself blessed thereby."

Although Baba enjoyed sense objects in reality he was completely detached from it. He was pure consciousness.

Nanavali

There was queer fellow by the name of Nanavali, who looked at Baba's works and affair. He once approached Baba and expressed his interest to sit on Baba's gadi. At once Baba got up and he occupied in turn. After sitting for a while Nanavali got up and asked Baba to resume his seat. Then Baba sat down and Nanavali fell at Baba's feet. Baba did not show the slightest displeasure in been dictated or ousted.

Nanavali loved Baba so much that he died on the thirteenth day of Baba's Mahasamadhi.

The Easiest Path: Hearing The stories Of The Saints And Being In their Company

Sai Baba had extraordinary wisdom and skill. All his actions were for the benefit of his devotees. He taught his devotees to do a very simple thing. To leave egoism and cleverness and take the name of Sai. Baba. He said if you did that all your shackles will be removed and you would be free. The rituals are only possible for the Brahmins and have no use for the other classes. Hearing the stories of Saints is the easiest Sadhanas. They remove all fears of the worldly existence and take you to the spiritual path. So Baba said, listen to these stories. Meditate on them and assimilate them even while attending to worldly duties.

This is the easiest path, but the question is why doesn't everyone take it? The reason is that without God's grace we do not get the desire to listen to the stories of the Saints. The company of saints removes our body consciousness, egoism and free us from the cycle of birth and death and takes us towards pure copiousness. and enhances detachment thus leading us to the spiritual path. It is for this reason that saints manifest themselves in this world. It is on account of the store of merit in past births that we have attained the feet of Sai Baba. I conclude this chapter by meditating on Sai. He is graceful. Handsome standing on the edge of the masjid and distributing Udhi to his bhaktas, for their welfare and is ever engrossed in Supreme bliss. Before him we humbly bow at him.

Chapter 11

Sai As Shagun Brahma

There are two aspect of Lord Brahma. (1) Sagun which has form (2) Nirgun, which is formless. But Sad guru is better than all these. The form of Sai who has complete non attachment. Our faith in his words and our determination in him will help abandon our desires. Some say he was a devotee of the Lord and some say he was a great devotee but to us he is Gods incarnation. He was ever forgiving, never irritable, straight, soft, tolerant, content and beyond compares'. Just like the sacred Ganges river saints like Sai Baba give comfort and solace to all. Lord Krishna has said that saint is my soul and my living image. Knowledge and bliss incarnated in the form of Sai. Baba the support of all did not require the asana, instead used a piece of cloth for his seat which was covered by a small mattress, and a bolster placed for his back. Baba respected the feelings of his devotees and allowed them to worship as they liked. Some waved fans others played music, while some washed his hands and feet and applied chandan, some gave betel nut with leaves while other performed Naivaidya. Although he lived in Shirdi he was everywhere. Our humble bow to Sainath.

Dr. Pandit's Worship

Dr. Pandit once came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan. After saluting Baba he sat in the Masjid for sometime. Baba asked him to go and meet Dadabhat Kelkar which he did. And accompanied him everywhere. Although Dadabhat worshipped Baba dearly nobody had the courage to apply sandal paste on Baba's forehead. But this simple hearted Dr. Pandit applied sandal paste on Baba's forehead by drawing 3 horizontal lines, which Baba willingly accepted. Then Dadabhat asked Baba why did he allow the sandlepaste to be put by Dr. Pandit?

To this Baba replied that Dr. Pandit believed Baba to be the same as his Guru Raghunath Maharaj, there fore applied the sandal paste on Baba's forehead. And when asked the same question to Dr. Pandit he gave the same reply.

Though Baba allowed his devotees to worship him as they pleased, sometimes he acted in a strange way. At times he threw the puja dish, scolded the devotees, and sometimes be in total peace. Though he may seem angry from outside inwardly he had lot of love and affection. He always stood by his devotees and responded to them whenever they needed him, and he always longed for their love.

Haji Siddiki Falke

A Muslim gentleman by the name of Haji Siddiki Falke came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan, after making a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. He lived in

Chavadi and sat in the open courtyard for 9 months. Baba ignored him and did not allow him to sleep in the Masjid. Falke was very confused, at this somebody advised him to approach Baba through Shama a close devotee of Baba. Falke liked the idea and immediately approached Shama. Shama agreed to help him in this matter. Shama then at a convenient time asked Baba “why he did not allow Haji to enter the Masjid and take his darshan.” To this Baba replied “Shama you are very immature, without Gods grace none can climb in to the Masjid. Then Baba convey the message to Haji through Shama wether he could come near the Barvi well, and wether he was willing to pay a sum of Rs. 40,000 in four instalments. The Shama returned with the answers that the Haji was willing to do everything that Baba wanted. Again Baba sent Haji a message through Shama that they were going to cut a goat in the Masjid, wether he would prefer meat or testicles? To this the Haji replied that he would be happy to receive a small crumb from Baba’s mud pot. Hearing this Baba threw the earthen jars and pots and went straight to Haji, and gave him a good scolding and went back in the Masjid. Thereafter Baba sent him a basket of mangoes and also gave him Rs.55. From then on Baba loved Haji, invited him for meals and from then on Haji came to the Masjid and Baba sometimes gave him money. Thus Haji was enrolled in Baba’s durbar.

Baba’s Control Over The Elements

We shall close this chapter by describing two incidents showing Baba’s control over the elements:

- (1) One evening there was a terrible storm in Shirdi. The sky was overcast with thick clouds, with very strong winds. There was lightening and rain began to pour heavily. All creatures, birds, beasts and men were frightened and came to the Masjid for shelter. None of the local deities in Shirdi came to their rescue, so they all prayed to Baba with devotion. Baba was much moved. He came out, stood at the edge of the Masjid and addressed the storm in a thunderous voice to stop the fury and calm down. In a few minutes rains subsided, winds ceased and storm came to a stop, skies became clear and people went back home happy.
- (2) On another occasion the fire of the Dhuni began to burn brightly as flames began to reach rafters above. The people sitting in the Masjid did not know what to do. They dared not ask Baba to pour water to quench the flames. But Baba came soon to realize what was happening. He took his short stick and dashed it against the pillar saying “Get down be calm”. At each stroke of the stick the flames began to slow down and in a few minutes the Dhuni became calm and normal.

This is our Sai, an incarnation of God. He will bless all those who surrender unto him. He who will read this chapter daily with devotion will be free of calamities. He will very soon get God vision and all his desires will be fulfilled and become ultimately desire less, and thus will attain Salvation.

Chapter 12

Saint's Mission

The purpose of Divine incarnation is to protect the good and destroy the evil. But the mission of the saints' is quite different. To them good and wicked are the same. They draw the wicked people and set them to the right path. God dwells in Saints. Sai Baba is one of those. He incarnated for the welfare of his devotees. He loved all beings, was detached and full of divinity and knowledge and treated everyone equally. The devotees never approached unless he was meant to receive them. There were many people who desired to have Baba's darshan but not very fortunate, for those persons listening to Baba's Leelas with devotion will satisfy their quest to a great extent. Nobody could come and stay in Shirdi unless Baba wished to. They could only stay as long as Baba permitted them to stay. Everything depended on Baba's divine will.

Kaka Mahajani

Once Kaka Mahajani went to Shirdi, hoping 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." It surprised him, to this he answered that "when Baba tells him to go home he would do so." Then Baba said "Go tomorrow" Kaka Mahajani immediately left Shirdi. When he went to his office in Mumbai, he found his employer anxiously waiting for him. His manager suddenly fell sick hence Kaka's presence was necessary. Kaka's letter was sent to Shirdi which was redirected to Mumbai.

Bhausahab Dhumal

Bhausahab was going to Niphad for a case. On the way he came to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan, and wanted to continue to Niphad. But Baba did not give him the permission to go and made him stay in Shirdi for a week. In the meantime the magistrate suffered pain in the abdomen and the case was adjourned. Mr. Dhumal was then allowed to go and attend his case. The case went on for four months, ultimately Mr. Dhumal won the case and his client was acquitted.

Mrs Nimonkar

Mr. and Mrs. Nimonkar were spending most of the time in the Masjid serving Baba. It so happened that their son fell sick in Belapur, and the mother decided to take Baba's consent and go and see her son in Belapur. But Nansahab asked her to return the next day. The lady was in a fix and did not know what to do, but God Sai came to her help. Before leaving Shirdi she went to Baba to take his permission. Baba said to her go quickly and stay comfortably in Belapur for four days. See all your relatives and then return to Shirdi. Mr. Nansahab's words were overruled by Baba's decree.

Mule Shastri Of Nasik

A Brahmin of Nasik Mr. Mule Shastri, who was well versed in Shastra, astrology and palmistry once came to Shirdi to see Mr. Bapusaheb Buti, the famous millionaire of Nagpur. After meeting him he came to the Masjid to take Baba's darshan. Baba brought various things from vendors with his own money and distributed to people in the Masjid. Mule Shastri wanted to read Baba's hand. Baba ignored his request and gave him four plantains. Then Mule Shastri returned to the Wada and resumed his duties. Then Baba started for Lendi and said "Take some saffron coloured dye, we all will be wearing saffron coloured cloth. Then Baba returned to the Masjid for the arti. Bapusaheb jog asked Mule Shastri to accompany him for the arti, at this Shastri replied that he would go and meet Baba in the afternoon. As the arti commenced Baba said get some Dakshina from the Nasik Brahmin Mule Shastri. Buti himself went to the Wada and conveyed Baba's message to Shastri. Hearing this he was perplexed and thought in his mind being an Agnihotri Brahmin why should he pay, why should he pay dakshina, as he is not dependent on Baba, but in spite of such thoughts he agreed to pay the Dakshina. Leaving all his work he immediately went to the Masjid. As soon as he threw flowers at Baba all of a sudden he saw his late Guru Gholap there. It surprised him. At first he thought it was a dream and was speechless. Ultimately leaving all doubts aside he fell at his Guru's feet and stood there with folded hands. Other people sang arti while Mule Shastri chanted his Guru's name. Then giving all pride, he closed his eyes and fell at Guru's feet. When he opened his eyes Baba asked him for Dakshina. Seeing Baba's blissful form, overjoyed, and tears in his eyes saluted Baba and gave him Dakshina. Seeing this wonderful leela of Baba all were much moved, and they realised the

meaning of Baba's words about wearing of saffron coloured clothes. Such was the wonderful leela of Baba.

A Doctor

Once a revenue officer came to Shirdi with his doctor friend. The Doctor said that his deity was Ram and he would not bow to Baba and therefore expressed his unwillingness to go to Shirdi. To this revenue Officer replied that he would not force him to bow to Baba, but just requested the pleasure of his company. On reaching Shirdi when the doctor went to the Masjid for Baba's darshan all were wonderstruck to see him going ahead and saluting Baba. Then the doctor replied that he saw Ram and so he saluted him, while saying this he saw Baba there and was dismayed.

Next day he took a vow and began to fast, resolving not to go in the Masjid unless Baba blessed him. On the fourth day of the fast a close friend turned up and together they went to the Masjid for Baba's darshan. Baba asked him, did anyone go to call him. Hearing this question he was much moved. The same night he was blessed by Baba and he experienced supreme bliss in his sleep. Then he went to his home and remained in this state for a fortnight. Thus his devotion to Baba increased immensely.

The moral of the story that we should have firm faith in our Guru and none else.
Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 13

The Inscrutable Power Of Maya

Baba's word always carried a lot of weight and meaning. He was very content and never cared for anything. He said "Though I am a fakir and possess nothing and stay at one place, still the Maya teases me often. Though I forget myself, she does not forget me. Those who take refuge in God will be free from the clutches of Maya and will ever be blessed.

For the welfare of his devotees Baba said "Those who are very fortunate and have no demerits, say my name and I shall take you over the seven seas, and you will certainly be benefitted. I do not need any things for worship. I rest there where there is full devotion."

Bhimaji Patil

In the year 1909 Bhimaji Patil of Narayangoan suffered from a chronic chest disease and developed tuberculosis. He tried all remedies but was all in vain. When nothing worked he ultimately prayed Lord Narayan to help him. Then he came up with the idea of consulting Nanasaheb Chandorkar and wrote a letter to him, explaining his health problem and expressing that he would like take refuge at Baba's feet. On Nanasaheb's advice Bhimaji went to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan. On seeing him Baba said that his disease was due to previous evil karmas and would not interfere in that at all. But the patient cried out in despair

and prayed for mercy. Baba's heart melted and he said to Bhimaji "Stay cast off your anxiety, your suffering has come to an end.

However oppressed or troubled one maybe, as soon as they stepped 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. The patient vomited blood every five minutes, but in front of Baba there was no vomiting. Baba asked him to go and stay in Bhimabai's house which was not a convenient place at all, but Baba's orders had to be obeyed.

While he was staying there Baba cured him in 2 dreams. In the first dream he saw himself a boy suffering severe pain of a flogging when he did not recite poetry. In the second dream someone caused him intense pain by rolling a roller over his chest. The pain he suffered in the dream cured him completely and he returned home. He often came to Shirdi to take Baba's darshan. He also started a new Sai Satya Vrata puja, in his house when he returned to his village.

Bala Ganpat Simpi

Another devotee Bala Ganpat Simpi suffered from malignant malaria. He tried all remedies, but nothing worked. So he ran to Shirdi and fell at Baba's feet. Baba suggested him to give food of rice mixed with curd to a black dog in front of the Lakshmi temple, which he religiously obeyed after he reached home. Strange to say Baba got rid of his malaria.

Bapusaheb Buti

Bapusaheb Buti once suffered from dysentery. He tried all medicines but nothing worked. Thus he became very weak on account of diarrhoea and vomiting and therefore was not able to go the Masjid for Baba's darshan. Baba then sent for him, and made him sit before him and said "now take care, no more diarrhoea and vomiting" and made a gesture with his index finger. Baba's word has so much power that his maladies disappeared and he became completely well.

On another occasion he had a cholera attack and suffered from severe thirst. Dr. Pillai tried all remedies but could not give him any relief and so he consulted Baba for a cure. Baba prescribed him to boil infusion of almonds, walnuts and pistachios in sugar milk and drink it. Normally this would aggravate the disease. But Buti followed Baba's advice and strangely the disease was cured.

Alandi Swami

A Swami from Alandi came to Shirdi for Baba's darshan. He suffered severe pain in his ears which prevented him from getting proper sleep at night. He was operated for this. While he was returning back, the pain was so severe that he did not know what to do. When he came to take Baba's leave Shama requested Baba to do something about his ear. Baba confirmed him by saying "Allah will do well." When Swamiji returned home his pain subsided.

When he went to Mumbai for the operation the surgeon told him that no operation is required. Such were the wonderful words of Baba.

Kaka Mahajani

Once Kaka Mahajani suffered from diarrhoea. Kaka did not inform Baba about his problem and at the same time kept doing his duties. He thought that Baba knew everything and would cure him. When the actual work of constructing the pavement which was permitted by Baba commenced everybody including Kaka ran away. At that moment Baba caught hold of Kaka and made him sit before him. Then Baba took the groundnuts, from a packet left by somebody, deskinning it, and made Kaka eat them forcefully. Baba also ate the nuts. Then Baba drank some water and made Kaka also drink it. Baba said to Kaka “Now your diarrhoea has stopped and you may attend to work of the pavement.”

In the meanwhile others who had run away also came back and started the work. Kaka also joined them. Usually groundnuts aggravate the problem of diarrhoea. But it was actually Baba’s words that cured Kaka.

Dattopant Of Harda

A gentleman by the name of Dattopant of Harda suffered from stomach ache for fourteen years. He tried all remedies but none gave him relief. Hearing Baba’s fame he ran to Shirdi and fell at Baba’s feet. While giving blessings Baba placed his hand on his head and also gave him udhi. He immediately felt relief and there were no troubles anymore in his stomach.

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

- (1) Madhavroa Despande suffered from piles. As a remedy Baba gave him sonamukhi pods. This gave him relief. After 2 years the problem reoccurred and Madahroa took the same remedy that Baba had prescribed earlier. But the disease aggravated, but later on it was cured by Baba’s grace.
- (2) Kaka Mahajani’s elder brother Gangadharpant suffered from a stomach pain for many years. Hearing 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 there was no stomach pain and he was completely cured.
- (3) Once Nanasaheb Chandorkar suffered from acute stomach pain and was restless the whole day and night. Doctore gave injection which did not give him any relief. Then he approached Baba who told him to eat burfi with ghee. This recipe gave him complete relief.

All these remedies show that the real medicine that cured various diseases permanently were Baba's words and grace, but not the medicine itself.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 14

In the last chapter we described how Baba cured incurable disease by his words and grace. Now we shall describe how with Baba's blessing Rantanji Wadia was blessed with a son.

The life of a saint is sweet and blissful. Sai Baba through his stories gave bliss to his devotees which led them to a path of true religion. His main objective was that people should live happily in this world but at the same time achieve their ultimate object in life, self realization.

If you hear the stories of Sai daily you will always see him in your mind. Mind will loose fickleness, and if one goes on continuously, he will merge into pure consciousness.

Rantanji Of Nanded

Rantanj Shapurji a Parsi mill contractor and trader was a very rich and prosperous man having lots of property, conveyances and cattle. He was liberal and charitable and always looked after the poor people in various ways. In spite of having everything in life he was internally not very happy as because he longed for child. He brooded on this matter and said to himself "Would God be ever pleased to grant me a son", and suffered from anxiety. He told his problem to Das Ganu, at this Das Ganu advised him to go to Shirdi and take Baba's darshan.

After a few days Ratanji went to Shirdi and fell at Baba's feet and offered him a garland and a basket of fruits. , and sat near Baba and requested him to give him relief from his problems. Hearing this Baba asked him for dakshina of Rs.5 and also told him that earlier he had got from him Rs. 3-14-0 and this was the balance he had to pay. Ratanji was perplexed and gave Baba the balance dakshina, and prayed to Baba to bless him with a son. Baba told him not to worry as his bad days were over, and while giving blessings and Udhi told him that go would satisfy his heart's desire.

After returning from Shirdi Ratanji told Das Ganu about everything that took place in Shirdi, but there was one thing which he could not understand about the Dakshina, as he had never gone to Shirdi. Hearing this Das Ganu was puzzled, but sometime afterwards he recalled that Ratanji had given a reception to the well known saint Moulisaheb of Nandev. When Ratanji decided to go to Shirdi, Moulisaheb again turned up and Ratanji gave a party in his honour. Das Ganu calculated the same expenses mentioned by Baba and it came to the exact amount. Everybody was wonderstruck and came to know that Baba was omniscient and knew the past present and the future.

Ratanji was satisfied by the explanation and as time went by he was blessed with a son. It is said that he had a dozen children out of which four survived.

In the footnote it is stated that Baba asked Rao Bhahdur Hari Vinayak Sathe to remarry after the death of his first wife so that he can have a son. He did as Baba said. His first two children were daughters and the third was a son. Baba's words did come true and he was satisfied.

Dakshina

Baba always asked for dakshina from people who went to see him. There are many people who ask this question,"if Baba was a fakir and none attached, why should he ask for dakshina and care for money." At first Baba never asked for dakshina from anybody. If anybody gave him a paisa or two he would buy oil or tobacco. Baba loved tobacco as he always smoked the bidi or chillum. Then some persons thought that one should not go to saints empty handed and therefore placed some copper coins before Baba. If a paisa was placed before Baba he would pocket it. But if it was two paisa coin it was returned immediately.

Then after Baba's fame spread, people began to flock on numbers Baba began to ask for dakshina. Although Baba extracted dakshina he had to give back hundred times more of what he received. There are many instances in which this has happened.

In one incident Mr. Ganpatrao Bodas, a famous actor, says that Baba kept pressing him for dakshina. He emptied his money bag before him, but later in life he never lacked money as it came to him abundantly.

But there are also secondary meanings of Dakshina. Once Baba asked Prof. GG Nark for Rs.15 as dakshina, who replied that, he had no money. To this Baba

said that he was reading the yog Vasishtha and to give him the dakshina from that. Giving dakshina in this regard means deriving lessons from the book and lodging them in the heart where Baba resides.

In another incident Baba asked a lady Mrs. R.A.Tarkhad for Rs.6 Dakshina. The lady felt pain as she was unable to give. Then her husband explained to her that Baba wanted six inner enemies to be surrendered to him. Baba agreed with this explanation.

Baba collected a lot of money by dakshina which was distributed to all. When he attained the Mahasamadhi he had only a few rupees in his possession. Baba's main aim for taking Dakshina from his devotees was to teach them the lessons of renunciation and purification.

Post Script

Mr. B.V.Dev has written an article on dakshina in Sai Leela magazine and mentions the following facts.

Baba did not ask Dakshina from all. If somebody gave dakshina to Baba then he would accept it and at other times refused it. He never demanded it. If anybody offered it against his wish he never accepted it. He asked for small or big amounts according to their wish, devotion and convenience. He even asked from women and children. He never asked of all the rich, or of all the poor. Baba never got angry with those who did not give dakshina even if it was asked for. If any Dakshina was sent through a friend and the person did not pay it, he reminded him of it and made him pay it.

On some occasion Baba used to return the dakshina and asked the donor to keep it in his shrine of worship. This benefitted the devotee immensely. If anyone offered more than he intended to give, he returned the extra amount. Sometimes Baba would ask for more dakshina than what the devotee intended to give, and if they had no money, Baba would ask them to beg or borrow money. For some he demanded dakshina three or four times a day.

Out of the amount collected as dakshina Baba spend very little for himself, buying chillum and fuel for his dhuni, and the rest he would distribute as charity in varying proportions to various persons.

When Baba's devotees bought all costly rich articles, he use to get annoyed and he told Nanasaheb Chandorkar that his property only consisted of a codpiece, a piece of cloth, a kafni and a tin pot, and was much troubled when people bought him costly articles.

Woman and wealth are the two obstacles on the way of spiritual life, and Baba in Shirdi had provided two institutions Dakshina and Radhakrishnamai. He demanded Dakshina and then asks his devotees to go to Radhakrishnamai's

house. If they stood these two tests well, their progress in spirituality would be rapid by the grace and blessings of Baba.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 15

This chapter describes in the manner in which Das Ganu does the Kirtan.

Naradiya Kirtan Padhati

Generally Haridas, the people who do kirtan are bare body from waist upwards. Das Ganu when once went to Baba to salute before him, Baba asked him where he was going dressed up as a bridegroom. To this Das Ganu replied that he was going to perform kirtan. Then Baba said why he needs to wear a coat and asked him to lay off the clothes. Das Ganu immediately took off his clothes and lay at Baba's feet. Thenceforth Das Ganu was bare body from waist upwards, a pair of chiplis in his hands and garland round his neck. This was the best and the pure method.

Mr. Cholkar's Sugarless Tea

Initially Baba was known in Poona and Ahmednagar districts, but with Nanasaheb Chandorkar word of mouth and Das Ganu's kirtan Baba's name and fame spread in Mumbai. The audience who came to listen Das Ganu's kirtan liked the various ways in which Das Ganu performed the kirtan. Among the audience there were very few who developed faith and devotion in God and saints. The effect of hearing Das Ganu's Kirtan was like electric in the mind of the audiences. We give an instance here.

Once Das Ganu was doing kirtan and singing the glory of Sai Baba in Koupineshwar temple in Thana. One Mr. Cholkar who was among the audience was much moved by Das Ganu's kirtan. He then mentally bowed to Baba saying, that he was a poor man unable to support my family. If by Baba's grace he passed the departmental examination and got a permanent post, then he shall go to Shirdi, fall at Baba's feet and distribute sugar candy.

Luck favoured him. Mr. Cholkar did pass the examination and got a permanent post. And now it was his turn to fulfil his vow, the sooner it was done the better. Mr. Cholkar was a poor man and could not pay expenses for his Shirdi trip, he started saving money by cutting down his expenses and sugar. After he was able to save some money. He came to Shirdi, fell at Baba's feet, offered a coconut and distributed sugar candy as per his vow, and told Baba that he was very happy that all his desires were fulfilled. That day Mr. Cholkar was with his host Bapusaheb Jog. When both were leaving the Masjid, Baba spoke to jog "Give him a cup of tea full of sugar."

Hearing these words Mr. Cholkar was much moved, his eyes were full of tears and he fell at Baba's feet again. Mr. Jog did not understand anything. By saying these words Baba wanted to create faith and devotion in Cholkar's mind. Baba meant to say, "If you spread your palms with devotion before me I am immediately with you always. Though I am in Shirdi I come to know what you do beyond the seven seas. Go wherever you wish in the world, I am with you. Always worship me. Blessed and fortunate indeed he is who knows me thus."

What beautiful lesson Baba imparted to Mr. Cholkar.

Two Lizards

Once Baba was sitting in the Masjid with a devotee, when suddenly there was a tick sound. Out of curiosity the devotee asked Baba whether the ticking of the lizard signifies anything good or bad. Baba said the lizard was overjoyed as the lizard from Aurangabad was coming to see her. The devotee sat silent not understanding the meaning of Baba's words. Immediately a gentleman from Aurangabad came on the horse back to see Baba. He wanted to proceed further but his horse was hungry and wanted to eat grams. He took out a bag of grams and dashed it out to remove dirt; while he did that a lizard came out from there and climbed the wall. Baba asked the devotee to keep a close watch on the lizard. The lizard at once went to her sister and both embraced each other. It is a wonder how the two sisters met. It is really wonderful and proves the all knowing nature of Baba.

Post Script:

He who respectfully studies this chapter daily will get all his miseries removed by the grace of the Sad guru, Sai Baba.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 16 & 17

The last chapter describes how Mr. Cholkar completed his vow by giving a small offering which was appreciated and accepted by Baba. Sai Baba would accept with appreciation any small thing offered to him with love and devotion. But if the same thing was be offered with pride, he would reject it. Being Sat Chit Anand (Pure Consciousness, knowledge and Bliss) he did not care much for the outward formalities. There is no person more generous than the Sad guru.

The Sad guru gives us the most precious thing which cannot be compared with none and it is self realization. Here is a story of a rich man who came to learn Brahma Gyan from Sai Baba.

There was a super rich gentleman who had a quest for Brahma gyan. He told his friend that he had decided to go to Shirdi and ask Baba to give him Brahma Gyan which would make him happier. His friend explained to him that it was not easy for him to know Brahma as he was so engrossed in wealth, wife and children and never gave any charity.

Paying no heed to his friend he went to Shirdi, came to the Masjid and fell at Baba's feet requesting him to give him Brahma gyan. Baba then replied "Oh my friend do not be anxious, I will show you Brahma. Many people come to me asking for worldly comforts very rarely a person comes to me for asking Brahma Gyan.

It is a very fortunate and auspicious moment that you have come to me." Saying this, Baba started to show him Brahma. Baba made him sit and engaged him in some other talk and made him forget his question for the time being. Then he called a boy and told him to go to Nandu Marwari and get from him Rs.5. The boy left and returned immediately saying that Nandu was not at home and his house was locked. Then Baba asked the boy to go to Bala grocer for the same amount but the boy returned unsuccessful. This experiment was repeated thrice, but with same result.

One may ask that if Sai Baba was a living Brahma incarnation why he wanted a mere Rs.5. The answer is that he wanted to test the seeker of Brahma Gyan. The gentleman had a bundle of currency notes in his pocket. He knew that Baba was trying frantically to get Rs. 5 but he could not make up his mind and advance the sum. Such a man wanted from Baba Brahma gyan. Any other person in his place would have given Baba Rs.5 at once. He advanced no money and began to be impatient, and requested Baba to give him Bhrama Gyan, as he was in a hurry to go home. Baba replied "Oh my dear friend did you not understand all the procedures that I went through, sitting in one place for enabling you to see Bhrama?" for seeing Bhrama one has to surrender 5 things (1) five pranas (vital forces) (2) five senses (3) mind (4) intellect (5) ego. This path of Brahma Gyan is hard as treading on the edge of the razor.

Sai Baba then gave a long discourse the subject the purpose of which is given below:

Qualifications Of Brahma Gyan Or Self Realization

- 1. Mumuksha or free of intense desire: One who wants to be free of bondage of life and works earnestly to achieve it till the end and does not care for anything is qualified for spiritual life.**
- 2. Virakti or feeling of non attachment toward worldly things: unless a man feels completely unattached from his honours and actions, he has no right to enter into spiritual world.**
- 3. Antarmukha (Introversion): God has created our senses to feel the outer world, so man always looks outwardly. He who wants self realization must be with his divine inner self and thus look inwards.**
- 4. Catharsis (elimination ideas and emotions): Unless a person has stopped doing wrong and turned away from wickedness and bring his mind to he cannot gain self realization by means of knowledge.**
- 5. Right Conduct: Unless a man leads a life of truth, penance and insight, a life of celibacy, he cannot get God realization.**
- 6. Preferring Shreyas (the good) to Preyas (the pleasant: There are two things the good which deals with spiritual affairs and the pleasant deals mundane matters. Both these choices are open to man. The wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the unwise chooses the pleasant as he is engrossed in greed and attachment.**
- 7. Control of the Mind and the senses: Body is like a chariot, Self is its master, intellect is the charioteer, mind the rein, senses the horses, sense objects the path. He who has no understanding, mind unrestrained and unmanageable like a stray horse of a charioteer does not attain self realization but goes through the cycle of birth and death. But he who has an understanding of the inner self and has the mind in under control, reaches the end of his journey thus attaining Self realization.**
- 8. Purification of the Mind: A person cannot get self realization if his mind full of egoism, desires and is not purified. The very thought that "I am the body "is a cause of bondage and attachment. One has to forego attachment to attain self realization.**
- 9. Grace: Lastly the grace of God is most essential thing. When the Lord is pleased with anybody, he takes him beyond the ocean of mundane existence. Self realization cannot be gained by studying Vedas, nor attaining knowledge, but only attain by going deeper into inner self.**

After the dissertation was over Baba requested the gentleman to take out Rs. 250 from his pocket. When he took out the money to his surprise he found 25 notes of Rs. 10 each. He was much moved, and fell at Baba's feet and craved for his blessings. Then Baba said to him "Roll up your bundle of Brahma, unless you get rid of your creed you will not get the real Brahma. How can a person having so much attachment with wealth, progeny and prosperity know Brahma. The love for money is a deep whirlpool of pain. Greed and Brahma are two opposite poles. Wherever there is greed there is no room for Brahma. For a greedy man there is no peace, contentment nor steadiness. Sadhana goes in vain with the slightest taste of greed. Even the knowledge of a learned man cannot help him to attain self realization. The teachings of a Guru are of no use to a man dipped in egoism and sense objects. Purification of the mind is absolutely necessary without which spirituality is nothing, but pomp and show. Therefore it is better to take only what one can digest. My treasury is full and I can give anyone what he wants, but before I do so I need to know whether he is qualified to receive my gift. If you listen to me carefully you will certainly be benefitted. While sitting in the Masjid I never speak the untruth.

When guests are invited to the house all the members including relatives and friends present there are entertained along with the guest. So all who were present at that time in the Masjid had a spiritual feast, which was served by Baba for the rich gentleman. After getting Baba's blessing the gentleman left the place happy and contented.

Special Characteristics Of Baba

There are many Saints who stay in solitude in order to get salvation. And do not care for people. Sai Baba was not such type. He had no home. Still he lived in the world. He begged his bread from four or five houses and lived under the Neem tree, and taught the people how to act and behave. Rarely one will come across a saint who will strive for the welfare of the people. Sai Baba was the foremost of these, therefore says Hemadpant:

Blessed is the country where this extraordinary saint Sai Baba was born.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 18 & 19

In these two chapters the author Hemadpant describes how he himself was accepted and blessed by Baba, and how Baba gave him teachings of self improvement and induced good thoughts in him.

Preliminary

It is a true fact that before imparting any knowledge the Sad guru looks at the qualification of his disciple, and then accordingly guides him towards the goal of self realization. There are many controversies regarding the teachings of the Sad guru. But to me the Sad Guru is like a monsoon cloud who pours his nectar like teachings which we should assimilate and serve others with them without any reservation. This rule should be applied to not only what he teaches us but also the visions he gives us in our dreams. Like a loving mother giving bitter medicines to her children similarly Sai Baba imparted spiritual instructions to his devotees.

Sai Baba showed his disciples the divine beauty of self and devotion. The devotees who followed his instructions attained their desires and were free of troubles and sufferings. The progress of the inner self is entirely due to the help of the Sad Guru, therefore we should always be after the Sad Guru. Hear his stories, fall at his feet and serve him with devotion. Now we come to our main story.

Mr. Sathe

There was a gentleman Mr. Sathe who attained fame during Crawford regime, but was put down by Lord Reay. He also suffered great losses in trade and was troubled by adverse circumstances which made him sad and dejected and thought of leaving home and going to a distant place. His friends advised him to go to Shirdi and take Sai Baba's darshan. He liked the idea and immediately went to Shirdi. Seeing Baba his mind became peaceful and he became calm and composed. He thought that his good karmas in past life brought him to the holy feet of Baba. He was very strong willed and at once started to do the parayan (reading of Guru Charitra). When the reading was completed in seven days Baba gave him a vision in the night, and explained the contents of Guru Charitra which he listened very carefully.

When he woke up, he was very happy and he thought that it was extremely kind of Baba to awaken his soul which was dipped in ignorance, by making him taste the nectar of Guru Charitra. Next day narrated the vision of Baba to Kakasaheb Dixit and requested him to consult Baba regarding the meaning of this vision. When Kaka asked Mr. Sathe's question to Baba. Then Baba advised him that Mr. Sathe should read one more saptah of the book so that he can be benefitted immensely, and moreover the Lord will be pleased and rescue him from the bondage of mundane existence.

When Baba uttered these words Hemadpant was sitting there shampooing Baba's legs. He thought in his mind that Mr. Sathe got rewards for reading the Charitra for 7 days, but he is reading for forty years with no results. Like a Chatak bird I am waiting instructions and blessings. Baba knew everything going on in Hemadpant's mind and wanted to create good thoughts in his mind by suppressing his evil thoughts. At once Baba asked Hemadpant to go and visit Shama for a while, chit chat with him and bring Rs.15 as dakshina from him.

Hemadpant obeying Baba's orders immediately left the Masjid and went to Shama's house. Shama asked Hemadpant the reason why he came to his house and why he looked restless and dejected? Shama offered him Leaves of betel nut and asked him to sit and wait till he finished his worship. Hemadpant sat alone in the veranda, suddenly his eyes fell over a well known Marathi book "Nath Bhagat" which he read a portion daily. But that day he left the reading unfinished because he had to accompany certain devotees going to the Masjid. When he took the book and opened the page to his surprise the unfinished portion opened up. He thought Baba sent him very kindly to Shama's house to complete the unfinished portion which he left that day. As soon as his reading was over Shama returned after doing his worship and both indulged in the following conversations:

Hemadpant: I have come here with the message of Baba that he has asked Rs. 15 dakshina from you. And also to sit with you for sometime and have a chit chat before I return to the Masjid.

Shama: (surprised) I have no money, in lieu of that take my 15 namaskars as dakshina to Baba.

Hemadpant: Alright your namaskars are accepted. Now please tell me some stories of Baba which will destroy our sins.

Shama: sit for a while; you know more about Baba's leelas than I do, as you are an enlightened soul. Well take the betel beads and the nuts while I go and dress myself.

In a few minutes Shama came out and kept talking to Hemadpant explaining to him that the leelas of Baba are inscrutable and endless. Why does Baba not tell his own stories? What do we rustics know? While talking Shama remembered a story which he narrated to Hemadpant. As a devotee is resolute and determined, so is Baba's immediate response. Sometimes Baba puts his devotees to severe test and give them instructions

As soon as Hemadpant heard the word instructions a flash of lightening crossed his mind. Immediately he remembered the story of Sathe and thought Baba might have sent him to Shama to give peace to his restless mind. But he curbed his feelings and began to listen to Shama's stories. Every one of his stories depicted the kind and affectionate nature of Baba towards his devotees. Hemadpant was overjoyed listening to all these stories. Then Shama began to tell the following story:

Mrs. Radhabai Deshmuk

There was an old woman by the name of Radhabai. Hearing Baba's fame she came to Shirdi from Sangamner. She took Baba's darshan and was very satisfied. She loved Baba very much and wanted to accept him as her Guru and take instructions from him. She was determined to fast herself to death as long as Baba did not give her instructions or mantra. She stopped taking food and water for three days which frightened me, so I went and told Baba about her decision to fast until death, if he did not instruct her, the consequences will be bad. So I advised Baba to take some mercy on her and bless and instruct her. Seeing her determination Baba sent for her and made her change her mind by addressing as follows: "Oh mother why are you torturing yourself? You are my mother and I am your child. Take pity on me and hear my story carefully which will do you good. I had a Guru whom I served for very long, but still he did not blow any Mantra in my ears. I never wanted to leave him and at all costs wanted to receive some instruction from him. But he had his own ways. First he shaved off my head and then asked 2 paisa dakshina which I gave at once. You may ask this question that why my Guru asked me for money when he is perfect and desire less?"

The reply is he never cared for coins, but the two paisa denoted (1) Firm Faith (2) Patience which I gave him and he was much pleased.

I resorted to my Guru for 12 years, who brought me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He loved me the most. Rare will you come across a Guru like that. When I looked at him he seemed to be in deep meditation and then we both were filled with bliss. I forgot my thirst and hunger when I gazed at him.

Without him I felt restless as he was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. This Nishta (Firm Faith) is one paisa of dakshina. I waited patiently and served my Guru. This Saburi will carry you across the sea of mundane existence, removes all afflictions and sins and gets rid of calamities in various ways including fear and gives you success. Both Faith and patience are like twin sisters loving each other intimately.

My Guru never accepted anything from me, and nor did he neglect me and protected me at all times. Sometimes even if I was far away from him I never felt the absence of his love. Oh mother my Guru never taught me any Mantra, so how shall I blow any mantra in your ears. Do not try to get Mantra and upadesh from anybody, make me the sole object of your thoughts and actions and you will attain salvation. Look at me with love and devotion and I shall look at you.

Sitting in the Masjid I only speak the truth. No Sadhana is necessary. Just have faith and confidence in your Guru, because Guru is Brahma's incarnation."

The old lady was very convinced listening to Baba. She bowed to him and gave up her fast.

Hearing this wonderful leelas of Baba Hemadpant was greatly surprised, joyful and was much moved and could not utter a word. Seeing this Shama asked him why was he silent and what was the matter with him?

Just at that time the bell began to ring in the Masjid denoting that the noon arti had begun. Shama and Hemadpant both hurried to the Masjid. Bapusaheb Jog commenced the arti and all were singing accompanied by drums. Hemadpant sat in front of Baba and Shama sat to the right. On seeing them Baba asked Hemadpant for the Dakshina brought from Shama. He replied that Shama gave Namaskars in lieu of rupees. Then Baba was eager to know what chit chat they had. Hemadpant also was eager tell Baba what they talked and Baba also was eager to know, he left the bolster and leaned forward to hear about their talks. Hemadpant said all that he talked about including the story of the old woman. Hearing this Baba was much pleased and asked him wether the story had any significance on him? To this Hemadpant replied that all his restlessness of the mind vanished and he came to know the true path.

Then Baba told him “My method is very unique, by remembering this story will help you get knowledge of self. Meditation is necessary and if practiced daily will make you disreless and with all effort merge into Brahma.

While uttering these words Arti ceremony was over and Prasad was distributed. Bapusaheb jog after saluting Baba and gave him handful of sugar candy, which Baba gave to Hemadpant and told him that if he takes this story to heart , he will be very happy and all his desires will be fulfilled.

Dear readers, as Hemadpant we also now get Prasad as the nectar of this story. Let us meditate and assimilate on it and be strong and happy by Baba’s grace Amen!

Baba’s Advice Regarding Our Behaviour

The following words of Baba if kept in the mind will always do well. Unless there is a relationship or connection nobody goes anywhere. If anyone comes to you do not drive them away but receive them with respect. God will be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, food to the hungry and clothes to the naked, and veranda to strangers for resting. If anybody asks you for money and you are not inclined to give do not give but don’t treat him badly. If anyone spoke against you do not resent in a bitter way. If you tolerate all things you will be happy. Let the world be topsy turvy, but you be calm and watch like a spectator. Demolish the wall of separation and differentiation then the road will become clear. God is the sole proprietor and protector and his method is unique. He alone shows us the way and satisfies our heart’s desires. It is on account of previous relationships that we have come together. Let us love and serve each other and be happy.

Encouraging Good Thoughts to Fruition

Sai Baba always encouraged good thoughts to those who completely surrendered to him with love and devotion. Some saints have said that if you get good thought immediately after waking from sleep and if you develop the same during the day you will be at peace.

Hemadpant wanted to try this. On Wednesday night before going to bed he thought, he would spend the whole of Thursday remembering and celebrating Ram naam. Next morning when he woke up he remembered Ram, and after completing his morning duties went to Baba with flowers. While passing Buti Wada he heard a beautiful song mentioning Lord Ram. There are so many songs, but this song was particularly chosen. This was a miracle.

Variety In Upadesh – Slanderer Condemed

Whenever an occasion demanded Baba always gave instructions. It once happened that a Bhakta of Baba criticised someone sarcastically behind his back that the hearers were disgusted. Saints see such scandals in another light. They say that there are various ways of removing dirt, but a scandal monger removes dirt by his tongue. In a way he is obliges a person and therefore he should be thanked. Sai Baba has his own way of correcting the scandal monger. He knew what the slanderer had done. At noon in Lendi Baba pointed out to the slanderer a pig eating filth with great relish, and told him that your conduct is similar. Baba also told him “that after performing many deeds of merit you are born as a human being and if you act like this how can Shirdi help you in any way.

In this way Baba gave instructions whenever necessary. If these were properly followed it helps to achieve spiritual goal. One has to make every effort to attain self realization.

Baba said he was omnipresent. If any devotee meditated on him with complete surrender he would experience union with him. He who wants to get rid from the cycle of Birth and death should live a righteous life. He should not hurt anybody, engage in good deeds and surrender completely. He need not then be afraid of anybody. He who has trust in him, listens to his leelas is sure to get self realization.

To some Baba advised Shravan (study) and manan (contemplation), and to some he said to take God’s name, and to others hearing his leelas and to some Baba would give punishment or advices in their dreams. It is impossible to describe his ways. His ways were unique.

Remuneration For Labour

One day at noon Baba came near Radhakrishnamai’s house, and asked for a ladder which was bought in by some men and put against the wall of the house. As directed by Baba the boy climbed up Vaman Gandkar’s house, passed over the roof of Radhakrishnamai’s house and then got down from the other side. Radhakrishnamai was that time suffering from malaria, so people think that this act was performed by Baba to drive out her fever.

Baba paid Rs.2 to the person who bought the ladder. When asked why he did so Baba replied nobody should take anybody’s labour free. The worker should be paid his dues promptly and liberally. If the principal of Baba is followed it benefits both the labourer and the employer.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 20

God is formless. He assumed form with the help of Maya and played the part of an actor in the drama of the universe. Let us visualize Sai Baba. Go to Shirdi and see the happenings after the Arti ceremony was over. After that arti was over Baba came out of the Masjid and distributed Udhi as well as put it on the forehead, with lots of love, affection and grace to his devotees. Then Baba would address his Bhaktas individually to go home and enjoy their meals. This is how he sent his Bhaktas home. Even today we can still imagine the same sight by thinking and meditating on Baba.

Isha Upanishad

Das Ganu started writing Maharathi commentary on Isha Upanishad. Giving an idea of the Upanishad Das Ganu mentions, it is a mantra and constitutes the 40th chapter of Yajurveda. It is regarded as superior of all the Upanishads.

According to Professor R. D Rande, Isha Upanishad is small and yet it contains many facts. Within a short compass of 18 verses it gives a description about the soul. It also gives description of a sage standing unruffled on the mist of temptations and sorrows. The doctrine of Karma Yoga as later formulated is also mentioned in the book. The most logical idea that lies in the Upanishad is the two opposite synthesis between of knowledge and work, which are both required to be annulled in higher synthesis. Page 24 of the Upanishad philosophy says that the poetry of Ishopanishad is a commixture of moral, mystical and metaphysical knowledge.

From a brief description given above one can see how difficult it is to translate in the vernacular language and bring out the exact meaning. Das Ganu translated it verse by verse in Marathi, but as he could not understand the essence of it he was not very satisfied with his performance. Hence he consulted some learned men and discussed with them in great length. But in vain nobody could solve his doubts and difficulties, and therefore he became very restless, over this matter.

Sad Guru Only Competent And Qualified To Explain

An Upanishad is a science of self realization and free us from the bondage of life and death. Therefore Das Ganu thought the person who has himself attained self realization can give a true interpretation of the Upanishad. When everybody failed to satisfy him he resolved to consult Sai Baba. He saw Sai Baba, bowed before him and mentioned all the difficulties about the Isha Upanishad. Baba blessed him and told him not to be anxious, and assured him that Kakasaheb Dixit will remove all his doubts at Vile Parley on his way home. People sitting in the Masjid thought that Baba was joking. They said how could a maid servant solve doubts, But Das Ganu believed in Baba's words, and was sure that whatever Baba spoke will come true.

Kaka's Maid Servant

Fully believing in Baba's words Das Ganu left for Shirdi and came to Vile Parle and stayed with KakaSaheb Dixit. The next day when Das Ganu was enjoying his nap, he heard a poor girl singing a song. The theme of the song was how beautiful, colourful and well embroidered was a crimson coloured sari. He liked the song so much that he came out to see who was singing. It was a young girl the servant of Kakasaheb. She was wearing a torn rag and was cleaning the vessels. Das Ganu took pity on her and requested Rao Bahadur to buy her a small sari and presented it to her. She was overjoyed to receive this gift. Next day she wore her new sari and danced around and played with the other girls. The following day she kept her new sari and wore the same old rag and came to work, but she looked happy. On seeing her, Das Ganu's pity transformed into admiration. He thought that the girl being poor had to wear the torn rag, but she had a new sari which she kept in reserve, showing no trace of sorrow or dejection. Thus he realised that all our feelings of pain and pleasure depends upon the attitude of our mind. On thinking deeply he realized that a man ought to enjoy what God has bestowed on him with the firm conviction that whatever God has given him must be for his good. In this case all that happened were the part of the lord and was pervaded by him. Here Das Ganu got a practical demonstration of the Upanishad which states the lesson of contentment , that what ever happens in ordained by God and is ultimately good for us.

Unique Method Of Teaching

Baba's method was unique and varied. Though Baba never left Shirdi he would send his devotees to different places for practicing Sadhanas. To some he appeared in his waking form, and to others he appeared in dreams fulfilling their desires. It is impossible to describe Baba's methods for imparting instructions to his Devotees. In this particular case he sent Das Ganu to Ville Parle to solve his problem through a maid servant. Those who do not agree with this, we say to them that Baba followed the right and the best course, or how else Das Ganu could have learnt a great lesson.

The Ethics Of The Isha Upanishad

One of the main features of the Isha Upanishad is the ethical advice it offers based on the metaphysical position given in it. The opening word of the Upanishad say that God pervades in everything and man ought to enjoy whatever God bestows to him in a firm belief that he pervades in everything. Whatever bestowed by God must be good. We are taught a lesson of contentment, and that what ever happen is divinely ordained and hence is good for us. Another advice is that man must do his Karmas with resignation to his will which will help him to attain salvation. Finally the text mentions a man who sees all beings in self vice versa would never from grief and infatuation.

Bow To Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 21

In this chapter Hemadpant narrates the stories of Vinayak, Anantroa and Patankar , which are very interesting and lead the readers to a spiritual path.

Preliminary

It is a general rule that the accumulation of merits in our past life help us to seek company of Saints and benefit thereby. Hemadpant gives his own example. When Hemadpant was a magistrate of Bandra there lived a Muslim Saint Pir Maulana. People from all religions use to go and take his darshan. His priest Yurus pressed Hemadpant many a times but for some reason or the other he was unable to see him. After many years his turn came and he was called in Sai Baba's durbar. It is only the fortunate persons who get in contact with the Saints.

Mr. Thakur

Mr. Thakur was a clerk of the Revenue Department. He once came to Vadgoan with a survey party and met a Kanarese saint Appa and bowed before him. The saint was explaining the portions of the book Vichar Sagar to the audience. When Thakur was taking leave the saint told him to study this book which will help fulfil his desires and also told him that when he goes to the North for his duties in the future, he will come across a great saint who will show him the future path and give peace to him and make him happy.

Then Thakur was transferred to Junnar, where he had to cross the Nane Ghat which was very steep and difficult and no other conveyance other than the buffalo was used to cross it. So he had to take the buffalo ride which was very inconvenient. Thence he was transferred with promotion to Kalyan where he got acquainted to Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He heard much about Baba from him and wished to go and see him. Next day Nanasaheb was going to Shirdi and asked Thakur to accompany him, but Thakur said no because he had to attend the Thana Civil Court for a case. So Nanasaheb went alone. When Thakur went to the Thana and found the case postponed. He repented for not accompanying Nanasaheb to Shirdi and then went alone. When he reached Shirdi he found that Nanasaheb had already left the previous day. Some of his other friends whom he met there took him to Baba. He saw Baba and was overjoyed. His eyes were full of tears. Then Baba told him that the Spiritual path is not so easy, just like the teachings of the Kanarese Saint Appa and his buffalo ride in Nanehat Ghat. Then falling at Baba's feet he asked Baba to accept and bless him. Then Baba told him that what Appa told him has to be practiced and followed. Mere reading will not do. Self realization without the Guru is of no use. The theoretical part was read by Thakur and the practical way was shown to him in Shirdi.

Anantroa Patankar

A gentleman from Poona Mr. Anantroa Patankar wished to see Baba. He came from Shirdi and took Baba's darshan and was much pleased. He fell at Baba's feet and after performing worship and said to Baba "I have read a lot of religious books like Vedas, Upanishads etc. But still I have no peace of mind. Simple ignorant people are better than me. I have heard from many people that you give peace of mind by your words and mere glance, and 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 Vidhya Bhakti)

Once a merchant came to Shirdi. Before him a mere passed 9 stools, which he gathered in his dhoti, and got peace of mind.

Mr. Patanker could not understand the meaning of the story so he asked Dada Kelkar to explain to him what Baba meant by it. But Dada told him from his inspiration that the mare is God's grace and the nine balls excreted are the nine types of Bhakti. (1) Shravan (hearing) (2) Kirtan (praying) (3) Smaran (remembering) (4) Padasevan (restoring to the feet) (5) Archan (worship) (6) Namaskar (bowing) (7) Dasya (service) (8) Sakhyam (friendship) (9) Atmanivedan (surrender of the self). These are the nine types of Bhakti. If any of these is faithfully followed, God will be pleased and manifest himself in the home of the devotee. All the Sadhanas are useless unless it is accompanied by Bhakti. Devotion is the key to Bhakti. Consider you to be the seeker of truth and be eager to cultivate nine types of devotion and thus attain stability of mind. Next day when Patanker went to Baba, Baba asked him whether he collected the nine balls of the stool. To this he replied that that first he needed to be graced by Baba and then he would be able to collect them Baba blessed him and comforted that he would attain peace and happiness. After hearing Baba's words Patanker became overjoyed and happy.

The Phandarpur Pleader

In this chapter it is depicted how Baba corrected people and set them on the right path. Once a pleader from Phandarpur came to Shirdi, went to Baba's Masjid and fell at Baba's feet, and being asked offered some Dakshina and sat at the corner eager to hear the talk that was going on. Baba turned his face towards him and said "How cunning the people are, they fall at the feet, offer dakshina and abuse people behind their back, it is not funny."

This remark fitted the pleader and he had to take it which he grasped it and remained silent. When the pleader returned to the Wada he told Kakasaheb Dixit, that what Baba remarked was perfectly right and was aimed at him. Baba hinted him that I should not indulge myself in scandalising others." When the sub-judge of Phandarpur came to Shirdi for the recovery of his health, a discussion about him was going on in the Bar room in Phandarpur. It was discussed that whether the ailments suffered by the sub-judge could ever be got

rid without medicines, and by merely going to Sai Baba, and whether it was proper for an educated man to take such a decision. The sub-judge and Baba both were criticised, in which he actively took part. Sai Baba showed the impropriety of his conduct. Baba has done a favour to him, as he has learnt a lesson that he should never indulge in any scandal and not interfere unnecessarily in their affairs.

Phandarpur was far away from Shirdi, but still Baba could read the minds and hearts of all and nothing was hidden from him. Wether a person is far or near he cannot avoid the all pervading gaze of Sai Baba. From this incident the pleader learnt a lesson that he should not speak ill of others. This evil tendency was got rid off and he was set on the right path.

Though his story refers to the pleader still it is applicable to all. Therefore all should take this lesson to heart and benefit from it. Sai Baba's greatness is unfathomable and so are his wonderful leelas. He is himself a Para Brahma (Almighty Lord).

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 22

Preliminary

How to meditate on Baba? Nobody knows the nature and form of almighty. Even the Vedas and Puranas have not been able to describe it. The devotees only look at the form of God for they know that his feet are their only refuge and meditation, their supreme goal. Hemadpant suggest an easy way of devotion and meditation.

Hemadpant takes the example of veining and waxing of moon and then goes on to describe Baba's form. Baba has a lovely posture. He is sitting with his legs folded and his right hand held across the left knee. His left hand fingers are spread on the right foot. His two fingers index and the middle are spread on his toes. By this posture Baba seems to say that if you want to see my true form, be egoless and humble and meditate on me. Then you will be able to see my light.

Now let us look at Baba's life. Shirdi has become a place of pilgrimage on account of Baba's stay there. People from all walks of life flocked there and got immense benefit. Blessed are those souls who have experience Baba's boundless love, knowledge and pervasiveness. Sometimes Baba observed long silence, sometimes he would be in a blissful state, sometimes he spoke in parables and at times indulge in wit and humour, and sometimes he gave his teachings in a nut shell and even argued at length. He was very direct and gave instructions to many, according to their requirements. Our longing to see him, Talk to him and to hear his leelas were never satisfied. Now we narrate how Baba anticipated the calamities of his devotees and warned them in time.

Balasaheb Mirikar

Balasaheb Mirikar was going on a tour to Chaitali. On the way he came to Shirdi to see Sai Baba. When he went in the Masjid and bowed before Baba a usual conversation was going on regarding health and other matters. Then Baba sounded a note of warning. Do you know Dwarkamai where we are sitting protects her children from all dangers and troubles whoever sits on her lap? He who sits in her shade gets divine bliss. Then Baba gave Balasaheb udhi and placed his hand on his head. When Balasaheb was about to depart Baba said "Do you know a long Gentleman (serpent), he is so terrible, what can he do to the children of Dwarkamai." and made a gesture of the hood of a snake with his right hand.

All who were present there were very curious to know what Baba meant and its reference to Mirikar, but none had the courage to ask. Balasaheb left the Masjid after saluting Baba. Then Baba asked Shama to accompany Balasaheb. But when asked by Shama Balasaheb refused explaining him that the journey will be uncomfortable. But then Balasaheb thought it over again and finally decided to take Shama. Shama then took Baba's permission and went with Balasaheb in a tonga to Chitali. They reached Chitali at 9pm and camped in the Maruti temple. The office people had not come so they sat in the temple talking and chitchatting.

Balasaheb was sitting on the mat reading the newspaper. His upper dhoter was spread across his waist and on it a snake was sitting unnoticed. It began to move with a hissing sound which was heard by the peon. He bought a lantern, saw the snake and raised the alarm. Balasaheb was frightened and began to quiver, Shama was also stunned. Then he and other quietly took sticks and clubs in their hands. The snake slowly moved away from Balasaheb but was immediately beaten to death. Thus this calamity prophesied by Baba was averted and Balasaheb's devotion in Baba was confirmed.

Bapusaheb Buti

While Bapusaheb was in Shirdi an astrologer named Nanasaheb Denge told him that today was an inauspicious day for him, as there is danger to his life, which made Bapusaheb very restless. When Bapusaheb went to the Masjid, Baba asked him did Nana foretell death for him? And Baba assured him that he need not be afraid. Then later that evening when Bapusaheb went to the toilet he saw a snake there. On seeing this his servant lifted a stone to strike it. Bapusaheb asked him to bring a big stick. But before the servant returned the snake was seen moving and soon disappeared. Bapusaheb remembered Baba's words of fearlessness.

Amir Shakker

Amir Shakker a native of Korhale village belonged to a butcher class. He worked as a commission agent and was well known there. He once suffered from rheumatism which gave him much pain. So he left his business and went to Shirdi, and prayed to Baba to relieve him from this malady. Baba then stationed him in Chavadi, a very damp unhealthy place unfit for such a patient. He followed every word of Baba as they were like command to him. Baba did not even allow him to come to the Masjid and fixed him there. Every alternate day Baba would come in the procession and sleep in the Chavadi, so Amir got Baba's contact very often. Amir stayed there for nine months and got disgusted of that place so one night he left Chavadi and came and stayed in one dharamshala in Kopergoan. There he saw an old dying fakir, who asked him for water, As soon as Amir gave him water the old man died.

Now Amir was in a fix. He thought if he informed the authorities he would be held responsible for his death. He repented his actions. Leaving Shirdi without Baba's permission and prayed to Baba. Then he immediately left for Shirdi taking Baba's name and reached in the morning. Then he lived in Chavadi as per Baba's wish and got cured. One night Baba cried out loudly to Abdul to examine his bed as he thought that there was some creature dashing against the side of his bed. Abdul came with the lantern but could not find anything. Then Baba asked him to examine the whole place carefully. Seeing the Leela of Baba Amir thought that Baba must have seen a serpent. Then Baba saw a serpent coiled up near Amir's cushion. Thereupon the serpent was immediately beaten to death and Baba saved Amir's life by giving timely warning.

Hemadpant (Scorpion And Serpent)

At Baba's recommendation Kakasaheb Dixit was daily readings the work of Sri Eknath Maharaj, Bhagwat and Bhawarta Ramayana and Hemadpant had a good fortune to be the audience of it. When Kakasaheb was reading the portion of the Ramayana relating to Human testing Rama's greatness according to his mother's instructions. At that moment Hamadpant noticed a big scorpion sitting on his right shoulder on his upper dhoter. It was dead silent as if listening to the readings. Then Hemadpant without any disturbance, took the two ends of his dhoter folded them, enclosing the scorpion within. Then he went out and threw it in the garden.

On another occasion some persons were sitting in the Kakasaheb's Wada in the evening, when a serpent crept through a hole in the window frame and sat there coiled. Light was dazzled on it but still it did not move. Then the people came with sticks, but as it sat in an awkward place it did not get the blow. But hearing the noises the serpent went away through the hole. Thus everyone present there felt relieved.

Baba's Opinion

One devotee by the name of Muktaram said that it was good that the snake escaped. Hemadpant challenged him by saying that the serpent better be killed. This hot discussion between the two continued, until late night without any proper conclusion.

The next day this question was put to Baba. Baba explained to them that "God lives in all beings, he is the great wirepuller of this world and all beings obey his command. Unless he wills it nobody can do harm to others. The world is all dependent on him and no one is independent. So we should take pity and love all creatures, leave the killings and be patient. The lord is the protector of all.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 23

Preliminary

In reality the human soul transcends the three qualities Sattawa, Rajas and Tamas, but being deluded by Maya it forgets its true nature pure consciousness and thinks that he is the doer and entangles in endless miseries and loses its way to deliverance. The only way out is the loving devotion towards the Guru's feet.

We regard Baba as the incarnation of God. He showed people good conduct and how to carry out their duties in life. Nor did he emulate, nor did he ask anyone for any favour. He saw God in movable and immovable things, and always uttered Allah Malik (God is the sole proprietor).

By God's grace Saints manifest in this world to liberate the ignorant and bound souls. If we have any merits in our accounts we get the desire to listen to the stories of the saints, otherwise not.

Yoga And Onion

One a yoga sadhak came to Shirdi with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He studied all works of yoga but had no practical experience in it. He could not even concentrate his mind for a short while. He thought that if Baba would be pleased with him he would show him the way to attain Samadhi, for a longer time. With this objective in mind he came to Shirdi, and when he reached the Masjid he saw Baba eating onion with chapatti. Immediately a thought crossed his mind, how can a person eating stale bread and raw onion solve my problems? Sai Baba read his mind and he told Nanasaheb "Oh Nana he, who has the power to digest onion should eat it and none else." Hearing these remarks the yogi was wonderstruck and fell at Baba's feet with complete surrender. With pure mind he related all his difficulties to Baba and got their solutions. Thus being satisfied and happy he left Shirdi with Baba's udhi and blessings.

Shama Cured Of Snake Bite

Once Shama's little finger was bitten by a poisonous snake. The pain was so severe that he thought that he would die. His friends wanted to take him to God Vithoba, but Shama ran to the Masjid to Sai Baba. When Baba saw him he got enraged and began to scold and abuse and said "Oh priest do not climb up, get away, and come down." Seeing this Shama was disappointed and puzzled. He thought the Masjid was his home and Baba was his refuge, and if he was driven away where will he go. He lost all hope in life and kept silent. After a while when Baba became calm Shama went and sat near him. Then Baba said to him don't be afraid, the merciful fakir will save you, you go and sit quiet at home, be fearless and have no anxiety and was sent home immediately. Then Baba sent Tatiya Patil and Kakasaheb Dixit with important instructions to his house, which said that he should eat what he liked and move around, but in no case he

should he lie down and sleep. If these instructions were acted upon Shama would recover in short time.

The words of Baba were not directed to Shama but to the snake and the poison not to rise up and circulate in his body. Baba's words alone saved Shama life. Anyone hearing these stories will get a firm faith on Sai Baba.

Cholera Epidemic

Once Shirdi was under the grip of cholera. The residents were so frightened that they stopped communication with the outside world. The five heads of the village decided that no fuel cart should be allowed in the village and no goat should be killed there. If anybody disobeyed these orders they would be fined. Baba knew that these were mere superstitions and cared a dam for it. When a fuel cart wanted to enter the village everyone drove it away knowing fully well Baba came to the spot and asked the carts man to take the fuel cart to the Masjid. None dared to say anything to Baba. Baba purchased fuel for his dhuni.

Throughout his life Baba kept his dhuni burning. He always stocked fuel Baba's home the Masjid was free and open to all and some poor people also took wood for their fuel. Baba never grumbled about this. He saw that the whole Universe is pervaded by the almighty and so he never pervaded any ill feeling for anybody. Though detached he behaved like an ordinary householder to set an example to the people.

Ordeal Of Guru Bhakti

Let us see how did the second cholera ruled fared with Baba. While it was in force somebody bought a goat in the Masjid. It was weak, old and about to die. At that time fakir Pir Mohammad (Bade Baba) of Malegaon was near. Baba asked him to behead the goat in one stroke and offer it as an oblation. Bade Baba was much respected by Sai Baba and he always sat in the right side of Sai Baba. But when Baba asked him to behead the goat he flatly refused it and said "Why it should be killed for nothing. Then Baba asked Shama to kill it, so he bought a knife from Radhakrishnamai and placed it before Baba. Shama got the wrong knife, so he went again to get another knife, but stayed in the Wada and returned late. Then Baba asked Kakasaheb Dixit to bring a knife and kill the goat. He went to the Sathe Wada and returned with a knife and was ready to kill the goat at Baba's bidding.

He was a Brahmin and never knew any killing but in spite of that he was bold enough to do such an act. He tightened his dhoti and with the semicircular motion raised his hands holding a knife, looked at Baba for the final signal. Then Baba said to him "What are you thinking? Just strike! Then when the hand was about to come down Baba said stop, how cruel you are, being a Brahmin you are killing a goat? Kakasaheb obeyed and kept the knife down and said to Baba "Your words are like law to us and we do know any other ordinance. We remember you, meditate and obey you always and do not know wether it is right

or wrong to kill. We do not want to reason or discuss things but implement Guru's orders, is our duty and dharma".

Baba said to Kakasaheb that he himself would do the offering and killing business. Then Baba decided that the goat should be disposed off in Takiya where the fakirs used to sit. But before the goat reached that place it fell dead on the way.

Hemadpant mentions that there are three kinds of disciples:

(1) First or Best, (2) Second or average, (3) Third or ordinary.

The best kind of disciples are those who knows what their Guru wants and immediately serve them without waiting for any further orders. The average disciple are the ones who carry out the order of their Guru to the letter, without any delay, and the ordinary disciple were the one's who go on postponing in carrying out the orders and hence make mistakes at every step.

Disciples should have firm faith backed by intelligence and patience thus helping them to achieve their spiritual goals easily. A disciple with above mentioned qualities, became qualifies for further instructions by master, which will lead them to their spiritual path to perfection.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 24

Preliminary

Unless we surrender our egos at the feet of our Sadguru, we will not succeed in anything.

By worshipping Sai Baba we attain both objects, worldly and spiritual and get peace and happiness. Therefore those who want their welfare should hear Sai Baba's stories and meditate on them. If they do this, they will easily attain their life objective and get bliss.

Generally people like wit and humour, but they do not like that jokes should be cut at their expense. But Baba's method was unique. When it was accompanied with good gestures, it was very interesting and instructive. Hemadpant gives his own instance below.

Chana Leela

In Shirdi a special bazaar was held every Sunday, and people from the neighbouring village came here to sell their commodities. On Sunday noon the Masjid was overcrowded. On such a Sunday Hemadpant, Shama, Shriram Buti and Kakasaheb Dixit along with the others were present there. Suddenly Shama laughed and said to Anasaheb, that some grains were stuck on his coat sleeve. He touched his sleeve and did find some grains. Hemadpant straightened his left forearm to see what the matter was, and to his surprise some grains came rolling down and were picked up by people who were sitting there.

This incident was like a joke. Everyone sitting there started discussing, but nobody could come to a conclusion.

Then Baba said that "Anasaheb had a habit of eating alone. Today he came here chewing grams and these grams are a proof of it."

Hemadpant told Baba that he never had the habit of eating alone, and I always share it, then how come the grams came rolling from his forearm?

Baba replied "It is true that you do share food, but if nobody is nearby, do you remember me before eating? I am always with you; do you offer me anything before you eat?"

Moral

In the above lesson Baba taught us that before enjoying any object we must remember Baba by way of making and offering to him. If we do so the attachment for them will naturally vanish. In this way if all the subtle thoughts are offered to the Guru desire, anger avarice, etc. will all be eradicated by the Lord.

Before enjoying an object if we feel Baba's presence, then we will get a clear picture whether the object is beneficial to us, and if not it will be shunned away thus eliminating our vicious habits. Hence our character will improve, love of our Guru will grow and pure knowledge will sprout, which in turn will free us from the body consciousness and merge us into spirit consciousness giving us bliss and contentment. Guru and God is one. By serving our Guru, God will be pleased and help us to attain self realization by purifying our minds.

To put it in a nutshell no object should be enjoyed without remembering our Guru. The Sagun form of Baba will always be before our eyes and then the devotion, detachment and salvation will all be ours and our mind will attain peace and happiness.

Sudama's Story

Hemadpant now relates a similar story of Sudama.

When Krishna and Balaram were living with their co-student Sudama, in their Guru Sandipani's ashram. One day Krishna and Sudama were sent in the forest to fetch fuel, so wife of Sandipani gave Sudama some grains and sent him in the forest for the same purpose. When Krishna met Sudama in the forest he told him he was thirsty and wanted water, At this Sudama said that he should not drink water on empty stomach, but did not mention that he had some grams for him. Krishna was tired and lay down for rest on Sudama's lap and started snoring. Seeing this Sudama suddenly took out the grams and started eating.

Then Krishna suddenly asked him what he was eating. Sudama told him a lie that he was shivering and his teeth were chattering. On hearing this Krishna said to him that, he had seen a dream of man eating things of others. Then Krishna told Sudama that it was just a dream, and I know you will not eat anything without me. If Sudama knew the omniscient Shri Krishna he would not have acted in this way, therefore he had to suffer for what he did. He passed his later life in utter poverty. But when he offered parched rice to Krishna. Krishna was much pleased and gave him a golden estate to enjoy.

This story should be remembered by those who have a habit of eating things alone without sharing with others.

Baba has also taught us the same lesson -- to offer things to God before enjoying them.

Annachinchamikar Vs. Maushibai

Hemadpant narrates a witty incident in which Baba played a peace maker's part. There was a devotee by the name of Annachinchmikar. He was simple, rustic, and straightforward and cared for no one. He always spoke plainly and carried out his dealings in cash but was very good natured. Baba loved him. He donated all his property to Shri Sai Baba Santhan Shirdi. One day when Anna was shampooing Baba's left arm. On the other side an old lady Maushibai whom Baba called mother, was massaging Baba's abdomen.

Suddenly she looked at Anna's face and said to Baba that Anna wants to kiss her. Hearing this Anna was very angry and he pulled up his sleeves. And started to argue with her. Everyone present in the Masjid was enjoying this heated conversation. Baba who loved both of them equally, pacified them and managed the affair skilfully by saying "Oh Anna why are you unnecessarily raising this issue. I do not understand what harm is there, if a mother is kissed? Hearing these words of Baba both were satisfied and all persons laughed and enjoyed Baba's wit to their heart's content.

Baba's Characteristics – His Dependency On Bhaktas

Baba allowed his devotees to serve in their own way and did not like any interference in it. On another occasion Maushibai was massaging Baba's abdomen forcefully. which made the other devotees nervous and anxious. They said "Oh mother do not massage so forcefully otherwise you will break Baba's arteries and nerves." Hearing this Baba got up at once and dashed his stick in much anger and his eyes became red. None dared to stand before Baba. He took one end of the stick with both hands and pressed it in his stomach hallow and deeper into the abdomen and everyone was dismayed. Fortunately Baba's rage cooled down and resumed on his seat. From that time the devotees learnt a lesson not to interfere with anybody and allow him to serve Baba as he chooses.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 25

Preliminary

We begin the Chapter by bowing to Sai Baba who is the Para Brahma, great Yogeshwara, crest jewel of the saints - our soul and the sole refuge of his devotees.

Sai Baba was full of mercy. What is wanted is full devotion on our part. Devotees who have firm faith and devotion his wishes are soon fulfilled. Hemadpant's wishes also came true when he desired to write Baba's Leelas, and Baba's grace and blessings, helped him to complete the project.

When ever a devotee had whole hearted devotion all his calamities and dangers were warded off and his welfare attended too by Baba. The story of Damu Anna illustrating the above mentioned statement was given below.

Damu Anna

Damu Anna's name has been mentioned in the 6th chapter which consists the celebration of the Ram Navami festival in Shirdi. He went to Shirdi in the year 1895 AD during the Ram Navami festival. Since then he has been providing the ornamental flag for the occasion every year. He also fed the poor and the fakirs who came there every year.

His Speculation (1) cloth trading

A Mumbai friend of Danu Anna wrote to him that he wished to do a cotton speculating business in partnership with him, which would earn them profit of Rs. 2 lacks. He also mentioned that he got this offer from a broker. The broker further stated that the business involved no risk and that the opportunity was not to be lost. Danu Anna unsure of this business proposal, decided to take Baba's advice. He wrote a detailed letter to Shama stating all the facts and requested him to take Baba's advice regarding this matter. At noon when Shama went to the Masjid with the letter Baba asked Shama about the letter and what was it all about? Then Shama explained to Baba that he wanted to consult him regarding something. Then Baba said "It seems that he wants to reach the sky and is not satisfied with what he has. Then Shama said that the letter contains what Baba just said.

Then Shama read the letter. Baba hearing his desires commented that Danu Anna has gone mad, and write to him, let him be contended with whatever he has and forget about the lakhs. Shama sent the reply to Danu who was anxiously waiting for it. On reading the letter all his hopes and prospects were shattered. He thought he had made a mistake by consulting Baba. But Shama hinted in the letter that he should come personally to Shirdi and see Baba.

So he came to Shirdi, but did not have the courage to ask Baba. Then a thought came to Danu's mind that if he gave a share of profit to Baba! Baba knew the present and the future prospects of his devotees, therefore reading Danu Anna's mind told him "Bapu I do not want to be entangled in any such worldly things" on seeing Baba's disapproval Danu Anna dropped the idea of business.

Grain Dealing

Then he thought of dealing in rice wheat and other grains. Then Baba told him certain things about the trade, so this business was also given up. The grain prices were rising initially but after a month or two there were lot of rain and the grain prices suddenly fell, and those who stored grain suffered severe losses.

Danu Anna was saved from this loss. Even the cotton speculation which was conducted by the broker with the help of another merchant incurred heavy losses. Hence Baba saved Danu Anna from two severe losses. Danu Anna's faith grew stronger and he remained a true devotee of Baba till the end of his life.

Amra Leela (Mango Miracle)

Rule of Goa sent a parcel of 300 mangoes to Shirdi for Sai Baba. All mangoes were in good condition and Shama was in charge of it. Baba took four mangoes and placed it in a pot for Danu Anna.

Danu Anna has two wives but no children. He consulted many astrologers, and even studied astrology himself and came to know that since he had a inauspicious planet in the horror scope there was no prospect of having a child. But Danu had great faith in Baba, so he came to Shirdi for worshipping him. Baba said that those mangoes were for Danu and he should eat and die. Danu hearing these words was shocked, so Mhalsapati explained to him, death means the death of his ego. When Danu expressed the desire to eat the fruit Baba told him to give them to his younger wife, which will give her four sons and four daughters. This was done it was found that Baba's words were true.

While Baba was alive and after his passing away Baba said "Believe in me, though I pass away, my bones will be speaking, moving and communicating with those who surrender them selves whole heartedly to me. Do not be anxious that I would be absent from you. You will hear my bones speaking and discussing your welfare. But remember me always and believe in me wholeheartedly, then you will be immensely benefitted."

Prayer

Hemadpant closes the chapter by saying a prayer to Sai Baba.

The meaning of the prayer is as follows. "Oh Sai Saguru the wish fulfilling tree of the Bhaktas, we pray that we never loose sight of your feet, so that you can free us from the cycle of birth and death. Restrain us from the worldly desires and bring us face to face with our soul, and thus attain us with self realization.

None of the relations of this world will be of any use in the end. It is only you who will give us salvation and bliss. Destroy all evil matters from our tongue and get the passion for chanting your name. Drive our negative thoughts and egoism. Make us ever remember your name. Make our minds steady and calm. It is with your grace and blessings and the merits of our past birth, you make us drink the nectar of your leelas and awaken our souls from the realm of darkness.”

Once I was sitting at the feet of Baba I put forward two questions for which Baba gave the answers of both.

(1) There are so many people coming to Baba. Do they all get benefit from him?

To this Baba replied, “Look at the mango tree in blossom. Most flowers fall off by wind and very few remain.

(2) If Baba was to pass away how am I to fare then?

To this Baba answered, he would be with me whenever and wherever I thought of him. The promise which Baba made, he has kept it. He is still with me and guiding me all the time.

In 1910-11, when my brothers separated and my sister died and there was a theft, these incidents disturbed me so much that I lost interest in life. That time Baba pacified me and made me eat the feast of puran poli at Appa Kulkarni’s house.

There was a theft in my house. A thirty year old friend stole my wife’s jewel box, including her auspicious nose ring. I wept before Baba’s photo. The next day the man returned the jewel box and asked for pardon.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 26

Preliminary

All things that we see in the universe are nothing but a play of Maya. The creative power of the lord. What really exist is the absolute. It is only a Sad guru who opens an eye of our understanding and enables us to see things in their true light and not as they appear. Let us therefore worship the Sad guru and pray to him to give us a true vision which is nothing but God vision.

Inner Worship

Hemadpant has given us a novel form of worship. He uses water in the form of tears of joy to wash the Sad guru's feet. Besmear his body with pure love sandal paste and cover his body with the true cloth of faith. Offer eight lotuses in the form of eight Sattwik emotions and fruit in the form of concentrated mind. Apply on his forehead the black powder in the form of devotion, and waistband of Bhakti and place our head at his feet.

After decorating the Sad guru with ornaments let us offer our self to him. After the worship turn the mind inwards to know the difference between real and unreal world. And surrender body, mind and soul at the Sadguru's feet.

Bhakta Pant

A devotee by the name of Pant had a good fortune of visiting Shirdi. On one occasion he had no mind to go to Shirdi but man proposes and God disposes. As he was travelling by train he met many friends bound for Shirdi. They all asked him to accompany them and he could not say no. Then Pant took permission from his Guru for the Shirdi trip. Then after arranging for his expenses left with the party for Shirdi. They reached in the morning and went to the Masjid at 11am. At that moment the Masjid was full of devotees, who had assembled for Baba's worship. Suddenly Pant got a fit and fell senseless. But with Baba's grace after sprinkling water on his forehead he regained consciousness. Baba knowing that he was a disciple of another Guru assured him and confirmed his faith on his own Guru, and addressed him that come what may he must stick to his Guru. Pant at once knew the significance of his remark and thus was reminded of his Guru. He never forgot the kindness of Baba in his life.

Harish Chandra Pitale

There was a gentleman by the name of Harish Chandra Pitale in Mumbai. His son was suffering from epilepsy. He tried many remedies but could not find a cure. Now the only remedy was to resort to the saints. Mr. Pitale heard kirtans of Das Ganu and from it he came to know how Baba cured many diseases by his touch and mere glance. Then he developed a desire to go and see Sai Baba. Making all preparations. Mr. Pitale came to Shirdi with his wife and children.

Then he went to the Masjid and bowed at Baba and placed his sick son before Baba's feet.

When as Baba saw the child an untoward thing happened. The son rolled his eyes and fell senseless, his mouth began to foam and his whole body began to perspire. It seemed he was dying. Seeing this parent became very nervous and upset. Mother was in tears and became restless. Seeing this Baba comforted her by his kind words and told her to be patient, and take the boy to their lodging and assured them that, he would come to his senses within half an hour. They followed Baba's advice and found that Baba's words came true. As soon as the boy was taken to the Wada he recovered and everyone was happy, and all the doubts disappeared. Then Mr. Pitale and his wife bowed before Baba and sat humbly shampooing his legs and thanking Baba for his kind help. Then smilingly Baba said to him "Have not all your doubt disappeared, Lord will protect, those who has got faith and patience."

Mr. Pitale was a well to do gentleman, He distributed sweet meats, and offered fruits and betel leaves to Baba. Mrs. Pitale was a very pious lady, she used to sit near the post gazing at Baba with tears of joy flowing from her eyes. Seeing her loving nature Baba was much pleased with her. After passing some days in Baba's company Mr. Pitale decided to go home. Before departing when Mr. Pitale came to the Masjid to take Baba's blessings, Baba gave him a Rs.3 coin along with Rs.2 which he gave earlier and asked him to keep it at his shrine of worship along with , which will greatly benefit him. Mr. Pitale took it as Prasad bowed again and prayed to Baba for his blessings. But in his mind he had curiosity what Baba meant by the coins. On reaching Mumbai he narrated the whole story about the coins to his mother. Initially his mother was confused but then she remembered an old incident which solved the mystery. She told her son "As you went with your son to Baba, similarly you father took you to Akalkot Maharaj for his Darshan. He then gave your father Rs. 2 coin to be kept in the shrine and being worshipped. Your father worshipped them till his death, but thereafter the worship was neglected and the Rs. 2 coin was lost and slowly the memory disappeared. Now you are very fortunate that Akalkot Maharaj has appeared to you in the form of Sai Baba and reminded you of your duties and worship to ward of all dangers. Now beware leave all bad thoughts and go on worshipping the family Gods and the rupees and take pride in the blessings of the saints. Hearing his mother's remarks Mr. Pitale was much delighted and resumed his worship and was careful about his conduct.

Mr. Ambadekar

Mr. Goal Narian Ambadkar of Poona was a devotee of Baba. For ten years he served in the revenue department in Thana and Javhar and had to retire. He tried to get other jobs but did not succeed. He was overtaken by other calamities and his condition grew from Bad to worse. He passed 7 years in utter misery visiting Shirdi every year and placing his grievance before Baba. When things got worst ultimately he decided to commit suicide in Shirdi, so he came with his wife and stayed for two months there.

One night sitting on a bullock cart near the Dixit Wada, he decided to end his life by throwing himself in the well. But Baba had something else in mind. Mr. Shagun a hotel proprietor came out and accosted him” Did you read Akalkot Maharaj’s life?” Ambadkar took the book from him and started reading it, while doing so he came across a story which narrated that, during the time of Akalkot Maharaj a devotee suffered from incurable disease and decided to end his life. As he could no longer suffer the miseries he threw himself in the well.

Immediately Maharaj came there and took him out with his own hands and advised him “ You must bear the fruit – good or bad of your past karmas, if it is incomplete you have to take another birth and suffer again, so instead of killing yourself why not suffer for sometime and finish up the fruit of your past deeds and be free from it.”

Reading this story Ambadkar was much surprised and moved. If Baba would not have hinted him in this way he would be no more. Seeing Baba’s kindness he became a staunch devotee of Baba. Baba wanted him to walk in his father’s footsteps, who was a devotee of Akalkot Maharaj. He then got Sai Baba’s blessings and his prospects began to improve. He studied astrology and was able to earn sufficient money and pass his life in ease and comfort.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 27

When a man takes a plunge in the sea he attains all the merit of bathing in the sacred rivers. Similarly when he takes refuge at the feet of the Sad guru, he gets the merit of bowing to Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and Para Brahma. Sri Sai by giving us all the knowledge and fulfilling all our desires gives us self realization. Hemadpant prays to Baba to create in us reverence for his stories. So that the readers can relish them, get pious emotions, eyes be full of tears, their breadth be study and their minds composed and the hostilities vanish. If these things happen it is a sign, of the grace of the Guru, drawing upon them. When these emotions grow in you, Guru will be much pleased and will lead you to the path of self realization. The best way to get free from the shackles of Maya is by surrendering whole heartedly to Baba. The Vedas cannot take you across the ocean of Maya but only a Sad Guru can.

Granting Consecrated Book

Baba followed various methods of imparting instructions. One such method is described here. Some devotees had a habit of consecrating their religious books by Baba before reading them. While reading such books they felt Baba was with them. Kaka Mahajani came to Shirdi with a copy of Eknath Bhagwat. Shama took the book from him to read in the Masjid, Baba took it from him and had a look at it. Then returned it to Shama. When Shama said that the book belonged to Kaka and had to be returned, Baba said no and explained to Shama as because he gave the book to him, he ought to keep the book for his own use. Then after a few days Kaka bought another copy of the Bhagwat and handed it to Baba. Then Baba gave it as Prasad and asked him to keep it carefully as it will benefit him. Kaka accepted it with reverence.

Shama And Vishnu Sahasara Naam

Shama was an intimate devotee of Baba, whom Baba wanted to favour by giving him a copy of Vishnu Sahasara Naam. Once a Ramdasi came to Shirdi and stayed there for sometime. Every morning after a ritual bath he read the sacred book Vishnu Sahasara Naam and Adhyatma Ramayana. After some days Baba thought of initiating Shama with Vishnu Sahasara Naam. Baba therefore called Ramdasi and asked him to bring the drug Sennapods as he was having a stomach pain. Ramdasi closed his book and went to the bazaar. Then Baba took the Vishnu Sahasara Naam and presents it to Shama and told him that this book is very valuable, and would protect him from all dangers. Baba also told him an instance when the book saved his life and gave him much relief, when he hugged this book.

Baba also advised him to read it slowly and it will do him good. To this Shama replied , the book belonged to Ramdasi who had bad temper and would certainly pick up a fight with him, and he could not read the text of the book very well as he knew little Sanskrit.

Baba regarded Shama as his intimate devotee and so wanted to give him Vishnu Sahasara Naam, so that it could save him from the miseries of worldly existence. Taking God's name saves us from all sins and bad tendencies and frees us from the cycle of birth and death. This is the easiest Sadhana that purifies the mind. Ramdasi returned soon with the Senna-pods and Anna Chinchanikar who was present there to play the part of Narad, informed him what had happened. Ramdasi immediately got angry at Shama, and blamed and abused him for sending him away on pretext of stomach ache and thus take away his book. He also remarked that, if the book was not returned he would bang his head. Shama calmly spoke to him but all was in vain. Then Baba spoke kindly to him "Oh Ramdasi what is the matter with you? Why are you scolding Shama unnecessarily? How did you become so quarrelsome? You read this sacred book daily and still your mind is agitated, and your passions uncontrolled. A true Ramdasi should be detached and treat everyone equally. Books can be purchased in plenty, but not men. So think well and be considerate. Shama has no concern with your book. I took it and gave it to him. You know the book by heart so I thought Shama might read it, so gave it to him.

Baba's sweet, soft and nectar like words had a wonderful effect on Ramdasi. Ramdasi calmed down and asked Shama for 'Panch-ratni Gita' in return which Shama was happily willing to give.

So the matter was ultimately settled. Now the question is, why did the Ramdasi asked a Panch-ratni Gita, the book that he was least interested in, and why did he quarrel with Shama before Baba? We can only say, that if this had not happened the significance of Vishnu Sahasra Naam would not have known to Shama. Baba's method of teaching and initiating was unique. Shama gradually studied and mastered the book and was able to explain to Professor GG Narke.

Vithal Vision

One day when Kakasaheb Dixit was meditating, he saw a vision of Vithal. Afterwards when he went to see Baba, Baba asked him whether he saw the vision of Vithal? Then advised Kakasaheb to hold him fast as he is very illusive, and will slip and run away. Then at noon the hawker came to sell pictures of Vithal and Kakasaheb was surprised to see the same picture of Vithal as he saw in his vision while doing meditation. He remembered Baba's words, therefore bought the picture and kept it in his shrine for worship.

Gita Rahasya

Baba always loved those who studied Brahma vidya and encouraged them greatly. In one instance, Bapusaheb Jog received a post parcel containing a copy of Gita Rahasya by Lokmanya Tilak. Taking the book he went to the Masjid, and bowed before Baba, in this process the parcel fell before Baba's feet and Baba inquired what it was. Bapusaheb opened the parcel and placed the book in Baba's hand. Baba went through the book and then took out a rupee and placed

it on the book and handed the same to Jog and said to him “Read it completely and you will be benefitted from it.

Mr. And Mrs. Khaparde

Once Dadasaheb Khaparde came with his family to Shirdi and lived for some months. Dadasaheb was an effluent advocate of Amravati and a member of Delhi State Council. He was an intelligent and good speaker, still he dared not open his mouth before Baba he was humble, modest and good natured. Dadasaheb stayed for four months and Mrs. Khaparde for seven. Both of them were highly pleased with their Shirdi stay as they loved Baba deeply. Mrs. Khaparde who was very faithful and devout bought naivaidy to the Masjid everyday. After it was accepted by Baba she would return home for meals. On seeing her firm devotion Baba wanted to tell others.

One noon she bought a plate containing sanza, puri, rice, soup and kheer along with sundry articles to the Masjid. Baba immediately got up and by removing the cover of the dish began to eat with relish. Shama then asked Baba “Why this partiality? Usually Baba would throw away dishes of others. Why the dish bought by this lady is so sweet? To this Baba replied that in the former birth this lady was a cow yielding milk, and then she disappeared and took birth in the gardener’s family, then in a Kshatriya family and married a merchant. Then she was born in a Brahmin family and I saw her after a long time, so let me take some sweet morsel of food from her dish. After saying this, Baba had her dishes with his heart content and resumed his seat. Then Mrs. Khaparde bowed down and began to shampoo Baba’s legs, and he began to talk to her kneading her arms, which were shampooing his legs. On seeing this reciprocal service Shama began to joke and said “It is wonderful to see God and his Bhaktas serving each other.” Baba was much pleased by her service and asked her to chant ‘Rajaram, Rajaram, always so that her life’s object will be achieved, and she will attain peace and benefit immensely. Baba’s words pierced her heart.

This case illustrates the nature of relation between the Guru and the disciple. Both should love and serve each other. One is dependent upon the other and there is no difference as both are same. Those who see difference between them are still ignorant.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 28

Preliminary

Sai is not infinite. He dwells in all beings. Sai was well versed in the knowledge of Vedas and the science of self realization. He was a perfect Sad Guru. Generally the worldly parent gives birth to a body, which is followed by death. But a Sad Guru does away with life and death and is more kind and merciful than anybody.

Sai Baba always said – Let his devotee be at any distance, he will be drawn to Shirdi, like a sparrow, with a thread tied to his feet.

This chapter describes the story of three such sparrows.

Lala Lakshmichand

Lala Lakshmichand of Mumbai came in Baba's contact in 1910. One or two months before Christmas he saw a dream of an old man with beard surrounded by his devotees. A few days later when he went to his friend's house Mr. Dattatreya Manjunath Bijur to hear the Kirtan of Das Ganu. It was Das Ganu's practice that he always kept Baba's picture while doing Kirtans. Lakshichand was surprised to see the same picture which he saw in the dream, and came to a conclusion that it was Sai Baba himself. Baba's picture, Das Ganu's discourses on Saint Tukaram and Kirtans made a deep impression in Lakshichand's mind and he decided to go to Shirdi. The very night Shankarao knocked on his door and asked Lakshmichand to accompany him to Shirdi which he joyfully agreed. He borrowed Rs. 15 from his cousin, made due preparations and left for Shirdi. In the train he and his friends sang bhajans and enquired about Sai Baba, from four fellow Muslim passengers who were returning to Shirdi. They told him that Sai Baba was a great Saint of Shirdi. On reaching Kopergoan they wanted to buy good guavas as offering for Baba, but forgot to purchase them. When they were nearing Shirdi, he was reminded of guavas as he saw an old woman with a basket full of guavas running after a tonga. The tonga was stopped and he gladly purchased the guavas, then the woman said take all and offer it to Baba on my behalf. All these incidents were a pleasant surprise to both friends and they thought that old woman might be a relation of Sai Baba.

On reaching Shirdi they went in the Masjid with puja materials and worshipped Baba with due ritual. Lakshichand was much moved to see Baba and he wrapped himself around Baba's feet. Then Baba spoke as follows:

“What a cunning fellow is Lakshmichand, he sings bhajans and asking others about me! We should see everything with our own eyes, what is the necessity of asking questions to others and taking a loan from a Marwari? Just think for yourself whether your dream is true or not? Is the heart's desire now satisfied?

Hearing these words of Baba he was wonderstruck and kept wondering how Baba came to know about all the things that had happened to him en-route. It is to be noted that Baba never liked anyone to borrow money for his darshan, or celebrating any holiday or making any pilgrimage.

Sanza

At noon when Lakshmichand was sitting for a meal a devotee gave him Sanza as Prasad, and was pleased to have it. Next day also he was expecting the same Prasad but got nothing. Then on the third day Bapusaheb Jog asked Baba what Prasad he should bring? To this Baba replied Sanza. Then the devotees bought two pot full of Sanza. Lakshmichand was hungry and had some pain in his back. Then Baba said to him "It is good you are hungry, take sanza and some medicine for back pain." He was wonderstruck to see Baba read his mind. How omniscient was Baba.

Evil Eye

During his visit to Shirdi one night Lakshmichand witnessed a procession to Shirdi. At that time Baba suffered much cough, and Lakshmichand thought that Baba's suffering might be due to somebody's evil eye. Next day when he went to the Masjid for Baba's darshan, Baba told Shama that the cough that he suffered last night was due to somebody's evil eye! Baba only spoke what was passing in Lakshmichand's mind.

On seeing Baba's kindness Lakshmichand fell at Baba's feet and said that he was much blessed by his darshan , and prayed to Baba to protect him from all miseries of the world always and be merciful to him. For him Baba was his only God and prayed that his mind be always wrapped in his Bhajan and feet. After getting Baba's udhi and blessings he returned home with his friend much pleased. He remained a staunch devotee of Baba and sent him dakshina and different garlands with any person or acquaintance bound for Shirdi.

A lady in Burhanpore saw in her dream Sai Baba begging khichadi. On waking up she saw nobody at the door, but was much pleased with the vision and told all, including her husband. Her husband worked in the postal department, and when he was transferred to Akola both husband and wife decided to go to Shirdi. On a suitable day they left for Shirdi after visiting Gomati Tirth. On reaching Shirdi they stayed for two months. Everyday they went to the Masjid worshipped Baba and happily passed their time. The couple came to Shirdi to offer Kichadi to Baba but it could not be offered. The lady was very disappointed with the delay. Then on the 15th day when the lady came at noon to the Masjid with the khichadi, Baba was already sitting for meals and the curtain was down. Nobody dared to enter when the curtain was down, but the lady could not wait.

She lifted the curtain and strange to say that Baba was hungry for Kitchadi and asked first for it. The lady gave Kitchadi to Baba and he ate it with much delight. On seeing the earnestness of Baba all were wonderstruck and were convinced about his extraordinary love for his devotees.

Megha

Megha of Viramgaon was a simple and illiterate, Brahmin cook of Roa Bahadur H V Sathe. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva and always chanted 'Namah Shivay'. Rao Bahadur taught him Sandhya and the Gayatri Mantra. Sathe told him that Sai Baba of Shirdi was an incarnation of Lord Shiva and prepared him to go to Shirdi. At Broach Railway station he learnt that Sai Baba was a Muslim and he prayed to his master not to send him there, as he was very orthodox and did not agree to bow to a Muslim. But his master insisted him to go there and gave a letter of introduction to his father in law Dada Kelkar at Shirdi to introduce him to Sai Baba. On reaching Shirdi when he went to the Masjid Baba did not allow him to enter the and roared loudly "kick out the rascal" and then said to Megha "You are a high caste Brahmin and I am a low caste Muslim, you will loose your caste by coming here, just get away" Hearing this Megha began to tremble, and was wondering how Baba came to know what he was thinking. Then is stayed in Shirdi for a few days serving Baba in his own way, but was not satisfied, so he went home. Then he went to Tryambak and after spending a year and a half there, again returned to Shirdi. This time with the insertion of Dada, Megha was allowed to enter the Masjid and stay there. Baba worked upon Megha internally with the intention he would change and be benefitted spiritually. Then Megha began to look to Sai Baba as an incarnation of Lord Shiva and worshipped his Shiva (Sai Baba) with Bel leaves. His practice was to worship all deities in the village and then come to the Masjid and after saluting Baba he worshiped him and then after shampooing his feet drank the washings. It once happened he came to the Masjid without worshipping Khadoba, as the door of the temple was closed. Baba did not accept and sent him back to the temple saying the door was open. Megha went and found the door open worshipped the deity and returned to Baba as usual.

Ganges Bath

On a Makar Shankranti day Megha wanted to smear with sandal paste and bathe him with Ganges water. At first Baba was unwilling but with repeated requests he finally agreed. Megha walked a long distance and got the water of the Godavari River and made all preparations for the noon bath and asked Baba to get ready for the same. Then Baba asked him to spare him from the bath, because being a fakir he had nothing to do with the Ganges water. Megha paid no heed to Baba's words, and made Baba sit on a wooden board. Then Baba projecting his head "Oh Megha only pour water on my head which is equivalent to a whole body bath." Then Megha lifting the pot began to pour water on Baba's head and cried out "Har Har Gange" and emptied the pot on the whole body. To his surprise he found that only Baba's head was wet but his whole body was dry.

Trident And Pindi

Megha worshipped Baba at two places in the Masjid and in the Wada for twelve months. In order to appreciate and confirm his devotion Baba gave him a vision. One morning when Megha was laying in bed with his eyes closed, he saw Baba, telling him to draw the Trident and then disappeared. Hearing Baba's words he opened his eyes and saw rice grains spread everywhere. He then went to Baba and told him about the dream and asked his permission to draw the trident. Then Baba told him that his words were true and he indeed had come personally to Megha and given the message. Megha's doubts were cleared.

Megha went to the Wada and pull a red trident on the wall near Baba's picture. Nest day when Megha came to the Wada he saw a Ramdasi bhakta came from Poona and offered Baba a phallic of Shiva which surprised Megha. In a few days when drawing of the trident was complete Baba installed a pindi near the big picture, where Megha was worshipping. This is how Baba confirmed his faith.

After continuous service to Baba for many years Megha passed away in 1912, the Baba passed his hands over his mortal remains and said " He was a true devotee of mine" and Baba also ordered that at his own expense the funeral dinner should be given to the Brahmins, and this order was carried out by Kakasaheb Dixit.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 29

Chennai's Bhajani Mela

In the year 1916 Chennai Bhajani Mela (Party Of A Ramdasi Pant) started on a holy pilgrimage to Banaras. On their way they heard there lived a great Saint in Shirdi by the name of Sai Baba, who was God realised and generously distributed money to devotees and to skilful persons who showed their talents there. Sai Baba collected lot of money everyday in the form of Dakshina and out of the amount he collected he gave Rs.1 to 3 to a three year old girl Amina. Rs. 2 to 5 to some, Rs.6 to Jamali Amina's mother, Rs. 10 to 20 or even Rs.50 to some of his bhaktas as he pleased. Hearing all this the party came to Shirdi stayed there and sang bhajans, but inwardly they desired money, there was one lady among them who had love for Baba. Once when the noon arti was going on, Baba was much pleased with her faith and gave her a vision of Lord Ram her beloved deity. Tears began to flow from her eyes and she clapped her hands with joy. She even told her husband that she saw Sri Ram in Sai Baba. He thought she was exaggerating, but did not resent her remark. As she was fortunate enough to get Ram darshan.

Wonderful Vision

Things were going on as usual when the husband saw a strange dream one night. He was in a big city, the police arrested him tied his hands and legs and put him in a cage. As the police were tightening the grip he saw Sai Baba standing outside the cage. On seeing Baba he said to him "Why should a calamity befall on him when he has surrendered at Baba's feet and has not done anything wrong. To this Baba said "You must suffer the consequences of your sins you have done in your previous life. To this he replied "I do not know the sins I have done in my previous life, but why can't they be destroyed in your presence." Then Baba asked him have you got such faith? He replied 'Yes'. Then Baba asked him to close his eyes which he did. Then he heard a thumping sound of something falling down. When he opened his eyes he saw the police had fallen down and was bleeding. Being much frightened he began to look at Baba, who said "Now you are well caught. Officers will arrest you." Then he begged Baba that he was his only saviour. Then Baba again asked him to close his eyes and when he opened again he saw himself free and out of the cage. Then he fell at Baba's feet. Baba then asked him is there any difference between this namaskar and the previous one? Then he replied as my former namaskars were with the object of getting money, but the present namaskar is offered to you as God. Besides I thought that you being a Muslim was spoiling the Hindus.

Then Baba confirmed his faith and worship as a Muslim which admitted. Then inquisitively he asked Baba his age. To this Baba asked him to have a race with him. On saying this Baba began to run and he followed him, No sooner Baba disappeared and he kept running and at that moment he woke up. After waking up he began to think seriously about the dream, he changed completely and began to realize the greatness of Baba, he stopped doubting and

became devoted to Baba. Next morning during arti in the Masjid Baba gave him Rs. 2 along with sweet meats. He made him stay for a few days more and gave him blessing "God will give you plenty and will do you good." He got Baba's blessings which stood him in good stead all his life. The party got plenty of money afterwards, their journey was smooth and they got success. They all returned home happy with Baba's words, blessings and grace which they cherished.

Baba followed this method to improve and reform his devotees.

Tendulkar's Family

There lived in Bandra a Tendulkar family who was much devoted to Baba. Mrs. Savitribai published a book called the Sainath Bhajan Mala describing the leelas of Baba. Their son Babu Tendulkar was studying hard for the medical examination. He consulted some astrologers who told him that his stars were unfavourable and there he should appear for his exams next year. Hearing this he became restless. A few days after his mother went to Shirdi and saw Baba and told the difficulties about her son. On hearing this Baba said "Tell your son to believe me, throw the horoscope away and appear for the exam with a calm mind, he is sure to pass this year, Ask him to trust me and not to be disappointed."

The mother returned home and communicated Baba's message to her son. He studied hard and in due course appeared for the exams. In the written papers he did well, but he was overtaken by doubts and did not appear in the oral examination. But the examiner was after him. He sent a word with another student that he had passed in the written exams and that he should appear for the oral examination. He appeared for the orals and was also successful there also. Thus he passed his examination with Baba's grace although the stars were against him. It shows that no matter how much the doubts and difficulties surround us we must have firm faith in Baba so that our efforts will ultimately be fruitful.

The father of the boy Raghunathrao was working in a foreign mercantile firm in Mumbai. As he grew older he was unable to attend office anymore so the chief manager of the firm decided to retire him on pension as he was a reliable servant. But the question arose about the amount of his pension. He was getting Rs.150 per month salary, and his pension half the amount Rs.75, which was not enough to meet the expenses of the family, so they were all anxious about this matter.

Fifteen days before the final settlement Baba appeared in a dream to Mrs. Tendulkar and said "I wish Rs100 be given as pension, will that satisfy you? She said that we trust you whatever you decide. Finally the pension was settled at Rs110 as a special case. Such was the wonderful love and care of Baba for his devotees.

Capitan Hate

Capital Hate was a great devotee of Baba. Baba appeared to him in the dream and said have you forgotten me? Hate immediately fell at Baba's feet and said if a child forgets his mother how could he be saved? Then Hate took fresh walpapadi vegetables from his garden and after arranging the siddha and dakshina was about to offer to Baba, when he woke up. Then he decided to send everything to Baba. Some days after when he came to Gwalior he sent Rs.12 by money order to his friend, giving him instructions to buy Siddha articles for Rs.2 and Rs.10 as dakshina. His friend went to Shirdi and did exactly what Hate asked him to do and offered it to Baba. Mr. Nimborkar prepared the Naivaidya the next day and offered the same to Baba. Baba had only the Walpapadi and left the rice. Hate's joy knew no bounds when he heard everything from his friend.

Consecrated Rupee

One day Capitan Hate wished he had a rupee consecrated by Baba. He came across a friend who was bound for Shirdi. Through him he sent a rupee. The friend went to Shirdi, saluted Baba gave his dakshina which Baba accepted and then handed Hate's rupee. Baba took the rupee, gazed it, tossed it, and played with it. Then he said to his friend, "Return this to the owner with udhi and tell him to live in peace and contentment as I want nothing from him!" The friend returned to Gwalior and handed over the consecrated rupee to Hate and told him all that had happened in Shirdi. Hate was much pleased and realised that Baba always encouraged good thoughts.

Waman Narvekar

A gentleman by the name of Waman Narvekar loved Baba very much. He once bought a rupee. On one side was engraved Ram, Lakshman and Sita and on the other side was engraved the figure of Maruti. He gave the coin to Baba with the hope that Baba would consecrate it with his touch and return it with udhi. Baba immediately pocketed it. Then Shama spoke to Baba about Waman's intentions. Baba expressed his intention to keep it and only return it if Waman gave Rs.25. Then for the sake of the rupee Waman collected Rs.25 and placed it before Baba. Then Baba said the value of this rupee exceeds Rs. 25 and so gave the rupee to Shama and asked him to keep the rupee in the shrine and worship it. No one had the courage to ask Baba why he did this. He only knows best and most suitable to each and all.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 30

Preliminary

Sai Baba is kind, merciful and affectionate towards his devotees. By his mere glance the worldly illusions and calamities are destroyed. He was first formless but because of his devotees he took form to give them liberation and self realization. Those who take refuge at Sai's feet will do away with sins and their progress is certain. Sai attracts Brahmans from holy places who came and read scriptures and chant Gayatri Mantra in his presence. Those whom Sai favours get enormous strength and true knowledge.

Sai knows fully the desire of his devotees and fulfils the same. Let us bow to Sainath forgetting our faults and free us from anxieties.

Hemadpant says that Sainath favoured him to write the Sai Satcharita, which would have otherwise not been possible. Sai got this service done in the form of a book written by him and this happened due to the merits of his past lives. Therefore he things himself to be fortunate and blessed.

The following story is like pure nectar which depicts Sai's greatness. Those who have unlimited love devotion and faith would appreciate Sai's stories. The fortunate devotees of Sai will find Baba's stories as a wish fulfilling tree, giving liberation to the ignorant souls and a deep sense of satisfaction.

Kakaji Vaidya

There lived in Vari a man named Kakaji Vaidya, who was a priest of Goddess Saptashringi. He was so overpowered with adverse circumstances and calamities that he lost peace of mind and became restless. So one evening he prayed to Goddess with devotion to free him from anxiety. The goddess was so pleased with his devotion that she appeared to him in a dream and advised him to go to Baba to attain peace of mind. Before Kakaji could ask about Baba he was awakened. Then he thought in his mind that maybe the Goddess was referring to Tryambakeshwar. So he went to that holy place and stayed for 10 days and chanted Rudra hymns and performed religious rites. But in spite of all this he was very restless as before. So he came back home and again invoked the Goddess. The Goddess again appeared in his dream and told him to go to Baba Sainath of Shirdi. The question arises in Kakaji's mind how and when to go to Shirdi, which was fulfilled by Baba itself.

Shama's Vows

When Kakaji for planning his trip to Shirdi a guest came to his place to take him to Shirdi. It was no other than Shama a great devotee of Baba. He had his own reasons to come to Vani. It so happened as a lad Shama was taken seriously ill, so his mother took a vow to their family Goddess Saptashringi. That if her son got well she would bring him and dedicate to her feet. Then after some years his

mother had ringworms on her breast, so she took a vow to her deity if she got well she would donate two silver breasts. Both the vows remain unfulfilled. Just before dying Shama's mother told him about the vows and took a promise from him, that he would fulfil it after her death. But after a while Shama completely forgot about it. Then one day a famous astrologer came to Shirdi, at that time Shama's younger brother Bapaji consulted him. The astrologer reminded them of his mother's unfulfilled vows. Which his elder brother had promised his mother on her death bed; hence the goddess was displeased therefore bringing troubles. Bapaji told Shama about the unfulfilled vows. Hearing this without further delay he got a pair of silver breast made from a goldsmith. Then he laid the silver breast at Baba's feet and prayed to him to free him from the vows. But Baba insisted him to go to Saptashringi and offer the breasts at the feet of the Goddess. Thus Shama took Baba's permission and went to Saptashringi. While searching for the priest he came to Kakaji's house. It was a wonderful coincident that Kakaji wanted to go to Shirdi and at the same time Shama came from Shirdi.

Kakaji and Shama embraced each other and talked about Sai Leelas. Shama after fulfilling his vows both started for Shirdi. On reaching Kakaji went to the Masjid and fell at Baba's feet. His eyes were full of tears and his mind attained calmness. Kakaji thought that by mere glance of Baba the consciousness of joy came upon him. Then he surrendered himself completely to Baba and got immense peace and happiness. He stayed in Shirdi for twelve days and after taking Baba's permission and blessings returned home.

Khushalchand Of Rahata

It is generally believed that the dreams that we see in the wee hours of morning comes true. But in case of Baba's dreams there is no restriction of time. To quote and instance, one afternoon Baba told Kakasaheb Dixit to go to Rahata and fetch Khushalchand as he had not seen him since long. Kakasaheb followed Baba's orders, went to Rahata, met Khushalchand and gave him Baba's message. Hearing this, surprised Khushalchand and he said that when he was taking a nap in the afternoon he saw Baba in his dream asking him to come to Shirdi immediately. As he had no horse he sent his son to inform Baba. But on the way his son met Dixit's Tonga, and Dixit said that he was specially sent to Rahata to bring his father to Shirdi. Then they both went back to Shirdi. Khushalchand was very happy to see Baba and was much moved by his Leela.

Ramlal Punjabi Of Mumbai

Once a Punjabi Brahmin of Mumbai Ramlal had a dream in which Baba appeared to him and asked him to come to Shirdi. He thought of going but since he did not know the whereabouts he did not know what to do. The same afternoon when he was strolling in the street he saw a picture of Baba in a shop. To his surprise it was the same picture he saw of the saint in his dream. Soon he learnt that it was a picture of Sai Baba of Shirdi. Then he went to Shirdi and stayed there till his death.

In this way Baba brought all his devotees to Shirdi for darshan and satisfied their desires materially and spiritually.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 31

Preliminary

Lord Krishna said in the Geeta that during the hour of death the last wish or thought a man has determines his future course. He who remembers Lord Krishna while dying goes to him. Most of us are frightened and terrified with death hence constant practice is needed to fix our minds on any desired good thought at that particular moment. So Saints advice us to chant and remember God's name so that our minds do not get perverted during the time of death. On the other hand devotees completely surrender to the Saints with faith that the saints will guide them in their last moment. A few such cases are given below.

Vijayanad

A Chennai Saint Swami Vijayanad while on his way to Mansarovar halted at Shirdi. There he met Swami Somadevji and enquired all details about the Mansarovar trip. Swamiji gave him all the information that the Sarovar was 500 miles from Gangotri River and mentioned the difficulties of the journey like snow on the way, suspicious people who trouble pilgrims and language difficulty.

On hearing this, the Sanyasi was dejected and cancelled his trip. Then he went to Baba to take his blessings, at that time Baba got angry and said "Drive out this Sanyasi his is useless. Not understanding Baba's words he sat there and watched what was going on. It was morning time and the Masjid was overcrowded. Many were worshipping Baba in various ways. Some washing his feet, some touching his eyes, some applying sandal paste and scents on his body. Though Baba was angry with him, he was very affectionate towards Baba and kept sitting there.

During the two days he stayed in Shirdi he got a letter from Chennai that his mother was very ill. He became very depressed and wanted to be with his mother, but could not leave without Baba's permission. Baba knew everything and told him "If he was attached to his mother why did he take Sanyas. Attachment is bad." Baba asked him to sit quietly in the lodge for few days and wait with patience and asked him to be careful as they are many thieves there.

According to Baba wealth and prosperity are transient and the body is subject to decay and death therefore he must do his duties with detachment. He who does this and surrenders completely to the Lord will be free of troubled and attain bliss. Lord helps those who remember him. It is the merits of your past life that has brought you here now follow my sayings and achieve your goal in life. From tomorrow study the Bhagwat for three weeks so that your sorrows will end and you will attain eternal happiness. Seeing that his end was approaching Baba made him read 'Ram Vijay' which would please the Lord of death. The next morning after a bath and religious rites he read Bhagwat in Lendi Garden. He completed two readings and was tired, so rested in the lodging for two days. On the third day he breathed his last on Bade Baba's lap. His body was preserved

for a bay and after a police enquiry was buried with due rites. This is how Baba helped the Sanyasi to get salvation.

Balaram Mankar

A devotee by the name of Balaram Mankar got dejected when his wife passed away, so he left his home and came to Shirdi and lived with Baba. Baba wanted to give him a good future, so he gave Mankar Rs. 12 and asked him to go to Machhiindragad. At first Mankar disagreed but with constant request from Baba he finally agreed to go to Gad. Baba asked him to practice meditation thrice a day. On reaching Gad he was much pleased with the beautiful and healthy environment there and started practicing meditation as recommended by Baba. After a few days he got revelation. When Baba appeared to him in person he asked him the reason why he was sent here. To this Baba replied that he brought him here to make his unsteady mind to rest. Baba also confirmed him that he is omnipresent and can be anywhere although he is physically present in Shirdi. Then after the time was over Mankar proceeded for his home. At the railway station when we went to get his tickets for Dadar he found the booking office so crowded that he was unable to get his ticket. At that moment a villager turned up and asked him where he was going? To Dadar replied Mankar? Then the villager gave him a ticket for Dadar and told him that he had some urgent work here, therefore he cancelled his Dadar trip. Mankar was very glad to get the tickets. While he was taking out the money from his pocket the villager disappeared not to be seen again. This was a second revelation. After returning home Mankar again came back to Shirdi and stayed with Baba and was fortunate enough to die in Baba's presence.

Tatyasaheb Noolkar

Tatyasaheb a sub judge of Phandarpur was friends with Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Tatiyasaheb did not believe in them while Nanasaheb respected them. Nanasaheb told him lot of stories of Sai Baba and pressed him to go to Shirdi and take Baba's darshan. Noolkar agreed to go to Shirdi on two conditions. (1) he must go with a Brahmin cook (2) He must get good Nagpur oranges to give to Baba. Both these conditions were fulfilled and Tatyasaheb went to Shirdi. At first Baba was enraged with him, but then Tatyasaheb got many experiences and was convinced that Baba was God incarnate. He was so moved that he stayed in Shirdi till his death. While he was dying sacred literature was read out to him and at the last hour of death he was given to drink Baba's pad tirth. On hearing about his death Baba said that Tatyasa has attained salvation and will not be reborn.

Megha

Megha's story has been described in Chapter 28. When Megha died all the villagers including Baba followed the funeral procession and showered flowers on his body. After the funeral rites were performed Baba was overcome with

grief and cried a lot and then covering the body with flowers returned to the Masjid.

Tiger

Seven days before Baba passed away, a wonderful incident occurred in Shirdi. A country cart stopped in front of the Masjid and in it was a tiger suffering and agonised tiger tied with iron chains, its keepers has been taking him from place to place for making money by exhibiting it - their only means of livelihood. They tried all remedies for his sufferings but all in vain. Hearing Baba's fame they came to him with the animal. They got the tiger near the door. People were frightened. The Derveshis told Baba everything about the condition of the tiger and with his permission brought it before him. When the tiger saw Baba he climbed the steps of the Masjid and looked at Baba with lot of affection, immediately he moved his tail and dashed it thrice against the ground and then fell down senseless and died. At first the Derveshis were very sad, but they soon realised that the tiger was so lucky that he met his death at the feet of Baba. It was their debtor and when the debt was paid off he met his end at Sai's feet. When any creature meets their end at Saints feet they are liberated.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 32

In Quest Of Guru and God- Fasting Disapproved

In this chapter Hemadpant describes two things (1) How Baba met his Guru and through him God. (2) How did Baba convinced Mrs. Gokhale to have Puran puri who had made up her mind to fast.

Preliminary

Hemadpant describes this world as a Banyan tree, which has root above and branches below as mentioned in the Gita. Its branches are spread downwards and upwards and are nourished by qualities, and its sprouts are the sense objects. After cutting this Banyan tree with a sharp weapon of non-attachment one should seek the path beyond treading, from which there is no return. For traversing this path the help of a good guide (Guru) is absolutely necessary. However knowledgeable a person maybe he cannot reach his destination without the help of a guide.

This story narrates Baba's experience, which when read will give faith, devotion and show us a path to achieve salvation.

The Quest

Once four of us after studying religious scriptures began to discuss the nature of Brahma. One of them said that we should attain spiritual enlightenment without taking any help from others. To this second replied, he who controls his mind by freeing from thoughts and ideas is truly blessed. The third said the world is constantly changing, formless and eternal therefore we should discriminate between the real and the unreal world. And the fourth (Baba Himself) argued bookish knowledge is useless and added "Let us surrender completely our body, mind and soul at our Guru's feet having unbounded faith in him.

While discussing this, we four men began to wonder in the woods in quest of God. On the way we met a Vanjari (A person trading in certain things like grains ect. by carrying them on bullock cart) who asked us, how far we were going. In the woods we replied. He enquired 'On what mission?' We gave a very evasive reply. On seeing us rambling aimlessly, he was concerned and advised us 'Without knowing the forests, jungles and woods you should never wonder aimlessly but take a guide with you. You may not reveal your secret quest to me, but I invite you to sit with me and have bread and drink water, take rest and then go and always have patience.'" Though he spoke tenderly we discarded his request and marched on. We thought we were very self contained men and needed no help. The woods were vast, trackless and dense so the sun's ray could not penetrate through them, so we lost our way and wondered here and there for a long time. Ultimately we came back to the place from where we started. The Vanjari met us again and said:

"By relying on your own cleverness you missed your way, a guide is absolutely necessary to show you the right way, and no quest can be achieved on an empty

stomach. Never discard food, because an offer of food is regarded as auspicious signs of success.” Saying this he again offered us food and asked us to be calm and patient. Again my companions did not like this unsolicited hospitality and discarded his offer and moved on. I was hungry and thirsty and much moved by Vanjari’s immense love and kindness. So very respectfully I accepted a loaf of bread offered, ate it and drank water. He who loves all without any expectation is truly an enlightened soul.

Then the Guru stood before us and he asked ‘What was the dispute about?’ I told him everything that had happened, and so he said “Would you like to come with me? I shall show you what you want, but only those who believe in what I say will be successful.” Others did not agree to him, but I bowed reverently to him and accepted his dictum. Then he took me to a well. Tied my feet with a rope and hung me upside down from a tree near a well just three feet above the water which I could not reach. He suspended me for 4 to 5 hours and when he took me out asked me how I felt? “In Supreme Bliss” I replied. On hearing this, Guru was much pleased and gave me motherly care, and put me into his school. It was such a beautiful experience that I forgot my parents and all my attachments and was totally liberated. I thought of embracing him and staring at him always. My Guru became all in all, my home, mother father everything. All my senses were destroyed and my eyes centred on him. Thus my Guru became the sole object of my meditation. While meditating on him I bowed to him in silence.

There are other schools where disciples go and seek knowledge and spend their money time and labour but ultimately gained nothing. The Guru there boasts of his secret knowledge and shows his holiness. He speaks and sings his own glory, but his own words do not touch the disciple’s heart and are not convinced in matters of self-realization. How can such schools benefit the disciples? With my Guru’s grace I attained self-realization, by teaching me to give up egoism.

Among the four one was Karmkandi (ritualistic) who only knew how to perform certain rites. The second was Dnyani who was very proud of his knowledge. The third was Bhakta, who surrender himself completely to God believing that God was the sole doer. The four went in search of God depending on their knowledge, in which Sai Baba was one of the four. Sai Baba to set an example to the other three went with the other three in the forest. By respecting the Vanjari he taught them “Food is Brahma” and showed that those who rejected Vanjari’s hospitable offer suffered and how difficult it was to get Dnyan without the Guru. The Shruti (Taittiriya Upanishad) teaches us to honour and worship our mother father and preceptor, and study the sacred scriptures. This helps us attain purification of the mind which leads to self-realization. It is ultimately the grace of the Guru which leads us to self-realization.

Fasting And Mrs. Gokhale

Baba never fasted himself, nor did he allow others to do so. God is not attained on an empty stomach, the soul has to be appeased. If there is no food in the stomach with what eyes should we see God. With what tongue should we describe his greatness and with what ears should we hear the same. In short when all our organs get proper nutrition, we can practice devotion to attain God.

Therefore neither fasting, nor overeating is good, but moderation of diet is good for the mind and body.

One Mrs. Gokhale came to Shirdi to Dada Kelkar with a letter from Kashibai Kanitkar. She came to Baba with the determination of observing three days fast. The previous day Baba said to Dada Kelkar that he would not allow his children to fast during the Shimga (Holi Holidays). Next day when Mrs. Gokhale went with Dada and sat at Baba's feet, Baba at once said to her "Where is the necessity of fasting. Go to Dadabhat's house and prepare puran-puris (wheat rotis with gram flour and jaggery) feed his children and yourself too." Mrs. Kelkar was having menses and there was nobody to cook in Dadabhat's house. So Baba's advice was very timely. Then Mrs. Gokhale went to Dadabhat's house and prepared the dish as directed. She cooked that day, fed others and herself. What a good story it was.

Baba's Sarkar

Baba gave his story of his boyhood as follows "As a lad I went in search of a job and did embroidery work. I worked very hard and the employer was much pleased with me. Three other boys were working with me. The first got Rs.50. The second Rs.100 and the Third got Rs.150, but I got twice the total amount Rs.600. After seeing my cleverness my employer honoured me with full dress, turban and a shawl which I kept intact without using it. I thought that what a man gives does not last long. But what God gives last to the end of time. My treasury is filled with spiritual wealth says Baba. Dig out and take away the wealth "The skill of the fakir, the leela of my lord and the appetitive of my Sarkar is very unique. This body is perishable and no matter where I go Maya will always trouble me. He who does anything spiritual endeavour will reap the fruit and he who remembers my words will get invaluable happiness.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 33

Greatness of The Udhi

Preliminary

Hemadpant says let us bow to the great saints. Their merciful glance destroys all our sins. Their talks give us good knowledge of divinity and invaluable happiness. They do not differentiate. and their obligations rapid.

Udhi

It is known to all that when Baba took the dakshina he spent it on Charity and purchased fuel for his Dhuni-the sacred fire, which he always kept burning and the ash from the fire is called Udhi, which was freely distributed to the devotees at the time of their departure from Shirdi.

What is the significance of Udhi? Udhi is ash a visible phenomena in the universe. Our bodies are composed of five elements, which will be reduced to ashes once we die. Baba distributed Udhi to remind us of this truth that we are nothing but ashes and the reality is Brahma, and that none in this world belongs to anyone. We have come alone and we have to go alone.

Udhi cured many physical and mental problems, but Baba repeatedly Baba hinted his devotees the difference between real and unreal world. Udhi taught us discrimination and dakshina taught non attachment. When Baba was in a cheerful mood he would sing. One such song was on Udhi.

Besides the spiritual implication of the Udhi it also had material significance. It conferred health, prosperity, freedom from anxiety and many other worldly gains. So the Udhi has helped us gain materially and spiritually.

Scorpion Sting

Narayan Motiram Jani a devotee of Baba came to Shirdi with his mother and took Baba's darshan. Baba told his mother that her son would start business, which came true. No sooner Narayan Jani left service and started a boarding house called 'Anand Ashram', which thrived well. Once his friend Narayan Roa got stung by a scorpion and was in unbearable pain. Udhi application was the most suitable by Narayanroa could not find any. Then he prayed to Baba and took some ashes from the josh stick burning in front of Baba's picture , and thinking it to be Baba's Udhi applied it on the on the sting. As soon as he applied the ashes his pain vanished and both were much moved and delighted.

Bubonic Plague Case

Once a devotee's daughter suffered from Bubonic plague. He had no Udhi with him so he requested Nanasaheb Chandorkar to send him some Udhi.Nanasaheb

got this message reroute when he was travelling with his wife to Kalyan. He too had no Udhi; therefore he took some dust from the road, meditated on Sai Baba, invoked it and applied it on his wife's forehead. Immediately the devotee's daughter began to improve. and the Devotee was much moved.

The Jamner Miracle

In the year 1904-1905 when Nanasaheb Chandorkar was a Collector in Jamner his daughter was pregnant and was seriously suffering from labour pains for the last 2 or 3 days. Nanasaheb tried all remedies but all was in vain. He then remembered Baba and invoked his aid. There in Shirdi one Ramgirbua was leaving for Khandesh, Baba asked him to stop at Jamner and give Udhi and arati to Nanasaheb. At first he disagreed as he had no money, but Baba assured him that everything would be taken care of. Then Baba asked Shama to write the well-known Arati of Madhav Adkar and gave a copy of it with udhi for Nanasaheb.

On Baba's words Ramgirbua left Shirdi and reached Jalgoan at 2.45 am. He had very little money and was in a fix. But he was greatly relieved when somebody called out his name. Then the person said that he was sent by Nanasaheb and took him in a excellent tonga. In the morning they came to brooklet. The man took the horses for watering them and offered Ramgirbua some food. At first he refused it as he thought that the man was Muslim but then after convincing him that he was a Hindu Kshatriya and that Nanasaheb has sent food both had it. On reaching Jamner at dawn when Ramgirbua went to the toilet and when he returned within a few minutes there was no tonga and was surprised. After making enquiries he finally went to Nanasaheb's house and gave him the Udhi and Arati. Nanasaheb immediately gave the Udhi with water to her daughter who was in a very serious condition and thought that Baba helped him in the nick of time. Soon the delivery was safe and crises passed away. When Ramgirbua thanked him for the tonga, peon and refreshments the later was surprised as he did not aware of anyone coming from Shirdi.

This article was written by Mr.B.V.Dev and published in the Sai Leela magazine.

Narayanroa

Devotee Narayanroa had a good fortune to see Baba at the latter part of his life. Three years after Baba passed away he wanted to come to Shirdi in 1918 but could not as he became very sick. He tried all possible remedies but none worked, so he meditated on Baba continuously. One night Baba came in his dream and told him that he will improve from tomorrow and within a week he will be on his feet. His vision came true.

Although Baba is not in mortal form he is ever alive. He who loves him with all their heart gets response from him. He is always by our side and appear before his devotees and satisfy them.

Appasaheb Kulkarni

Appasaheb Kulkarni started worshipping Baba picture in 1917 given to him by Balasaheb Bhate. He worshipped Baba by offering flowers, sandal paste and Prasad daily and internally longed to see him. Seeing Baba's picture is actually seeing Baba. The following story illustrates this statement.

Balabua Sutar

A Saint of Mumbai 'Balabua Sutar' known as 'Modern Tukaram' came to Shirdi for the first time in 1917. When he bowed before Baba, Baba said that he knew him for four years. At first Balabua wondered that it was not possible but thinking deeply he recollected that he had bowed before Baba's portrait at Mumbai and was convinced with Baba's words. He thought to himself how kind saints are to their devotees and came to a conclusion that seeing Baba's photo is equivalent to seeing Baba in person.

Returning to Appasaheb's story. While Appasaheb was on a tour to Bhivandi for a week, a wonderful incident took place on the third day at Appasaheb's house. A fakir who looked just like Baba came to his house. Mrs. Kulkarni and her children asked the fakir whether he was Sai Baba of Shirdi. The fakir said no, but he was an obedient servant of Baba and had come to inquire about the wellbeing of the family and asked for dakshina. The lady gave him one rupee and in turn the fakir gave her Udhi and asked her to keep it in the shrine and left the house. Appasaheb could not proceed with his Bhivandi trip as his horse fell sick. So he returned home and learned from his wife about the fakir's visit. He was not happy that he could not meet the fakir and moreover did not like that only one rupee dakshina was given to him because he intended paying Rs.10 as dakshina.

Then without taking food he frantically started looking for the fakir but in vain. Then he came home took his meals and went for a walk with his friends. After walking some distance they saw the fakir with similar features of Baba was approaching them. The fakir put forth his hand and asked for dakshina. So Appasaheb gave him one rupee first and then two more. But the fakir kept demanding again and again so Appasaheb borrowed from his friend and gave him Rs.3. Still the fakir was not satisfied. Then they all returned home and Appasaheb gave him Rs. 3 more. In all nine, But still the fakir was unsatisfied.

Then Appasaheb told him that he had a Rs.10 currency note. Fakir asked for the same. He took the note and returned the nine rupees and went away. The figure nine stands for nine types of devotion as mentioned in chapter 21. It is also noted that Baba gave 9 coins to Laxmibai Shinde in his last moment.

Appasaheb examined the Udhi packet and found flowers, leaves and Akshat. After sometime he even got a hair from Baba when he went to Shirdi. He made a tabiz of Udhi packet and hair and always wore it on his arm. In the beginning Appasaheb was only earning Rs.40 but after securing Baba's Udhi and photo he got much money along with power and influence. His spiritual progress was also rapid. So those who are fortunate to get Baba's Udhi should apply it on the forehead after and bath and take some of it mixed with water.

Haribhua Karnik

In 1917 Haribhua Karnik came to Shirdi on Gurupurnima day and worshipped Baba with all formalities, clothes and dakshina. After taking Baba's permission while getting down from the Masjid he thought of offering one more rupee to Baba, and was just turning to climb again Shama asked him to go home as he had got Baba's leave. On his way when he went to the Kale Ram temple in Nasik for darshan. The Saint Narsing Maharaj of that temple came to Haribhau caught him by his wrist and asked him for one rupee. Karnik was surprised. He willingly paid one rupee thinking that Baba recovered that one rupee which he intended paying to him, through Saint Narsing Maharaj.

This story illustrates the fact that all saints are one and they work in unison.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 34

Greatness Of Udhi (Continued)

Doctor's Nephew

In Malegaon there lived a doctor whose nephew suffered an incurable disease tubercular bone abscess. The doctor tried all remedies even surgery but the little boy got no relief. Everyone advised the little boy's parents to go to Sai Baba of Shirdi and take divine help. The parents came to Shirdi, bowed before Baba and placed the boy before him and pleaded humbly to save their son. Baba comforted them and said "Those who come to the Masjid shall never suffer anything in life, now do not worry, apply Udhi on the abscess and he will recover within a week and have faith on God. This is Dwarkamai. He who steps in gets health and happiness and all his sufferings come to an end." The boy sat in front of Baba. Babas looked at the boy with affection and moved his hands on the effective part. The patient started applying Udhi on the effective part and got cured in some days. Then the parents left Shirdi thanking Baba for curing their son. After hearing this, doctor was wonderstruck and desired to see Baba. While he was on his way to Shirdi somebody spoke against Baba to him and so he dropped his plans for visiting Shirdi and planned to spend his holiday in Aligarh. But for three successive nights he heard a voice "Still you disbelieve me", so finally the doctor changed his mind and planned to go to Shirdi. But he had to attend a patient with infectious fever and so postponed his Shirdi trip. He thought that if the patient got well today he would go to Shirdi tomorrow. To his surprise his patient became normal and so he went to Shirdi, took Baba's darshan. And he bowed before him. Baba gave him such experiences he became a devotee. He stayed in Shirdi for four days and returned home with Udhi and blessings. Within a fortnight he got promotion and a transfer to Bijapur. It is because of his nephew that he got the opportunity of seeing Baba and made him a staunch devotee.

Dr. Pilley

Dr. Pilley was an intimate devotee of Baba. Baba like him very much and addressed him as his brother. Consulted him in all matter and always wanted him by his side. Once Pilley suffered badly from guinea worms. The pain was so unbearable that he preferred to die. As he knew that he was repaying his past karmas, he sent a message to Baba through Dixit to cease his pain and transfer the balance of his past karma to ten future births. Dixit went to Baba and conveyed him this message. Hearing this Baba was much moved and said to Dixit "Tell him to be fearless, why should he suffer for ten births? In ten days he can work out his sufferings of his past karmas, and when I am here why should he pray for death? Bring him here and let us finish his sufferings once and or all." Pilley was brought to Baba in this condition and seated on Baba's right side. Baba gave him his bolster and asked him to lie down at ease. Our Karma is the cause of our happiness and sorrow there accept whatever comes to you and always remember God and surrender to him with body, mind and soul and then see what he does. Dr. Pilley said that Nanasaheb put a bandage over his leg but

gave him no relief. Baba replied that Nana was a fool, and asked him to take off the bandage or else he would die. Now the crow will peck on you and you will recover.

While the conversation was going on, Abdul who cleaned the Masjid and trimmed the lamps, accidentally fell upon the stretched leg of Dr. Pilley. The leg was swollen, Abdul's foot fell upon it and seven guinea worms were squeezed out at once and Dr. Pilley cried out loudly in unbearable pain and then became calm. He then asked Baba about the crow. Baba explained to him that Abdul was the crow. Then Baba asked him to go to the Wada and take rest and told him that he would recover.

By application of the Udhi and taking it orally with water the disease was completely cured in ten days as assured by Baba.

Shama's Sister In Law

Once Shama's younger brother Bapaji's wife was attacked with bubonic plague. She had high fever and two Bubo in her groins. Bapaji rushed to Shama and asked him for his help. Shama got frightened and rushed to Baba and requested him to cure her sister-in-law and also took permission from Baba to go and see her. Then Baba asked Shama to send her the Udhi and gave permission to him to go in the morning and come back immediately.

Shama took the Udhi with full faith and sent it to Bapaji. It was applied on the buboes and some was mixed with water and given to the patient to drink. No sooner she started perspiring profusely, her fever abated and she had a sound sleep. Next morning Bapaji was surprised to see his wife in the kitchen preparing tea. It was Baba's Udhi that cured her completely in one night. Shama went in the morning to his brother's house and after having tea returned back to Shirdi. Shama after bowing Baba asked an explanation from him about the happenings. Then Baba explained to him. There are mysterious which take on account of destiny, for which I am the witness. Lord is the sole doer, inspirer and is merciful. I am just an obedient servant who remembers him constantly. He who gives up egoism, trust him and thank him for everything will be free and obtain liberation.

Irani's Daughter

Irani, a gentleman from Mumbai, had a daughter who got fits every hour. Whenever she got an attack he would loose her speech, limbs contorted, and fell down senseless. None of the remedies work so a friend recommended Baba's Udhi and asked him to get it from Kakasaheb Dixit. Then Irani got the Udhi, mixed it with water and started giving his daughter daily. In the beginning the fits which were coming hourly came every seven hours, but after a few days the daughter recovered completely.

Harda Gentleman

An old gentleman from Harda was suffering from kidney stones. He was advised surgery but because of his old age he lacked strength to undergo surgery. But his suffering was to end in another way. A city officer who was a devotee of Baba happen to come there. He always carried a stock of Udhi. On recommendation of friends the old man's son got him Udhi and after mixing it with water gave it to his old father. Within 5 minutes the stone dissolved and came out through the urine thus curing the old man.

Mumbai Lady

A woman in Mumbai always suffered terrible pain at her delivery. Each time she became pregnant she became very frightened. Shri Ramamurthy of Kalyan advised her husband to take her to Sai Baba. When she again became pregnant both husband and wife came to Shirdi stayed there for some months and worshipped Baba. Then when she was about to deliver a child she again got labour pains, so a neighbouring woman gave her Udhi with water to drink. Within 5 minutes the woman delivered the baby safely and painlessly. Although the baby was still born the mother got rid of the anxiety and thanked Baba for safe delivery.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 35

Preliminary

In spiritual matters discrimination is the greatest barrier to our progress. Those who believe in formless God, thinks that the God with form is an illusion and so the Saints are mere human beings, so why should they bow down and offer dakshina? Other sects would also argue why they should respect other saints leaving their Gurus. Similarly many objected to Baba asking for dakshina, as this is not the sign of true sainthood.

Kaka Mahajani's Friend

A friend of Kaka Mahajani worshipped formless God and did not believe in idolatry. Out of curiosity he went to Shirdi with Kaka on two conditions that will not bow down to Baba, and nor he will pay any dakshina. On reaching Shirdi, as soon as they put their feet on the steps of the Masjid Baba very sweetly said to Kaka's friend 'Oh welcome Sir'. Baba spoke these words in the tone of his father, which sent thrill through his body. He forgot all about his conditions and bowed at Baba's feet.

Then Baba asked dakshina twice from Kaka, but not from his friend. His friend was curious to know why Baba did not ask him for Dakshina. To this Baba replied that he had no mind to pay the dakshina so that is why he was not asked for, but if he wishes to pay now he could do so. Then his friend paid Rs.17 as dakshina the same amount as Kaka. Then Baba gave him a word of advice “You destroy the wall between us so that we can see face to face with each other.” Then Baba allowed them to leave in spite of the rough weather. On reaching home on opening the door he found 2 of his sparrows dead and one was just flying out of the window and he thought that Baba had sent him home early to save the third sparrow.

Kaka Mahajani’s Master

Kaka was a manager in the firm of Thakkar Dharamsey Jethabai a solicitor of Mumbai. Both the master and the manager had very good relations. Mr. Thakkar knew that Kaka would often go to Shirdi, stay there for a while and then return only on Baba’s permission. Out of curiosity Mr. Thakkar decided to go to Shirdi. Since Kaka’s return was uncertain, he took another person with him for company. Together three of them started for Shirdi. On the way Kaka bought two seers raisins for Baba. They reached Shirdi in time and went to the Masjid to take Baba’s darshan. Mr. Thakkar met Babasaheb Tarkad and asked him why he was there? ‘For Darshan’ Tarkad replied. Then Mr. Thakkar asked weather any miracles took place there.

Mr. Tarkhad replied that earnest intentions of the devotees were satisfied. Then Kaka bowed before Baba and offered raisins to him. Baba ordered them to be distributed. Mr. Thakker got a few of them, but he was advised by his doctor not to eat them unless cleaned and deseeded. Out of respect he put it in his mouth, as he did not swallow them nor spited them. He thought that if Baba was a Saint how he could not know his dislike for raisins. While he was thinking this Baba gave him some more raisins which he kept it in his hands. Then Baba asked him to eat it. He obeyed and to his surprise he found the raisins seedless which was a miracle for him. Then he asked Tarkhad what kind of grapes he got? He replied “The variety of seeds.” This surprised Mr. Thakkar even more. Then to confirm his faith he thought if Baba was a real Saint then the raisins should be given to Kaka first. Reading his thoughts Baba ordered the distribution of raisins be commenced from Kaka. Thakkar was much convinced.

Then Shama introduced Mr. Thakkar as a master of Kaka, upon which Baba said “how could he be the master as he already had a different master.” Kaka appreciated the reply. Then they all returned to the Wada.

After the completion of the noon arati, they all went to the Masjid to take Baba’s leave. At that time Baba spoke, “There was a fickle minded gentleman who had everything in life but he had a lot of unnecessary anxieties, and therefore lost his peace of mind. His mind is never steady I take pity on him. I advice him to keep his faith in one place.”

Hearing these words Thakkar knew that Baba was pointing at him. He wished Kaka should return with him. Baba read his thoughts and gave permission to Kaka to return home with his master.

Then Baba asked Rs.15 dakshina from Kaka, which he gave. Then Baba said that if he took Dakshina from someone he had to return tenfold to him. I ask dakshina only to whom the fakir points out. If anyone is indebted to the fakir dakshina is received from him. By giving dakshina the donor sows the seeds, only to reap the rich harvest in the future. The best way to receive wealth is to give. Giving dakshina also enhances non-attachment.” Hearing these words Thakkar was very convinced and he also gave Rs. 15 as dakshina. He was very happy that he came to Shirdi and all his doubts were cleared.

Baba had a unique skill of handling such cases. Though he conducted it he was very much unattached, from all the modalities of life.

Insomnia Case

A Kayasta Prabhu Gentleman suffered from insomnia. Every night when he went to sleep his dead father would appear in the dream scolding and abusing him.

This disturbed his sleep and made him restless, and did not know what to do. One day a Baba’s Devotee recommended Udhi, and asked him to apply a little on his forehead every night and keep a packet of Udhi under his pillow. He tried this remedy and to his surprise he started sleeping well. He continued this remedy and always remembered Sai. Then he got a picture of Sai Baba and worshipped him daily and offered garland and Prasad on Thursdays. All his troubles were over.

Balaji Patil Newaskar

Balaji was a great devotee of Baba, and rendered excellent selfless service. Every he swept and cleaned all the passages of Shirdi. When Balaji reaped his corn every year he brought the whole quantity and present it to Baba. But returned with the quantity Baba gave him back, and maintained himself and his family with it. After him his son did the same.

Power And Efficacy Of Udhi

On Balaji’s death anniversary a limited number of guests were invited and dinner was prepared for them. But at dinner time thrice the number of people invited turned up. Mrs. Newaskar was in a fix as she thought there was not enough food for all the people assembled and if there is a shortage the honor of the family would be at stake. Her mother in law comforted her by saying it is not our food but Sai’s. Cover every vessel with a cloth putting Udhi in it and serve the same without opening it. Sai will save us from everything. She did as she was advised and to her surprise not only there was sufficient food for all but plenty

remained after serving. This proves that ‘If one feels intently so he realizes accordingly.’

Sai Appearing As A Servant

One day Raghu Patil went to Balaji’s house. That evening he saw a serpent enter the cowshed hissing. All the cattle became afraid and restless. The inmates of the house were frightened, but Balaji thought that Sai Baba appeared as a serpent. Without being afraid he bought a cup of milk and placed it before the serpent and said “Baba why to you hiss and want to frighten me, here drink this milk with a calm mind” saying this he sat near it. In a short time the serpent disappeared and nobody knew where it went.

Balaji had 2 wives and some children. Sometimes they went to Shirdi for taking Baba’s darshan.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 36

Two Gentlemen

Once two gentlemen came from Goa to take Baba’s darshan. When both bowed before Baba asked Rs.15 dakshina from one of them which he willingly gave. At the same time the other gentleman voluntarily offered Rs. 15 as dakshina, which was rejected by Baba. Sham who was sitting there at that time asked Baba why such discrimination? Baba replied “That when deity of the Masjid calls for debt, the donor pays it and is free from it.” I have nothing so I am free of debt. But there is no escape from enmity and murder.” Saying this Baba narrates a story as follows:-

At first he was poor, so he took a vow to God that he would pay his first month salary Rs.15 as dakshina. Then he got a series of promotions and ultimately his salary went to Rs.700. During this prosperity he forgot his vow. The force of his Karma drove him here and I asked him for Rs.15.

Another Story: While wondering at the seaside I came across a huge mansion and sat in the veranda. A Brahmin owner gave me good food and showed me a neat place near a cupboard for sleeping. While I was fast asleep the man cut my pocket and took Rs. 30,000 from from it. When I woke up I was crying in distress, and I thought the Brahmin had stolen my money. I lost all my appetite and sat for a fortnight in the veranda. Then I saw a passing fakir who inquired the cause of my sorrow. I told him everything and he advised to me to go to a fakir, whose whereabouts he gave, and asked me to surrender myself to him, and in the meantime to give up my favourite food till the money was recovered. I

followed the fakir's advice and recovered my money. Then I went to the sea shore and saw a crowded steamer which I could not get into, but the peon somehow managed and I boarded the steamer, and came to another shore from where I boarded a train for Masjidmai.

After completing his story Baba asked Shama to make their feeding arrangements. Shama took them home and gave them food. At dinner time Shama said to the guests that Baba's story was rather mysterious as he has never travelled anywhere nor had so much money. Hearing this the guests were very moved and were shedding tears, and in a choked voice they said that Baba was omniscient and what he spoke had already taken place and said they would give all details after the meals.

After the meals one of them started narrating the full story:

A hill station on the ghats is my native place. Once I went to Goa in search of a job. That time I took a vow to God Datta that if I got a job I would offer my first salary to him. By his grace I got a job of Rs15 and then got a series of promotions as described by Baba. Baba just reminded me and recovered Rs.15 thus freeing me of my debt and my vow.

Moral:

Baba never begged for money nor did he allow his devotees to beg. He regarded money as a bar to spiritual progress and did not allow his devotees to fall into its clutches. For instance Bhagat Mhalsapati was very poor and could hardly make his ends meet, Baba never allowed him to make money and nor did he give him anything from the dakshina he collected. Once a liberal merchant named Hansraj gave lump sum money to Mhalsapati, but Baba did not permit him to accept it.

Then the second guest narrated his story: "My Brahmin cook, who served me for 35years, unfortunately robbed my Rs. 30,000 from my cupboard while I was in a deep sleep. I spent a fortnight in great anxiety. As I sat on the veranda a fakir passing by enquired the cause of my sorrow. I told him all what had taken place. On this the fakir advised me to go and see Baba in Shirdi and to give up any food that I liked best till I take your darshan. I gave up eating rice on these conditions.

After fifteen days my Brahmin cook came and returned me my money after many apologies. I could not see the fakir at all but I had an intense desire to see Sai Baba. Without accepting Rs.35 and helping me recover my money he showed us the path of spiritual progress.

I was very happy to recover my stolen prosperity but forgot all about the vow. Then Baba came in my dream and reminded me to come to Shirdi. I went to Goa and wanted to board a steamer. The Capitan did not allow me but a peon helped me to get in, this I came to Mumbai. From there I took a train to Shirdi. Sai Baba know everything. It is Sai who is Lord Dattatreya himself and he brought me to Shirdi.

Mrs. Aurangabadkar

A lady by the name of Mrs. Aurangabadkar had no children for 27 years. She took many vows but was unsuccessful. She became hopeless and came to Shirdi with her step son Vishwanath and stayed there for 2 months serving Baba. Whenever she went in the Masjid it was always crowded. She wanted to see Baba alone but never got a chance. Ultimately she told Shama that she wanted to meet Baba alone. Shama said he would try and the Lord might bless her. He asked her to sit with coconut and joss sticks in the courtyard when Baba has his meals, so that when Baba called to her she would come up.

One day after dinner when Shama was wiping Baba's wet hands. Baba pinched Shama's cheek. Shama got a little annoyed and said that he did not want a mischievous God. Then Baba said " Oh Shama 72 generations you have been with me and I have never pinched you and now you resent my touching you" Shama replied " I want a God who will love us and give us nice things to eat, and let our faith always be at your feet. Baba said yes I have come for that, I have fed and nursed you and now I have affection for you."

Then Baba took his seat. Then Shama called the lady who bowed before Baba and offered coconut and joss sticks. Baba shook the coconut and found it to be dry. The kernel within made a noise. And told this to Shama. Shama said that the woman prays that the child should similarly roll in her womb, so please give her the coconut with your blessing.

Baba said: How foolish people are to say that coconut will give any children.

Shama said: I know the power of your words and blessings. Your words will give her many children.

After repeated discussions Baba finally ordered Shama to break the coconut but Shama pleaded Baba to give the entire fruit to the lady. Finally Baba blessed her with one child in 12 months. Then the coconut was broken into 2 parts and was eaten.

With Baba's grace she delivered a son in a year's time and the son was brought to Baba in his fifth month. The couple bowed before Baba and gave Rs.500 which was spent in constructing a shed for Baba's horse "Shyam Karna."

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 37

Preliminary

Blessed is Sai's life for his devotees. His ways and actions are unique. Sometimes he is intoxicated with the divine bliss and sometimes self-absorbed. He was unattached to everything he did. His calmness was deep and unfathomable. He regarded men as brothers and women as sisters and mothers. He perfect in every way. And the knowledge we acquired from him stay with us forever. Let us serve him with devotion and see him in all beings.

Below Hemadpant describes the Chavadi procession.

Chavadi Procession

Baba slept one day in the Masjid and the next day he would sleep in the Chavadi. This went on till his Mahasamadhi. From December 10th 1909 devotees offered regular worship to Baba in the Chavadi. On the day of retiring to the Chavadi people flocked in the Masjid and did bhajans in the courtyard for a few hours. Behind them was a beautiful Palanquin. To the right was Tulsi Virrndavan and in front was Baba adorned in his seat. Men and women who loved Bhajans took various musical instruments and conducted it. Outside in the open some trimmed their torches, some decorated the Palanquin, and some stood with cane sticks in their hands and hailed victory to Baba. The corners of the Masjid were decorated with buntings. The inside of the Masjid was lighted with rows of oil lamps. Baba's horse stood fully decorated. Then Tatya Patil along with a group of men came and helped Baba to get up by putting his arm under Baba's arm. Baba wore a kafni, took a short stick under his arm pit, his tobacco pipe with tobacco and placing a cloth over his shoulder became ready to start. Then Tatya placed a beautiful golden shawl over his body. Then Baba would put some fuel sticks in the Dhuni and extinguish the burning lamp near the Dhuni and then start for Chavadi. Then with the sound of different musical instruments, exhibition of fireworks, men and women were dancing, some singing Baba's name and some carrying the flag. The Bhalgars announced Baba's name when he stood in the step of the Masjid. Two persons stood on both side of Baba with charmers and some fanned Baba. Cloth was spread on the way on which Baba walked with Tatya holding Baba on the left and Mhalsapati on the right, Bapusaheb Jog held the umbrella on his head. This is the way Baba marched to the Chavadi. The horse led the way and behind him were carriers, waiters, musical players and a crowd of devotees. The name of the Lord and Sai were chanted with the music. In this manner the procession reached the corner to everyone's joy and delight.

On reaching this corner, Baba stood facing the chavadi looking to the north. All musical instruments kept playing while Baba moved his hand up and down. At that moment Kakasaheb Dixit came forward with a silver plate containing flowers and gulal and threw it on Baba off and on. As the musical instruments played on everyone was happy to see Baba's face beamed with radiance and beauty. Sometime Mhalsapati would dance, but all were surprised to see that Baba concentration was the least disturbed. It was a beautiful procession, truly an expression of devotion. People from all walks of life came to witness this beautiful extravaganza. Baba walked at a slow pace followed by devotees on both sides. The whole atmosphere was filled with joy and the procession reached in Chavadi.

The chavadi was well decorated with mirror and lamps. On reaching there Tatya spread the cushion and placing the bolster made Baba sit there and make him wear the coat. Then the devotees worshipped him in various ways. They would put the crown on his head, placed garlands of flowers and jewels on his neck and marking his forehead with musk and kept gazing at him to their heart's content. Nanasaheb Nimonkar held the umbrella with beautiful pendants, which moved in a circle. Bapusaheb Jog washed Baba's feet in a silver dish and worshipped with due rituals, then put sandal paste on his hands and offered him betel leaves. When Baba sat on the Gadi devotees waved charmers and fans. Shama prepared the chillum gave it to Tatya, who after inhaling deeply gave it to Baba. After Baba had a smoke he passed to Mhalsapati and then it was passed down to all. After the function was over devotees put garland round Baba's neck and gave him scent and bunches of flowers and had a good fortune to get the contact of Baba's hand and his kiss. Finally Bapusaheb Jog waved the arati over Baba accompanied by musical instruments. When the arati was over the devotees after saluting him one at a time returned home. After completing all work when Tatya Patil stood to depart Baba said to him, "Guard Me properly" go if you want but come in the night and enquire about me. After replying Tatya went home. Then Baba made his own bed arranging the sheets and went to sleep. Hemadpant request the readers to remember Baba's Chavadi procession daily before retiring to bed.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 38

Preliminary

Oh blessed Sadguru Sai who has given happiness in the whole world accomplished the welfare of his devotees by being liberal, protector and saviour for those who surrendered to you completely. You have incarnated to do good to mankind. Saints are like jewels. Sai is the abode of perfect divine bliss. After fulfilling the devotees desires he took them to the path to salvation.

Baba's Handi

Different accomplishments are prescribed in our scriptures for different ages. Penance is recommended for Krita age, Knowledge is for Treta Age, Sacrifice for Dwapar age and Charity for the Kali or the present age. Of all the charities giving food is the best one. He who gives food to the poor and the hungry is the best donor. Taittiriya Upanishad mentions food is Brahma. From food all creatures are born, by food they live, and they enter into food after death. When a guest comes to our door it is our duty to welcome him with food. Other charities like giving wealth, property and clothes ect. Require some discrimination but with food there is no discrimination. If any lame, crippled, blind and diseased person came to your door at noon they should be first fed and others afterwards. The merit of former is greater than feeding the latter. Other charities are imperfect without Food Charity. Now let us see how Baba prepared food and distributed to others.

Baba required very little food for himself, which he obtained by begging from few houses. But when he decided to distribute food he made all preparations and depended on nobody. First he would go to the bazaar and bring all the ingredients like corn, flour spices ect. By paying cash. In the open courtyard of the Masjid he made a fire and kept a Handi with proper measure of water. There were two kinds of handis. Small and one provided food for 50 people and the big handi provided food for 100 people. Sometimes Baba cooked sweet rice and sometimes cooked biryani with meat. At times in the boiling soup he put small balls of thick or flat wheat flour bread. He grinded spices on the stone slab and put them in the cooking pot. He took all pains to make the dishes palatable. He made Ambli by boiling jawari flour and mixing it with buttermilk and then boiling together with the food and distributed to everyone. To check if the food is properly cooked Baba put his bare hands in the boiling cauldron and churned the whole mass sideways and up and down, but never burnt his hand. When the cooking was over Baba got the pots from the Masjid and was duly distributed by the Muslim priest. First a part of the Prasad was sent to Taty and Mhalsapati and the remaining was served to the poor and helpless people. Blessed are those fortunate people who got food prepared by Baba and served by him.

Baba distributed vegetarian and non-vegetarian food according to the preferences of his devotees. There is a principal when a Guru gives anything as Prasad and the disciple has doubts on it he falls in misery. In order to see if any disciple disobeyed this principal Baba put them to test. On Ekadashi day Baba gave Dada Kelkar and orthodox Brahmin some rupees and asked him to buy some meat. So Dada Kelkar dressed himself and got ready to go and buy meat, and then Baba called him and asked him to send somebody else, so Dada sent his servant Prabhu for this purpose. When Baba saw his servant go he cancelled that programme. On another occasion Baba asked Dada how the biryani was done. Dada causally replied that it was ok. Then Baba told him “Neither you have seen it nor tasted it then how you can say it was good? Saying this Baba took off the lid, put his arms in the pot, took some out and gave to Dada to taste a little. This is how Baba pinched Kelkar.

The Handi business went on till 1910 and was stopped thereafter as because many pilgrims flocked to Shirdi and offered various foods as Prasad. The food was so much in quantity that the poor fed themselves to their heart’s content. Here is a narration of Nanasaheb Chandorkar’s story showing Baba’s regards for local shrines and deities.

Nanasaheb’s Disrespect Of A Shrine

Sai Baba belonged to no caste and none knew his whereabouts where he came from.

Once Nanasaheb Chandorkar came to Shirdi with his brother-in-law Mr. Biniwale. When Nanasaheb went and sat in the Masjid the latter suddenly got angry with him. And said that he had been in his company for long so why did he behave like this? Nanasaheb did not understand so requested Baba to explain. Baba mentioned about his trip to Kopergoan to Shirdi. Then Nanasaheb realised his mistake. He usually worshipped the shrine of Datta on the Banks of the river Godavari at Kopergoan, but this time he dissuaded in relative who was a Datta devotee and straight drove to Shirdi. He confessed to Baba that while bathing in the Godavari River a thorn went into his foot and gave him much trouble. Baba warned him that this was a slight punishment he met and asked him to be more careful in the future.

Kale (Hodge-Podge)

After the arati was over and Baba sent away the people with Udhi and blessings, Baba sat behind the curtains with two rows of his intimate devotees' one on each side. The devotees brought Prasad containing variety of foods and kept waiting outside for Baba to consecrate it. All the food was mixed in a hodge podge and placed before Baba. He offered it to God and portions were given to the persons waiting outside and rest were served to the group of devotees inside, with Baba at the centre. The devotees sitting in two rows dined to their heart's content the food served by Shama and Nanasaheb Nimonkar. The food was served daily and each individual needs and comforts were looked into. Every morsel of food gave them fulfilment and satisfaction. Very auspicious and holy.

Cups Of Buttermilk

Once Baba offered a cup of buttermilk to Hemadpant, that that day Hemadpant had over eaten, so he took just a sip. Then Baba said drinks it all as you would not get such an opportunity thereafter. He drank the whole cup that Baba's words were prophetic, for he passed away after a brief period.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 39

This chapter deals with Baba's interpretation of a verse of the Bhagwat Gita.

Preliminary

Blessed is Shirdi and Dwarkamai where Baba lived. Blessed are the people of Shirdi for whom Baba lived. At first Shirdi was a small village but it gained its importance because of Baba and became a holy place of pilgrimage. Equally blessed are the womenfolk of Shirdi due to their undivided faith on Sainath. They always sang the glories of Baba while doing their household duties.

Baba's Interpretation

Nobody believed that Baba knew Sanskrit. One day he surprised everyone by giving interpretation of a verse from Gita to Nanasaheb Chandorkar. A brief account has been written by BV Dev and published in Marathi in the Sai Leela Magazine.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar was a good student of Vedanta and had read Gita and commentaries. He thought that Baba knew nothing about Sanskrit texts. One day when Nana was messaging Baba's legs and muttering something, the following conversation took place:

Baba - Nana what are you mumbling to yourself?

Nana – I was reciting a verse

Baba – What Sholak

Nana – From the Bhagwat Gita

Nana – then recited the Bhagwat Gita, 1V-34

Tadviddhi, Pranipaatenā Pariprashnena Sevaya Upadekshyanti Te
Gnyanam Gnyaninastattvadarshinah.

Nana – It means “Making Sashtanga Namaskar” i.e. prostration, asking the Guru, serving him, Learning the knowledge. Then those who attained the real knowledge of the Sadvastu (Brahma) will give you Upadesha (instruction of knowledge.”

Baba – 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 it is not enough to merely prostration.

Nana – The only meaning I know of the word ‘Pranipaata’ is ‘making prostration.’

Baba – What is ‘Pariprashna.’

Nana – Asking questions.

Baba – What does ‘Prashna’ mean?

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 any other meaning for the word ‘Pariprashna.’

Baba – ‘Seva’, what sort of Seva is meant?

Nana – Just what we are doing to you.

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 ‘Upadekshyantite Gnyanam’ can you read any other word in lieu of Gnyanam?

Nana – Yes

Baba – What word?

Nana- Agnyanam

Baba – Taking this word (instead of gnyan) is any meaning made out of this verse?

Nana – No, Shankara Bhashya gives no such construction.

Baba – Never mind if he does not. Is there any objection using the word ‘Agnyan’ if it gives a better sense?

Nana – I do not understand how to construct by placing the word ‘Agnyan’ in it.

Baba – Why does Krishna refer to Arjun to Tattwadarshis to do his prostration, interrogation and service? Was not Krishna a Tattwardarshi in fact Gnyan himself?

Nana – Yes he was but I could not make out why he referred Arjun to Gnyanis ?

Baba – Have you not understood this?

Nana was humiliated, his pride was knocked down. Then Baba began to explain.

- (1) It is not enough to prostrate before Gnyanis. We must completely surrender to the Sad guru.**
- (2) Mere questioning is not enough. The question must be made with proper motive to the Guru in the view to achieve spiritual progress or liberation.**
- (3) Seva is not done with the intention that one is free to offer or refuse service. One should feel that he is not the master of the body, that the body belongs to the Guru and exists merely to render service to him.**

If this is done the Sad guru will show you, what the knowledge referred to in the previous stanza is.

Nana did not understand what it meant by saying that the Guru teaches ‘Agnyan’.

Baba – How is Gnyan Upadesh i.e. imparting of realization to be effected? Destroying ignorance is Gnyan. “Oh Arjun if dream and sleep disappear you are yourself.” Gnyan also means light (expelling darkness, destroying duality (Dwaita), means no duality (Adwaita). Both are interrelated. To achieve one the other has to be removed. Realization can only be attained when one gets into a non duality state.

The disciple, like the Sad guru is the embodiment of gnyan. The Sat Guru is Nirgun Sat chit anand. He has taken human form to elevate mankind. His wisdom and divine power remains remain undiminished. The disciple is of same nature but he is but is burdened with Karmas and thus becomes ignorant. The guru has to root out the ignorance from his disciple by giving him instructions that he himself is God and God is no different from him. This ignorance is based on actions of joys and sorrows. To remove this ignorance he must ask this question why this ignorance arises.

The following are the example of Agnyan meaning ignorance:

- 1 – I am Jiva (creature)
- 2 - Body is the soul (I am in the body)
- 3 - God, world and Jiva are different
- 4 - I am not God.
- 5 – Not knowing that body is not the soul.
- 6 – Not knowing that God, world and Jive are one.

Unless these error are pointed out the disciple cannot learn about God , Jiva, world and body, how they are interrelated and are one and same. So instruction is absolutely necessary to destroy ignorance.

Construction Of The Samadhi Mandir

Baba never made fuss of anything but he skilfully arranged circumstances very slowly which attained sure results. This surprised many people. Shriram Bapusaheb Jog a famous multi millionaire of Nagpur lived in Shirdi with his family. Once he had an idea of having a building of his own. One night while sleeping in the Dixit Wada with Shama. He got a vision. Baba appeared in his dream and ordered him to build a Wada with a temple. Shama also got a similar vision. When Bapusaheb woke up he saw Shama in tears and asked him why? Shama told him that he saw Baba came in his dream and ordered him to build the Wada with the temple and he shall fulfil the desires of all. Hearing these sweet words Shama was overwhelmed that tears came from his eyes. Bapusaheb was surprised that they both saw the same vision. Being rich and capable Bapusaheb decided to build a Wada and drew a plan with Shama and Kakasaheb Dixit which was placed before Baba who sanctioned it immediately.

Then the construction work duly started under Shama's supervision and the ground floor, cellar and the well were completed. Baba also suggested some improvements. Further work was entrusted by Bapusaheb Jog and while the work was in progress Bapusaheb Buti had an idea to have an open space in the middle and a statue of Lord Krishna be installed there. He asked Shama to take Baba's permission. Shama asked Baba about this when he was just passing by the Wada, so Baba said that he would come and stay there after the temple was complete, and added that after the Wada was complete we shall use it ourselves. When Shama asked Baba whether it was an auspicious time to commence the foundation work , Baba said yes and so Shama got a coconut broken and started the work. In due time the work was completed and an order was placed to make the statue of Lord Krishna.

But before it was ready Baba fell seriously ill which depressed Bapusaheb because he thought if Baba passed away his Wada will not be consecrated by the holy touch of Baba's feet and all his money would be wasted away. But before passing away Baba said "Keep me in the Wada" which consoled Bapusaheb and all others. In due time Baba's holy body was placed in the central shrine meant for Lord Krishna and the Wada became the Samadhi Mandir of Sai Baba.

Blessed and fortunate is Bapusaheb Buti in whose Wada lies the holy and pure body of Baba.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 40

Stories Of Baba

Preliminary

Blessed is Shri Sainath who gives instructions to his devotees in temporal and spiritual matters and helps them to achieve goals in life. Sai by placing his hands on their heads transfers his powers thus destroying differentiation and making them attain the unattainable and become one with the Devotees.

Mrs. Dev Udyapan Ceremony

Mr.B.V.Dev a devotee of Baba lived in Thana. His mother had taken 30 religious vows and the concluding ceremony in this regard was to be performed. This ceremony included the feeding of 100 to 200 hundred Brahmins. Mr. Dev fixed the date of the ceremony and wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog, requesting Baba to attend the dinner ceremony, as without it the ceremony would be incomplete. When Bapusaheb Jog read the letter to Baba, Baba said “I always think of him who remembers me. I require no conveyance I manifest myself to him who lovingly calls me.” Then Baba asked Jog to write to him that he had accepted the invitation and three of them will attend. Mr. Dev was very pleased and he knew that Baba could come in any form and fulfil his words.

A few days before the ceremony a Sanyasi in Bengali dress came to station master at Dhanua to collect donations for protection of cows. The station master introduced the Sanyasi to Mr. Dev who told him that a subscription list had already been prepared for some other charitable cause and therefore asked him to come after 2 or 4 months and see him. Hearing this Sanyasi left the place. After one month the Sanyasi came in a tonga and stopped in front of Dev's house. Mr. Dev thought he came for donation, but the Sanyasi told him that he has come not for money but for meals and had two lads with him. Dev welcomed the Sanyasi and the two lads to his house in his house. As there was about two hours for the meal Dev asked them to come at noon. Exactly at twelve the trio came, joined the party and after feeding themselves went away.

After the ceremony was over Dev wrote a letter to Bapusaheb Jog complaining Baba's breach of promise. Jog took the letter to Baba and before he opened it Baba said “He says I [promised him I would come but deceived him, tell him I did attend his dinner with two others but he failed to recognise Me. He thought that the Sanyasi came to him for the subscription money, did I not remove his doubt and did I not say I will come with two others, and did not the trio come in time and have their meals? See I keep my words, I will sacrifice my life but would never be untrue to my words.” This reply pleased Jog's heart and he communicated to Dev. As soon as he read it he burst into tears and got angry at himself for blaming Baba. He wondered about the incident which took place with the Sanyasi.

It clearly states that when devotees surrender completely to the SadGurn he sees to it that all religious functions in the house are duly executed with necessary formalities.

Hemadpant Shimga Dinner

In the morning of 1917 on a full moon day, Hemadpant had a vision. Baba appeared to him in the form of a Sanyasi, woke him up and said to him he would come to him for a meal that day. When he woke up he saw no one but he recollected each and every word Baba said. Although he knew Baba for 7 years he never thought Baba would come to his house for meals. Hemadpant was much pleased and informed his wife to prepare some more rice as a Sanyasi was coming for meals and also told her about his dream about Baba. But she had her doubts, but Hemadpant assured her that Baba might not come in person but attend in the form of guest.

After the lunch was ready at noon and the Holika worship was over two rows of leaves were arranged with Rangoli around them with a central seat for the honourable guest. All the family members occupied their seats and the serving of food commenced. Everyone was anxiously waiting for the guest to come but no one turned up. Then the entrance was closed. Just when everybody was about to eat they heard the footsteps on the staircase. Hemadpant immediately opened the door and welcomed two men Ali Mohammed and Moulana Ismu Mujavar. Both the men apologised to Hemadpant for being late, and gave him a packet wrapped in an old newspaper. He unwrapped the paper and to his surprise he saw a big nice picture of Sai Baba. Seeing this he was much moved and tears began to run down his eyes and he bent his head at Baba's feet. He thought that Baba has blessed him by this miracle. He said that he bought it from a shop and would give all details afterwards, Hemadpant thanked him and bid them good bye and returned to the dining hall. The picture was placed in the central seat reserved for the guest and offerings were given. After that everyone started eating and finished in proper time. On seeing the beautiful picture of Sai everyone was wonderstruck and wondered how it all happened.

This is how Sai fulfilled his words in the dream of Hemadpant. The remaining story of Ali Mohammed about the Sai's picture is mentioned in the next chapter.

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Chapter 41

Nine years after the incident described in the last chapter, Ali Mohammed met Hemadpant and related to him the following story.

One day while wondering on the streets of Mumbai he brought a picture of Baba, framed it and set it on the wall of his house and daily took his darshan. Three months before he gave this picture to Hemadpant, he suffered from swelling of the legs and after the operation was performed was staying at his brother-in-law in Mumbai. For three months his house was empty in Bandra and only the pictures of few Saints including Baba was there. As time passed by all the photos of Saints destroyed except for Sai Baba's which was unexplainable?

The story goes like this:

Many years ago he had a small picture of Saint Baba Abdul Rehman from Mohammed Hussian. He gave this picture to his brother in law Noor Mohammed and was lying on his table for 8 years. Once he took it to the photographer, enlarged it and distributed among family and friends including, which he kept in his Bandra house. Noor Mohammed was a disciple of Abdul Rahman. When he went to present this picture to his Guruji, his Guru became wild and ran to beat him and drove him out as he did not like image worship. He felt sorry and dejected. He took the enlarged picture and threw it in the sea. He requested his Guru's picture from family and friends and threw it in the Bandra sea. At that time Ali Mohammed was in his brother-in-laws house and he was told that all his sufferings would come to an end if he immersed the pictures of other saints into the sea. On hearing this Ali Mohammed sent Mehta to his house to get all pictures of Saints to be thrown in the sea.

After two months when Ali Mohammed returned he was surprised to see the picture of Baba hanging on the wall and did not understand why Mehta left that picture and took all. He thought of keeping Sai picture in his cupboard away from his brother-in-law. While he was thinking how to dispose the picture, Sai Baba gave him the inspiration to consult Moulana Ismu Mujavar and abide by his opinion. After consulting Moulana they both decided that the picture should be given to Hemadpant.

This story shows how Baba knew the past, present and future of his devotees and skilfully pulled the wires and fulfilled desires of his devotees. The following story shows how Baba liked those who took interest in spiritual matters and removed their difficulties and brought them happiness.

Stealing The Rags And Reading the Dnyaneshwari

Mr. B.V Dev for a long time wished to read the Dnyaneshwari (A well known Marathi commentary by Dnyaneshwari). He could read a chapter of Bhagwat Gita daily but when he took the Dnyanshwari some difficulties cropped up and so gave up on the reading. He tried his best to read it but was in vain. So he thought that one day Baba would create love for this book.

Then in the month of February when he went to Shirdi with his family Jog asked him whether he read the Dnyaneshwari daily. Dev replied that he desired to read it but was unsuccessful. And then only when Baba ordered him to commence he would do so. Jog advised him to take the book and get it consecrated by Baba and start reading it, which he disagreed.

Dev then saw Baba and gave him one rupee dakshina, But Baba asked him for Rs.20 which he gave. At night he met Balakram and asked him how to secure Baba's devotion and grace which Balakram said he would tell him the next day after the Arati. When Dev went to Baba's darshan the next day Baba asked him for Rs.20 dakshina which he gave willingly. As the Masjid was crowded Dev sat at the corner, but Baba asked him to come closer and sit calmly. After the noon arati when the crowd got dispersed Dev asked Balakram about his previous experiences with Baba. As Balakram was about to reply Baba sent a leper devotee Chandru to call Dev. When Dev went Baba asked him with whom he was talking? He said Balakram. Then Baba asked for Rs.25 dakshina which Dev gladly gave. Then Baba charged him by saying that "You stole my rags without my knowledge" Dev denied it, but Baba asked him to make a search, which he did but found nothing. Then Baba got angry and said "There is nobody here except you. You came here for stealing grey haired and old." After this Baba lost his temper and started abusing him. Dev remained silent and thought that he might even get a beating. After an hour or so Baba asked him to go to the Wada. Then in the afternoon Baba told everyone that his word might have upset Dev, but he is committed to theft and so he took him to task. Baba again asked him for Rs.12 dakshina. Dev collected the amount and gave it to Baba and bowed before him. Then Baba said to him "I read the Dnyaneshwari daily and go and sit in the Wada and read regularly and explain the portion with love and devotion. I am sitting here to give you a gold embroidered shawl so why steal rags from others.

Dev was much pleased as now he got the permission from Baba to read the Dnyaneshwari. He again bowed to Baba and surrendered himself completely to him. Then he realized what Baba meant by stealing the rags. Baba did not like that he asked questions to Balakram when he himself could answer all his queries. Dev took scoldings as blessings of Baba.

The matter did not end there. Within a year he went to Dev and enquired about his progress. On 2nd of April 1914 on Thursday morning Baba gave him a dream. He asked him whether he understood the Pothi? No answered Dev. Then Baba said "when are you going to understand?" Dev burst in tears and said "Unless you shower your grace the reading is a mere burden and understanding is even more difficult," Then Baba said "Read before me Adhyatama (spiritualism). Dev went to bring the book. When he opened his eyes he felt joy and divine bliss.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 42

Baba's Passing Away

Preliminary

The stories given in the previous chapters show that Guru's grace removes fear and misery and opens the path to salvation and happiness. If we always remember the Sad guru then we will be free from all troubles, misery and death. Therefore those who care for their welfare should carefully listen to the stories of Sainath which will purify their minds.

Previous Indication

Readers have heard life stories now let us hear Baba's passing away. On 28th of September 1918 Baba has slight fever for 2 or 3 days, but thereafter Baba gave up food and became very weak. On the 17th day Tuesday the 15th October 1918 Baba passed away at about 2.30pm. Two years before this incident Baba gave an indication of his passing away but nobody understood it then. It was as follows:- On Vijayadashami Day in the evening Baba suddenly got enraged when people were crossing the border of the village (Seemollanghan), so he took out his kafni and langota, he tore them and put them in the Dhuni. On being fed with this offering the Dhuni shown brighter, He stood there stark naked and with burning eyes shouted "You fellows now you have to decide whether I am a Hindu or a Muslim" everyone was trembling with fear and none dared to approach Baba. Bhagoji Shinde a leper devotee went boldly near him and succeeded in tying his Langota (waist-band) and asked Baba why he was angry? Then Baba striking the ground with his stick said "This is my Seemollanghan (crossing the border)." Baba did not cool down till 11.00pm and people doubted whether the Chavadi procession will take place that night. After a while Baba became his normal self and after dressing up attended the Chavadi procession. By this incident Baba gave a clear indication that Dasera was the proper time for him to cross the border of life. But none understood the meaning then. Baba gave another indication as follows:

Averting Death Of Ramchandra and TatyaPatil

Once Ramchandra Patil fell seriously ill. He tried remedies but none gave him relief and so in despair he was waiting to die. Then one night suddenly Baba stood near his bed. Patil held Baba's feet and said "I have lost hopes of life please tell me definite when shall I die." Merciful Baba said "Don't be anxious your death warrant is withdrawn and you will soon recover, but I am afraid of Tatya Patil he will pass away on Vijayadashmi in 1918 AD. Do not say to him as he will be very frightened." Ramchandra got well but kept the secret about Tatya's death. He told none but Bala Shimpi the tailor.

Ramchandra Dada became well and time passed quickly. Then at the end of 1918 true to Baba's words Tatya fell sick and was bed-ridden and so could not take Baba's darshan. Baba was also down with fever. Tatya became bad to worse and could not move at all but always remembered Baba. Baba became equally worse. On the day of Vijayadashami Tatya's had a low pulse and was expected to pass away shortly. But a curious thing happened Tatya remained, Baba passed away instead. It seemed there was an exchange. People say Baba gave up his life for Tatya. Baba gave a hint of passing away substituting Tatya's name. Next morning (16th October) Baba appeared to Das Ganu in his dream and said the Masjid collapsed and all oilmen and grocers of Shirdi harassed me. So I left this place and therefore have come to inform you. Go there and cover me with flowers. So he came to Shirdi with disciples and sang Lord's name throughout the day before Baba's Samadhi. He himself weaved a beautiful garland and placed it on Baba's Samadhi and gave mass feeding in Baba's name.

Charity To Lakshmibai

Vijayadashami is regarded as the most auspicious time for the Hindus and Bab choose to take Mahasamadhi on this day. He was ailing for some days, but just at the last moment he could sit up without any support. People thought that he was getting better but Baba knew that his end was near. He wanted to give some money as charity to Lakshmibai Shinde.

Baba Pervading All Creatures

Lakshmibai Shinde was a good well to do woman. She served Baba in the Masjid day and night. Except Tatya, Malshapati and Tatya none were allowed to step in the Masjid at night. One evening when Baba was sitting with Tatya in the Masjid, Lakshmibai came and saluted Baba. On seeing her he told Lakshmibai that he was very hungry. Lakshmibai immediately bought bread and vegetables and placed it before Baba. Baba took it and gave it to a hungry dog. Lakshmibai got irritated and asked Baba why he did this. Baba explained to her that, a dog's hunger is the same as his, Dog also has a soul no matter how different the creatures are their hunger is all the same. Know for certain, He who feeds the hungry really serves me. Baba showed a practical experience without hurting anyone's feeling. From that time onwards Lakshmibai began to offer Baba with bread and milk which Baba ate with much love. This bread story depicts that Sai Baba is Omni-present and pervades in all beings.

Baba always remembered Lakshmibai's service. Just before leaving he gave her Rs.9 in all, which denote 9 types of devotion as described in chapter 21.

Lakshmibai was a well to do and did not desire any money, It may be the dakshina offered at the time of his passing away or to bring to her notice the nine characteristics of a good disciple.

Being conscious and watchful Baba ordered Baba ordered Kakasaheb Dixit, Bapusaheb Buti and others to go to the Wada and return after meals. With a heavy heart they returned to the Wada as they knew that Baba's condition was getting serious. Before they finished their meals the news came that Baba was dying. They left their dishes and ran to the Masjid and found that Baba finally rested on Bayaji's lap. He did not collapse on the ground, nor did he lie on the bed but sitting quietly on his seat and doing charity with his own hands left his mortal body.

Saints come in this world with a definite mission and after that is fulfilled they pass away quietly and easily as they come.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapters 43 &44

Previous Preparation

It is a general practice among the Hindus that when a man is about to die religious scriptures are read out to him to divert his mind from worldly things to spiritual matters so that the future progress will be easy. Even today the Gita, Bhagwat and other sacred books are read out to dying persons. Baba being an incarnation of God did not need such help, but just to set an example he followed such practice as others. When he knew that he was to pass away, he asked Mr. Vaze to read Ramvijaya to him, which he read once a week. Then Baba asked him to read the same book day and night and he finished the 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 quiet. He abided in himself and was waiting for his last moment.

Two or three days earlier Baba stopped his morning outings and sat quietly in the Masjid. He was conscious till the last and advising devotees not to loose heart. He did not let anyone know the exact time of his departure. Kakasaheb Dixit and Shriram Buti were dining daily with him in the Masjid, but on 15th October after the arati he asked them to go to their residence for dining. Still a few of them, Lakshmibai Shinde, Bhagoji Shinde, Bayaji Laxman, Bala shimpi and Nanasaheb Nimonkar remained there. Shama was on the steps after giving Rs.9 to Lakshmibai Shinde. Baba said he did not feel well in the Masjid that he should be taken to the Dagati (stone) Wada of Buti where he would be alright. While saying these last words he leaned on Bayaji's body and breathed his last. Bhagoji noticed that his breathing was stopped. Nanasaheb immediately poured some water in Baba's mouth but it came out. Then he cried loudly 'Oh Deva' and Baba opened his eyes and said 'Ah' in a low tone and left his mortal body. The news of Baba's passing way spread like wild fire in the village of Shirdi and the whole village flocked in the Masjid to mourn Baba's passing away. Some could not bear this loss and fell senseless.

Then the question arose how to lay Baba's body to rest? Some Mahammedens suggested that the body should be buried and a tomb built over it. Even Khushalchand and Amir Shakkar agreed on this. But Ram Chandra Patil firmly told the villagers that Baba's body should be placed nowhere but in the Wada. People had different views and the discussion regarding this was made for 36 hours.

On Wednesday morning Baba appeared in the dream to Laxman Mama Joshi and told him "Get up soon, Bapusaheb thinks I am dead so will not come. You do the worship. Laxman Mama was an orthodox Brahmin, astrologer and the maternal uncle of Shama. Her worshipped Baba daily in the morning. After the vision he came with all the puja materials, performed the worship and Kakkad arati and went away. Then at noon as usual the noon arati was performed by Bapusaheb Jog along with other devotees.

After paying due respects to Baba's words it was finally decided to place his body in the Wada by digging the central portion there. On Tuesday evening the sub inspector came from Rahata and along with others they all agreed with this proposal. Amritbhai from Mumbai and a Mamladar from Kopergoan. People had divided opinions, some gave opinion to bury the body in an open field, but the Mamladar took a voting and found that the proposal to use the Wada secured a number of votes. He wanted to inform this matter to the collector so Kakasaheb got ready to go to Ahmednagar. Meanwhile with Baba's grace all finally voted for the proposal. On Wednesday evening Baba's body was taken in a procession and laid to rest in the central portion of the Wada, reserved for Murlidhar. Infact Baba became the Murlidhar and the Wada became the holy shrine and the temple. All the obsequies of Baba were preformed by Balasaheb Bhate and Upasani.

It was observed by professor Narke that Baba's body did not get stiff and his limbs were elastic and his kafni could be taken out easily though it was exposed for 36 hours.

Breaking Of The Brick

Some days before Baba's departure an incident occurred. There was an old brick in the Masjid where Baba rested his hands and sat. At night time 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 took it into his hands, but unfortunately it slipped from his hands and broke into two pieces. When Baba came to know about this he moaned its loss by saying "It is not a brick but my fate that has been broken into pieces, it was my life-long companion, with it I always meditated on self, it was dear to me, my life, and it has left me today. Some may say why should Baba be so sad for the brick, to this Hemadpant says. Saints incarnate in this world with a mission to save the poor and helpless people. They become one with the people outwardly, but inwardly they are wide awake to their duties and mission.

72 Hours Samadhi

In 1886 Baba made an attempt to leave his body. On a full moon day Baba suffered a severe attack of Asthma. To get rid of this he decided to take his soul high up and go into Samadhi. He said to Mhalsapati to protect his body for 3 days. If he returns he will be alright but if he does not then bury his body in open land and fix 2 flags there as a mark. After saying this Baba fell down at 10pm. His breathing and pulse stopped, it seemed his soul left his body. All the villagers wanted to bury the body but Mhalsapati prevented it. With Baba's body on his lap he sat there for 3 days guarding it. After three days Baba showed signs of life at 3am. His breathing commenced, his eyes opened and stretching his limbs Baba returned to consciousness.

From this account we come to know that our body is made up of five elements which is perishable, but the self is the absolute reality, consciousness or Brahma. For fulfilling his mission he incarnated in the body and after it was fulfilled he threw his body and assumed his infinite form. Sai ever lives. His passing away is just an outward aspect but in reality he lives in all beings. This is experienced by those who surrender themselves completely to him and worship him with wholehearted devotion.

Thought it is not possible to see Baba's form but if we go to Shirdi we shall find his beautiful life like portrait adorning the Masjid drawn by Shamroa Jayakar a famous artist and a well known devotee of Baba. Even today this portrait gives the satisfaction of taking Baba's darshan. Though Baba is not in body now, he lives there and looks after the welfare of all his devotees, as he did before. Saints like Baba never die, because in reality they he is God himself.

Bapusaheb Jog's Sanyas

Hemadpant before closing this chapter gives an account of Jog's Sanyaas. Bapusaheb Jog, had no children. After his retirement in 1909 he came to Shirdi with his wife. Both husband and wife loved Baba and spend all their time worshipping and serving him. After Megha's death Bapusaheb daily performed the arati ceremony in the Masjid and Chavadi till Baba's Mahasamadhi. He was also given the work of reading and explaining Dnyaneshwari and Ekanthi Bhagwat in Sathe Wada to the audience.

After serving for many years jog asked Baba the reason why his mind is not at peace although he is in a company of saints? When will he bless him? Hearing this Baba replied " In due time your bad actions will be destroyed, your merits and demerits will reduce to ashes, and you will be blessed, when you will renounce all attachments, serve God wholeheartedly and resort to a begging bowl (accept Sanyas). After sometime Baba's words came true. His wife died and he became totally detached, accepted Sanyas and achieved the goal of his life before he died.

Baba's Nectar Like Words

The kind and merciful Baba always spoke these sweet words in the Masjid. "He who loves me always sees Me. The whole world is desolate without Me. He who tells my stories and ceaselessly meditates on Me. I feel indebted to those who completely surrender to Me and ever remember me. I shall repay his debt by giving him self-realization I am dependent on him who thinks and hungers after Me, and does not eat anything without offering to Me. He, who comes to Me, becomes one with Me, just like the river merges one with the sea. So leaving pride and egoism you should surrender yourself to Me, who is seated in your heart.

Who Is This Me

Sai Baba explained many a times ‘Who is Me.’ He said “ You need not go far in search of Me. Barring your name and form, there exist in you and all beings a sense of Being or Consciousness of existence. That is Myself. Knowing this you see Me inside yourself and in all beings. If you realize all pervasiveness, and thus attain oneness with me.”

Hemadpant very humbly and lovingly request all readers, to love and respect all Gods, Saints and devotees. Has not Baba said “He who craps and cavils others, pierces Me in the heart and injures Me. But he who suffers and endures pleases Me the most.” Baba thus pervades in all beings and creatures. He likes nothing but love to all beings. Such nectar always flowered from Baba’s lips.

Therefore Baba concludes: Those who lovingly sing Baba’s fame, and those who hear it with devotion, become one with Sai.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 45

Preliminary

Although Baba passed away his infinite and spiritual form ever lives. Ever since his passing away more Leelas have taken place and are even happening now. This clearly shows that Baba is ever living and helping his devotees as before. The people who came in contact with Baba, during his lifetime very indeed very fortunate. But if anyone was attached to the worldly pleasures and did not turn to God very unfortunate. What is really desired is the wholehearted devotion to Baba. Our body, mind and soul all should be become one in worshipping and serving Baba.

No one in this world can help us to attain self realization; we have to find this path ourselves. We have to discriminate between the real and unreal world by renouncing materialism and by controlling our minds aspire for liberation, having full faith in ourselves. Practicing discrimination gives us the knowledge that the world is unreal therefore our passion for worldly things decreases and ultimately leads us to non-attachment. Brahma is Guru the sole reality is in all beings, so when we worship Brahma (Guru) wholeheartedly we become one with him and attain self-realization. In other words always chanting the name of the Guru and meditating on him enables us to see Him in all beings thus giving us eternal bliss.

Kakasaheb's Doubt And Anandroa's Vision

Sai Baba had enjoined Kakasaheb Dixit to read two works of Shri Eknath. Bhagwat and Bhavartha Ramayan. Kakasaheb read these daily and continued even after Baba passed away. Once in Kaka Mahajani's house Kakasaheb was reading Eknathi Bhagwat in the morning. Shama and Kaka Mahajani were present three and were listening very attentively to the portion read which was the 2nd chapter, 11th Skanda of the book which mentions the 9 Siddhas of the Rishabha family which expounded the principals of the Bhagwat Dharma to King Janak. They are:

1. Kavi : Which explains the meaning of Bhagwat Dharma
2. Hari: Chacteristics of a devotee.
3. Antariksha : The meaning of Maya (world)
4. Prabhuddi: How to cross Maya (world).
5. Pippalayan : What is Para-Brahma
6. Avirhotra : What is Karma
7. Drumil: The incarnations of God and their deeds.
8. Chamas: How a non devotee fares after death.
9. Karabhajan: Different modes of God worship in different ages. In this Kali age the only means of liberation is remembering the Lord or Guru.

After the reading was over Kakasaheb said to Madhavroa “ How wonderful are the discourses of the nine Nathas on devotion but how difficult it is to put to practice and even after many births how are we to get salvation ? It seems there is no hope.” Madhavroa did not like the pessimistic attitude of Kakasaheb and said to him “It is a pity that one who had a good fortune of being with Baba is feeling restless.” And pointed out that Baba had clearly said that remembering and chanting Guru’s name confers salvation, and there should be no cause of anxiety. Kakasaheb was not happy with Madhavroa’s explanation and continued to be anxious of how to get powerful Bhakti of the Nathas. The next morning the following miracle took place:

One gentleman named Anandroa Pakhade came in search of Madhavroa. At that time the reading of Bhagwat was going on. Mr. Pakhade sat near Madhavroa and was mentioning about his dream vision in a whisper. Hearing the whisper Kakasaheb stopped the reading and asked Madhavroa what the matter was. The latter said that he had all the explanation for all his doubts which he expressed yesterday, and devotion means bowing down to the Guru. Then Mr. Pakhade began to relate his vision which everyone was anxious to here:

I was standing in the deep sea. There I suddenly saw Sai Baba sitting on a beautiful throne studded with diamonds, with his feet submerged in water. The vision was so real that I thought that it was not a dream. Curiously Madhavroa was also standing there and told me to fall at Baba’s feet. I wish to do it but was helpless as Baba’s feet was in the water, So I told Baba to take out his feet from the water, which he did. I caught them without delay and bowed down to them. Then Baba blessed me by saying “Go now, you will attain your welfare with no cause of fear and anxiety, and give the silk-bordered Dhotar to Shama, you will benefit thereby.”

In compliance with Baba’s order, Mr. Pakhade bought a Dhotar and gave it to Kakasaheb to give it to Shama, but the latter refuse to accept it, and said unless Baba gave any hint he would not accept it. Then after some discussion Kakasaheb decided to cast lots and abide by a decision. Two chits were written “To accept” and another “To reject.” The accept was picked up by the child and the Dhoter was accepted by Shama. In this way all the three were satisfied.

This story teaches us to give respect to the saints, but at the same time have full faith in our Guru and abide by his instructions for he knows our welfare. Hemadpant says “Love your Guru Wholeheartly, surrender to him completely and bow before him and you will not see the sea of mundane existence, before you to cross.

Wooden plank, Baba's Bed Stead and Not Bhagat's

In the earlier days Baba slept on a wooden plank with earthen lamps burning on all four corners of it. Later he broke it into pieces and threw it away. Once Baba was describing the greatness of the plank to Kakasaheb Dixit. So the latter said to Baba that "If you still love the plank I will hang one for you in the Masjid to sleep at ease. Baba replied I won't sleep up leaving Mhalsapati on the ground." Then Kakasaheb said "I will provide another plank for Mhalsapati too." Baba replied "How can he sleep on the plank? It is not so easy for him to sleep on it." Only a person with many qualities can do so. Baba said "When I go to sleep I often ask Mhalsapati to sit by my side and place his hands on my heart watching the chanting of Lord's name there, and if he find's me sleepy wake me up. He can't even do this as he gets drowsy. When I feel his heavy hands I cry out 'Oh Bhagat'. He moves and opens his eyes. "How can he can't sit nor sleep well on the ground, sleep high up on the plank?" On many occasions "Weather good or bad, all is with us, and what is others is with them,"

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 46

Preliminary

Oh Sai blessed are your feet, remembrance and darshan which liberate us from the bond of Karma. Though you are invisible still your devotees get living experiences. By your invisible thread you draw your devotees from far and near and embrace them like a mother. You always stand behind your devotees help and support them. By your power you save the poor simple and devout, posing yourself as a non-doer. The best thing we can do is to completely surrender at your feet and always chant your name to destroy your sins. You fulfil the desires of your devotees, but those who have none you give them Supreme Bliss.

Chanting your name is the easiest Sadhana, which will destroy all our sins gaining righteousness, discrimination, dispassion and knowledge, which calms our mind, and gives us peace, non-attachment, fame and knowledge.

If Baba accepts a devotee. He follows him always to his home and abroad. Let the devotee be anywhere Baba is always ahead of him in some form.

The following story illustrates this.

Gaya Trip

Once Kakasaheb Dixit decided to perform a thread ceremony for his eldest son Babu at Nagpur, at the same time when Nanasaheb Chandorkar decided to perform a marriage ceremony for his eldest son at Gwalior. Both came to invite Baba for their respective functions. Baba requested them to take Shama and told them that after going to Benares and Prayag he would be ahead of them.

After taking the permission from Baba Shama decided to go to Nagpur and Gwalior to attend both the functions and ceremonies and then go to Kasi, Prayag and Gaya. Appa Kote accompanied him. Both went to Nagpur for the thread ceremony and Kakasaheb gave Shama Rs.200 for his expenses. Then both went to Gwalior and both attended the marriage ceremony. There Nanasaheb gave him Rs.100 and his relative Jathar gave him Rs.100. Then Shama went to Kashi and was well received by Jathar's LakshmiNarayan temple, and the Ram Mandir at Ajodhya by Jathar's Manager Both Shama and Kote stayed two months in Kashi and 21 days in Ayodhya. Then they left for Gaya. While in the train they heard about the plague prevailing in the there, so they arrived at Gaya and stayed at a Dharamshala. In the morning the Gayawala (priest who arranges boarding and lodging for pilgrims) asked Shama hastily to come with him. Shama asked him whether there was any plague in Gaya. The Gayawala said No. Trusting him they went with and stayed at his house.

It was a big and spacious Wada and Shama was pleased with the accommodation provided to him, but he was more pleased to see a beautiful big portrait of Baba fixed in the fixed in the central front portion of the building. On seeing the portrait Shama was overwhelmed with tears and emotions Gayawala thought Shama was crying because of plague, but then Shama enquired him about how he got Baba's portrait? He heard about Sai Baba of Shirdi from one of his agents working in Gaya. About twelve years ago he went to Shirdi and took Baba's darshan. There he was attracted to Baba's portrait hung at Shama's house. And with Baba's permission Shama gave it to him. Shama remembered that incident. Gayawala joy knew no bounds when he learned that it was the same Shama. The Gayawala was a rich man; he gave Shama a royal welcome. Made him sit on the elephant and attended to all the comforts and conveniences. The moral of the story is "Baba's words came true. His unbounded love for his devotees and love for all creatures showed that he was one with them.

Two Goats

Once while Baba was returning from Lendi he saw a flock of goats. Two of them attracted his attention and he brought them for Rs.32. The devotees were surprised at this conduct of Baba. They thought that Baba was cheated, and began to take Baba to task for it. But Baba kept his calm. Shama and Tatya Kote asked Baba for an explanation. Baba said he did not care for money as he had no family. He asked them to purchase lentils to feed the goats. After this was done Baba returned the goats to the owner and narrated the following story. "Oh Shama and Tatya, in the previous these two goats were human beings. And had a good fortune to be with me. They became enemies. The elder brother was an idle fellow but the younger one was active and earned a lot of money. They forgot their blood relation and began to quarrel with each other. The elder brother became greedy, and wanted to kill his younger brother and take all his money. The elder brother made many attempts to kill his younger brother but all was in vain. Finally the elder gave a deadly blow with a big stick on latter's head, while the latter struck the former. As a result both fell dead on the spot. Because of their actions both were born as goats. As they passed by me I recognised them. Taking pity on them I wanted to feed them and give them rest and comfort and for this reason I spent all my money, for which you blame me. I sent them back to the shepherd." Such was Sai's love for the goats.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 47

Preliminary

Blessed is the face of Sai. A glance at him destroys and confers great bliss on us and if he looks at us with grace our bondage of Karma is immediately destroyed bringing happiness. The river Ganges washes sins of those who have a bath in it. Similarly the Ganges wishes the saints to come and bless her by putting their holy feet in her, removing all sins. Sai is the crest jewel of all the saints. Now he narrates the following purifying story.

The Snake And The Frog

Sai Baba narrated the following story: “One morning after breakfast when I was strolling I came across a small river bank. As I was tired, I took a full bath and got refreshed. As I was preparing to smoke my Chillum (pipe) I heard a croaking of a frog. As I was lighting the fire a traveller turned up, sat beside me, bowed at Me and politely invited Me to his house for meals and rest. He lit a pipe and handed it to me. The croaking was heard again, and he wanted to know what it was. I told him that the frog was in trouble and tasting the bitter fruit of his Karma. We have to reap now the fruits of our past life and crying won't help. He wanted to go there and see for himself what was happening. I told him a frog was caught by a big snake and was crying for help. Both were very wicked in their past lives and were now reaping the fruits of their past actions. He went and saw the same scenario.

He returned and said that in 10 to 12 minutes the snake will eat the frog. I said No it cannot happen as I am its preceptor see how I release the snake!

He was afraid and asked Me not to proceed as the snake might attack us. Not minding him I went ahead and addressed the snake ‘ Oh Veerbhadra has not your enemy Bassapa yet repented though he is born as a frog and you as a serpent, still hold bitter enmity against him? Be ashamed of your self, give up your hatred now and rest in peace.

On hearing these words the snake left the frog, and quickly dived in the river and disappeared. The frog also jumped away and hid in the bushes.

The traveller was much surprised and asked Baba for an explanation. How the snake dropped the frog, and who were Veerbhadra and Basappa and what was their cause of enmity? I then explained my mystery to him as follows:

Four to five miles from my place there was an ancient temple of Lord Shiva. The temple was old and dilapidated and so the residents collected funds for its repairs. After a large amount was collected, arrangement for worship was made and estimates for repairs were prepared. A rich local man was appointed as a treasurer and the whole work was entrusted to him. He was a miser and spent very little money on repairs, which made very little progress. He spent all the funds and swallowed some amount himself.

He had a sweet tongue and was very clever in giving explanations regarding the work in progress. People requested him to speed up the work by laying a helping hand. They requested to work out a scheme and again collected subscriptions and sent the amount to him. He received it but still the progress was not there. After some days Lord Shiva appeared in his wife's dream and told her to build the dome of the temple, and he will give him hundred fold of what he spent. The wife narrated the dream to her husband, who had a good laugh saying that it was just a dream. And why did Lord Shiva not appear in his dream instead of her's.

God does not like donations collected against the wishes of the donors. But he likes amounts given to him with love and devotion. Some days after God again appeared in her dream 'Do not bother your husband with the collections and spending money for the temple. What I want is devotion, so give anything of your own. She consulted her husband and decided to give God her ornaments. The miser even cheated God by undervaluing the ornaments at Rs.1000/-and in lieu amount gave a barren field to God. This field belonged to a poor woman Debaki who mortgage to him for Rs.200. She could not redeem for long so the cunning miser his wife, God and Debaki became his victims.

Thus the transaction ended and the land was given to a poor priest who was pleased with the endowment. Sometime later a terrible storm came, and the lightning struck the house in which miser and his wife died. Debaki also died in due course of time.

In the next life the miser was born in Mathura in a Brahmin family and was named Veerbhadrappa. His wife was born as a daughter of priest and was named Gouri. The woman Dubaki was born as a male in the family of Gaurav (attendant) of the temple and was named Chenbassapa. The priest was a friend of mine we often chatted and smoked together. Her daughter Gouri was also devoted to Me. She was growing and her father was worried about her marriage. I told him not to worry as the bridegroom himself would come seeking her. Then the poor boy Veerbhadrappa came begging for bread to the priest's house. With my consent Gouri was married to him. Initially he was devoted to Me, but later on he became a miser and kept hankering for money.

Strange things happened. The demand for land increased and the land prices began to rise. With Gouri's luck the land was sold for Rupees one lac (100 times worth of her ornaments). Half the amount was paid in cash and the remaining was to be paid in 25 instalments of Rs.2000 each. All agreed with the transaction but began to quarrel over the money. They came to me for consultation. I told them the property belonged to Gouri, and no amount should be spent without consulting her and her husband had no right on her money. On hearing this Veerbhadrappa was angry at Me, and said that he wanted to establish Gouri's claim and embezzle her property. On hearing his words I kept quiet.

Veerbhadrappa scolded Gouri, so she came to me and pledged me for protection. I promised her that I would help her in every way possible. That night Lord Shiva appeared to her in the dream and told her “The whole money is yours, do not give anything to anyone. Spend some amount for temple by consulting Chenbassappa and for using it for other purposes consult Baba (Myself). Gouri told me her vision to Me and I gave her a proper advice to take the principal and amount for herself. And give half the amount to Chenbassappa and Veerbhadrappa has nothing to do in this matter. While I was giving the advice Veerbhadrappa and Chenbassappa came quarrelling. I tried my best to pacify them and told them, Gouri’s God’s vision. Veerbhadrappa was raging with anger and threatened to kill Chenbassappa. The latter was timid, he caught my feet and sought refuge. I pledge myself to save him from his foe. After sometime Veerbhadrappa died and was born as a snake and Chenbassappa died and was born as a frog. On hearing the croaking of Chenbassappa I remembered my pledge and came here to save him and kept my word. God runs to his devotees for helping them in times of danger. He Chenbassappa (frog) by sending me here. All this is God’s Leela.

The Moral

The moral of this story is what you sow you reap. There is no escape unless one suffers and squares up one’s old debts and dealings with others and the creed for money drags the greedy man to the lowest level. And ultimately brings destruction for him and others.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 48

Signs Of Sad Guru

He who teaches us Vedanta, controls our breath, gives us pleasing discourses of Brahma, he who gives Mantra to his disciples and order's them to chant the same many times but does not assure with definite results. He who only has bookish knowledge and no experience of self realization is not a Sadguru. But he who by his discourses creates distaste for the worldly enjoyments and is well versed in theoretical and practical knowledge and shows us the path to self-realization is the real Sadguru. A Sadguru never expects anything from his disciples; on the contrary he wishes to help them. He does not think himself greater than the disciple. A Sadguru is an abode of peace, has no pride and treats everyone equally.

Hemadpant believes, it is because of our merits of past lives we have a good fortune of meeting and be blessed by Sai Baba. He had pure attachment for his devotees and always acted on their interests. Although Baba is not living, what experiences he gave to his devotees is even felt today. The devotees to get self-realization should surrender completely with love and devotion. This will help them to attain liberation.

A man should go to a true Saint with a pure mind and fall at his feet. He is sure to be saved from this sea of mundane existence.

Mr. Shevade

Mr. Sapatnekar of Akalkot was studying law. He came in contact with Mr. Shevade a fellow student. They all studied and exchanged notes together. Through question and answers among themselves they found that Mr. Shevade was the least prepared for the exams. But he had full faith on Sai Baba and said that even if he is not prepared, he will get through the exams successfully.

Mr. Sapatnekar was surprised at his remark and asked him about Sai Baba. Shevade replied that "Sai Baba lived in Shirdi in a Masjid and he is a great Saint. Unless one has great store of merits of past life one cannot see him. I have full faith on him and his word always comes true. He has assured me that I will definitely pass next year in my final examination and I am confident that I will get through by his grace." Mr Sapatnekar laughed at his friend's confidence and made fun of him and Baba.

Sapatnekars

Mr. Sapatnekar passed his examination and settled in Akalkot and practiced as a pleader. Ten years after he lost in only son on account of throat disease. He was heart broken so he thought of making pilgrimage to Phandarpur and other holy places and even read the Vedanta, but got no peace of mind. He remembered Mr. Shevade's remarks on Sai Baba and decided to go to Shirdi. He went to Shirdi with his younger brother Panditroa and was much pleased to see Baba from a distance. When he went near Baba and bowed before him placing a coconut Baba at once cried out "Get away" Sapatnekar hung his head, moved

back and sat aside. Sapatnekar wanted to consult somebody who would advise him how to proceed and so he sought the help of Bala Shimpi. Together they bought Baba's photo and came with it to the Masjid. Bala Shimpi handed the photo to Baba and asked who it was. Baba laughingly pointed out to Sapatnekar and said that the photo belonged to the yaar (lover). Bala asked Baba the significance of the laugh and beckoned Sapatnekar to come forward and take darshan. When Sapatnekar began to bow at Baba, Baba again cried "Get out". Sapatnekar did not know what to do so he folded his hands and sat before Baba praying. Finally Baba ordered Mr. Sapatnekar to leave immediately. They obeyed Baba's orders and left Shirdi with a heavy heart, praying that they should be allowed to take darshan next time.

Mrs Sapatnekar

A year passed by, but still his mind was not at peace. He went to Gangapur and Madhegoan but felt more restless and finally decided to go to Kashi. Two days before leaving his wife got a dream. She was going with a pitcher to Lakkad Shah's well. There she met a fakir who sitting at the foot of the Neem tree, came closer to her and offered to fill her pitcher with pure water. She was afraid of the fakir and ran hastily with the pitcher, the fakir followed her. At this point she woke up and narrated the dream to her husband. They thought it was an auspicious sign and both left for Shirdi. When they reached the Masjid, Baba was absent as he had gone to Lendi, so they waited for his return. When Baba returned she was surprised to see that the fakir she saw in the vision resembled Baba. She bowed to Baba with devotion and kept looking at him. On seeing her humanity Baba was much pleased and began to tell a story in a very peculiar way.

He said "My arms, abdomen and waist were paining for a long time. I took many medicines which gave no relief to me, but I am surprised to see now that all my pains have disappeared at once." Though no name was mentioned, it was Mr. Sapatnekar's story. Her pain described by Baba left her soon and she was very happy.

Mr. Sapatnekar again went ahead to take darshan. Baba was again asked to 'Get out.' He understood that Baba's displeasure was due to past deeds and resolved to amend the same.

He determined to see Baba alone and ask his pardon for his past actions. He placed his hands on Baba's feet and Baba placed his hands on him. Then a shepherdess sat messaging Baba's back. Baba in his characteristic way began to tell a story of a Bania. He related various incidents of his life in detail including the death of his son. Sapatnekar was surprised that Baba narrated his own life story. He came to realise omniscient. Then Baba addressing the shepherdess and pointing at Sapatnekar said "This fellow blames me for killing his son. Do I kill people's children? So why does he come to the Masjid and cry? Now I will bring back the very same child into his wife's womb." With these words Baba placed his blessing hands on his head and comforted him by saying "These feet are old and holy, you are carefree now, place your faith on Me, and you will soon get your object." Sapatnekar was much moved with emotions. He bathed Baba's feet with tears and returned home.

Then he made preparations for his worship and Prasad came to the Masjid and offered it to Baba and saluted him again and again. Of seeing heads clashing against heads Baba said to Sapatnekar “Why do you bow yourself now and then? One Namaskar offered with love and devotion is enough.” Then Sapatnekar witnessed the Chavadi procession in the night.

The next day before leaving Shirdi Sapatnekar thought of paying one rupee dakshina, and if Baba asked him he should pay one more rupee to him and the rest amount keeps for the expenses for the journey. When he went to the Masjid to take Baba’s permission he offered Baba one rupee, then Baba asked him for another as per his intention which he willingly paid. Then Baba blessed him by saying “Take this coconut and put it in your wife’s upper fold of her sari and go in peace.” He did so and within a year he was blessed with a son, and when the infant was 8 months old the couple came to Shirdi and placed him at Baba’s feet and prayed “Oh Sainath, we do not know how to repay your obligation, therefore we totally surrender ourselves at your holy feet, which is our sole refuge and our mind be always engaged in you.

The son was named Murlidhar. Two other (Bhaskar and Dinkar) were born afterwards. Sapatnekar realised that Baba’s words were so true and fulfilling.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 49

Preliminary

When the Vedas and other religious cannot praise the Sadguru, how can we ignorant souls describe our Sadguru, Shri Sai Baba? In reality observing silence is the best way of praising our Sadguru, but the divine qualities of Sai Baba inspire us to open our mouth.

It is Sai himself who inspires these stories and get them written. Our duty is to surrender completely to him and meditate on him. We therefore have to chant Sai’s name, remember his sayings, and meditate on him with true love and devotion in our hearts. There is no better way to liberate ourselves than to chant Sai’s name.

Hari Kanoba

A gentleman from Mumbai named Hari Kanoba heard many stories of Sai Baba from his friends and relatives but still doubted in them. So he wanted to go and see Baba himself and came to Shirdi with some Mumbai friends. He wore a lace bordered turban on his head and a new pair of sandals on his feet. On seeing Baba from a distance he wanted to go and bow to him, but he did not know where to put his new sandals. So he placed his sandals at the corner of the open

courtyard, and went to the Masjid and took Baba's darshan bowing to him and taking Udhi and Prasad. After the darshan when he went to get his sandals, he was surprised to see them disappear. He searched for them in vain, and returned to his lodging dejected.

He bathed, worshipped and offered Prasad and sat for his meals but all the while his mind was on sandals. After his meals while washing his hands he saw a boy coming towards him, holding a stick on which were hanging new pair of sandals. He said to the men washing their hands that Baba sent him with the stick and asked him to go on crying 'Hari Ka Beta, Jari Ka Pheta' and that if anybody claims these sandals, his name is Hari and he is the son of 'Kanoba' and he wears a lace-bordered turban then give it to him. Hearing this Hari Kanoba was very surprised. He went a head and claimed his sandals from the boy by convincing him that his name was Hari and he was the son of Kanoba and even showed him his lace bordered turban. This satisfied the boy and returned the sandals to him. Hari Kanoba kept wondering that how did Baba know his name and his father's name as this was his first trip to Shirdi. He came there with a sole intention of testing Baba. From this incident he came to know that Baba was a great Saint, and returned home satisfied and much pleased.

Somadev Swami

This is another story of a man who came to test Baba. Kakasaheb's Dixit's brother Bhaiji stayed at Nagpur. When he visited the Himalayas in 1906 he became friends with Somadev Swami of Hardwar. Five years later Somadev Swami came to Nagpur and was Somadev's guest. There he heard about Baba's stories and had a strong desire to go to Shirdi and see him. He got a letter of introduction from Bhaiji and left for Shirdi. After passing Manmad and Kopergoan he took a tonga and drove to Shirdi. On approaching Shirdi he saw two flags flying high over the Masjid. On seeing the flags Somadev Swami thought 'Why should a Saint have a liking for flags? Does it denote Sainthood? It implies Saint hankering after fame. Thinking this he told his fellow travellers that he wished to cancel his trip and go back. They said to him 'Why did he come so far? If his mind became restless by mere sight of flags, and how agitated he will become by seeing the palanquin and horse. Hearing this, Swami got even more agitated and started to return. The fellow travellers convinced him not to return back, by saying that Sai Baba did not care for anything but it was his devotees who kept all this paraphernalia out of love and devotion. Finally he agreed to go and see Baba. When he saw Baba from the courtyard, he was in tears and all his crooked thoughts vanished. He remembered his Guru's sayings 'Where the mind is most pleased and settled, that is our abode and place of rest.' He wished to bow at Baba's feet and approached him. Baba got wild and shouted at him "Let your paraphernalia be with us, you go back to your home, and beware if you come back to the Masjid again. Why take a darshan of one who flies a flag high over his Masjid? Is this a sign of Sainthood? Do not stay here for a moment also." Hearing these words the Swami was much surprised. He realized that Baba was Omniscient and Baba's conduct responded exactly to his inner thoughts and that he should learn a lesson that Baba's anger was a blessing in disguise. Later on his faith grew in Baba, and he became a staunch devotee of Baba.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar

Hemadpant concludes this chapter by giving the story of Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Once Nanasaheb was sitting with Mhalsapati and others in the Masjid, at that time a Muslim gentleman came with his family to see Baba. On seeing veiled ladies Nanasaheb wanted to go away, but Baba prevented him from doing so. When the ladies came to take Baba's darshan one of them removed her veil for saluting Baba's feet. At that moment Nanasaheb had a glimpse of her face and was much against with her beauty and wished to see her face again. Knowing Nana's restlessness. After the ladies left Baba spoke to him "Nana why are you getting agitated, let the senses do their duty, we should not interfere in their work. God has created this beautiful world and it is our duty to appreciate our duty. The mind will get calm gradually. When the front door is open why use the back one? When the heart is pure and there are no evil thoughts, why should one be afraid, or feel shy, let the eyes do their work."

Shama did not understand anything of what Baba said so he asked Nana about this on their way home. Nana told him his restlessness at the sight of the beautiful lady, and how Baba knew and advised him about it. Nana explained Baba's meaning as follows "Our mind is very fickle by nature, so it should not be allowed to get wild. The senses may get restless, but the body should not be allowed to get impatient. Senses run after objects of desire but we should not crave them. By slow and gradual practice restlessness can be conquered. We should curb our senses properly according to the needs of the occasion. Beauty is the subject of sight, so we must beautiful object without feeling shy or being fearful. We should never entertain evil thoughts. By making the mind desires less and observing the beauty of God the senses will easily be controlled and reminding us of God even while enjoying objects. If our outer senses are not checked and mind gets attached to objects then our cycle of births and deaths will never come to an end. Discrimination helps control the mind and does not allow the senses to go astray thus giving us self-realization.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

Chapter 50

Preliminary

Victory be unto Sai, who is the mainstay of his Devotees. And our Sadguru. Oh Sai look favourably on us and bless us all.

The sandalwood trees grows on the Malay mountains and ward off heat. The clouds pour rain and thereby cool and refresh all. The flower bloom in spring and enables us to worship God. So the stories of Sai Baba give comfort and

solace to the readers. Both, those who tell and those who listen the stories of Baba are blessed.

It is a fact though we do a lot of worship we cannot attain spiritual goal without the grace of the Sadguru. The following story is the illustration of this statement.

Kakasaheb Dixit (1864-1926)

Kakasaheb Dixit was born in a Brahmin family in Vadnagara in the year 1864. His primary education was done in Khandwa, and secondary education in Nagpur. He came to Mumbai for higher studies at Wilson college and then at Elphinstone College. After graduation in 1883 he passed in LLB and solicitor examinations worked in a Govt. Firm and then started his own solicitors firm. After 1909 he became a great devotee of Baba. While he was staying in Lonavala he happened to meet his old friend Nanasaheb Chandorkar. Both spent time talking with each other. Kakasaheb described to Chandorkar while boarding a train in London he met with an accident. His foot slipped and was injured. He tried many remedies but gave him no relief. Nanasaheb advised him that if we wished to be pain free he must go to Sai Baba. He gave him all the information of Sai Baba including his dictum, "I draw to me my man from far off or even across the seven seas, like a sparrow with a string fastened to his feet." And also made him clear that if he was not Baba's man he would not be attracted to him. Kakasaheb was much pleased and told Nanasaheb that he would go to Baba and pray to him not to cure his leg, but his fickle mind and give him eternal bliss. After sometime Kakasaheb went to Ahmednagar and stayed with Sirdar Kakasaheb Mirikar for securing votes in the Mumbai Legislative Council. Mr. Balasaheb Mirikar son of Kakasaheb Mirikar had also come Ahmednagar in connection with horse-exhibition. After the elections Kakasaheb wanted to go to Shirdi and both the Mirikars father and son were thinking about a proper guide with whom he should be sent. In Shirdi Sai Baba was arranging things for his reception, in the meantime Shama got a telegram from his father-in-law that his wife had taken ill seriously and that he should come and see her with his wife.

Shama took Baba's permission and went there and saw his mother-in-law improving. Nanasaheb Panse and Appasaheb Gadre met Shama on their way to the exhibition and told him to go to Mirkar's house and meet Kakasaheb Dixit there and take him to Shirdi. The Mirikars were informed of Shama's arrival in the evening. Mirikars introduced Shama to Kakasaheb Dixit and they arranged both Shama and Kakasaheb to leave for Kopergoan by 10'0 clock night train. After all was settled a strange thing happened. Balasaheb Mirikar unveiled the portrait of Baba and showed it to Kakasaheb. He was surprised to see Sai Baba's portrait greeting him at this juncture. He was much moved and bowed before it. The portrait belonged to Megha. The glass was broken and was sent for repairs to Mirikars. The necessary repairs had been made and it was decided to return the portrait with Kakasaheb and Shama.

Before 10'0clock they reached the station and booked their tickets. When the train arrived they found the second class overcrowded and there was no room in the train. Fortunately the guard of the train turned out be Kakasaheb's acquaintance and put them in first class. They travelled comfortably and stopped at Kopergoan. Their joy knew no bounds when they saw Nanasaheb

Chandorkar who was also bound for Shirdi. Kakasaheb and Nanasaheb embraced each other and after taking a bath in the Godavari River went to Shirdi. After coming there and getting Baba's darshan Kakasaheb was overwelmed with joy and was in tears. Baba said to him that he was waiting for him and sent Shama ahead to receive him.

Kakasaheb passed many years in Baba's company He built a Wada in Shirdi which he made his permanent home. The experiences, he got from Baba were so many that it is not possible to relate them here.

Baba comforted Kakasaheb Dixit that he would secure a happy death. This came true. On 5th July 1926 while he was travelling 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 discomfort.

Shri Tambe Swami

The next story depicts how saints love each other with fraternal affection. Once Shri Tambe Swami encamped at Rajamahendri on the banks of the Godavari. He was a devotee of Lord Dttatreya. An advocate Mr. Pundalikroa of Nanaded came to see him with many friends. While they were talking they causally mentioned the name of Shirdi Sai Baba. Hearing Baba's name, the Swami joined hands with reverence and gave a coconut to Pundalikroa to offer it to his brother Sai and request him to give his blessings and love. He also added Swamis do not generally bow to others but in this case it is an exception. Mr. Pundalikroa agreed to the coconut and his message to Baba. The swami was right in calling Baba his brother, because just like Baba he also maintained a sacred fire day and night as Baba kept the Dhuni.

After one month Pundalikroa and others left for Shirdi with the coconut. And reached Manmad.

As they were thirsty they went to a rivulet to drink water. As water should not be drunk on an empty stomach they took some refreshments Chiva (flattened rice mixed with spice. The chiva tasted pungent so to soften it they broke a coconut and mixed the scrapings with it making it tasty and palatable. Nearing Pundalikroa remembered the coconut and was very sorry to learn that it was broken and consumed. He came to Shirdi and met Baba learned that Baba had already received a wireless message from Tambe Swami regarding the coconut. Baba himself asked Pundalikroa to give the coconut sent by his brother. He held Baba's feet, repented confessed his guilt and asked for Baba's pardon and offered to give another fruit as substitute. But Baba refused to accept it , saying the worth of that coconut was much more than an ordinary one and that it could not be replaced by another and also said that he need not worry about this matter anymore. It was on account of my wish that the coconut was entrusted to you and broken on the way. "Why should you take responsibility on your actions? Do not entertain the sense of doer ship in doing good and bad deeds, be entirely egoless in all matters and thus your spiritual progress will be rapid." What beautiful spiritual instructions Baba gave!

Balaram Dhurandhar (1878 to 1925)

Mr. Balaram Dhurander of Mumbai was an advocate of Mumbai High Court and also the principal of Government Law School. The entire Dhurander family was very religious. He was well-known for his services in the community. He studied the Gita and other religious scriptures and was a devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur. He came in contact with Sai Baba in 1912. Before the Dhurander brothers went to Shirdi Baba openly declared 'Today many of my Darbar people are coming. The Dhurander brothers were astonished to hear Baba's remarks from others as they did not mention about their arrival. Baba introduced the Dhurandars as his Darbar-people and said he was with them for sixty generations. All the brothers were very humble and were much moved by Baba's words. After taking meals and rest they again came back to the Masjid. Balaram sat near Baba massaging his legs. At that moment Baba was smoking the chillum, so offered Balaram to smoke it. Balaram who was not accustomed to smoking accepted the pipe and smoke with difficulty. This was the most auspicious moment for Balaram because his six years asthma was completely cured. But six years later he again got asthma, but this was precisely the time Baba took Mahasamadhi.

It was a Thursday and the Dhurander brothers had a good fortune on witnessing the Chavadi procession and the next morning the Kakad Arati.

Mr. Balaram wrote the life of Saint Tukaram in Marathi, but he did not survive to see it published. In 1928 by his brothers.

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

EPILOGUE

In the concluding chapter Hemadpant promised to give the index, giving the contents of all chapters in averse as given in the Marathi scriptures, but unfortunately the index was not found, therefore it was composed by a devotee Mr. B.V.Dev. Unfortunately Hemadpant did not survive to revise the manuscript of this chapter and make it ready for the press. When sent to the press Mr. Dev found it incomplete and unintelligible, but still had to be published. The main topics dealt with are given below:

Greatness Of Sadguru Sai

We bow ourselves and take refuge of Sai Samarth who is omnipresent and pervades in all creatures and for whom all devotees are alike and knows no honour or dishonour, like or dislike. By remembering and surrendering to him, he makes all our wishes come true and makes us attain the goal of life. The ocean of mundane existence is very hard to cross. It consists of attachments, bad thoughts, egoism, anger, hatred; doubts, hate and jealousy play here. Though the ocean is so terrible Sadguru Sai is the destroyer and Sai devotees have the least to fear. It is our faith that our Sadguru will safely take us across this ocean and free us from the cycle of life and death.

Prayer

Now we fall at Sai's feet and make the following prayer. Let our mind be free of desires and only concentrate of Sai Baba. Let the Satcharita be studied daily in every house, which will destroy all calamities and keep the devotees safe.

Fala-Shruti (Reward Of Study)

Sai Satcharita should be read after taking a bath in the Godavari River and the darshan of the Samadhi Mandir. Casually thinking of Sai's stories will make us interested in Spiritual life and when read with love destroys all our sins and free us from the cycles of birth and death. If you give Sai stories to others you will save them from future miseries. If you meditate on Sai your progress will be easy and your egoism will be destroyed. If you completely surrender to Sai with body, mind and soul you will free yourself from this mundane existence and attain self-realization.

If anyone reads the Satcharita daily with love and devotion or completes it within a week his calamities will disappear. If you read this Satcharita with reverence Sai will remove your ignorance and poverty and give you knowledge, wealth and prosperity. If you read a chapter daily you will get unbounded happiness.

The Satcharita should be specially read on Guru Purnima, Gokul Ashtami, Ram Navami and Dasara (Baba's Punyatithi).

By studying the Satcharita the diseased and the sick will get health, the poor wealth, the mean and afflicted prosperity and the mind will become steady. Dear devoted readers and listeners, I bow and make a special request to you to never forget Sai Baba whose stories you have read day by day. The more you read or listen to these stories the more encouragement we get from Sai. Both the author and the reader should co-operate with each other to make this work a total success.

Prasad Yachana

We close the Sai Satcharita with a prayer. May the readers and devotees surrender themselves wholeheartedly at the feet of Sai Baba? May they remember him always, and may they see Sai in all beings. Amen!!!!

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All

AARATI

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 desires. You remain absorbed in yourself, and show the Lord to the aspirants. As one feels intently for you, you give him experiences or realizations

accordingly. Oh kind hearted your power is such! Meditation on your name removes the fear of the world. Your method of word is really unfathomable as you always help the poor and the helpless. In this Kali age you – the all pervasive Datta, have incarnated as Sagun Brahma. Ward of the fear of this world of the devotees, who come to you every Thursday, so as to enable them to see the feet of the Lord. Oh God of Gods. I pray that, let my treasure be the service of Your Feet. Feed Madhav the composer of this Aarati) with happiness, as the cloud feeds the Chatak bird with pure water, and thus keep up your word. Amen!!!!

Bow to Sri Sai ----- Peace Be To All