



SHRI SAIBABA SANSTHAN TRUST, SHIRDI

सवका मालीक एक

श्रद्धा

सवुरी

ॐ श्रीसाईनाथाय नमः ॐ श्रीसाईनाथाय नमः

SHRISAILEELA - MAY-JUNE-2005

Contentment Essential for Life

Shree Dattatreya Sahasra Nama

In Sai's Proximity

Is Baba Living & Helping now

Shri Pant Maharaj as a Student

Saibhaktiprasarbhushan



In Sai's Proximity

— Mrs. Mugdha Diwadkar

Preamble

Shri Satchidanand Sadguru Sainath Maharaj is worshipped all over the world as a divine personality - by devotees belonging to different religions, castes and nationalities, speaking varied languages. This great eminent personage and angelic incarnation had amazing Godly powers and His life's accomplishments are vast. It is not possible for us mere mortals to take a review of the same.

Studies about Sai Baba point out that He was possibly born in Shake (Hindu year) 1760 (1838 English year).

From time to time, attempts have been made to find out the roots and past history of this divine personality. A few attempts yielded some information, while in majority of cases, people had to remain satisfied with mere guess-work. Several things had to be left unknown. Even today, the persons conducting research are still attempting to unearth the facts about the past life of Sai Baba.

It is felt, that one should respect the wishes of Sai Baba and let His past remain shrouded in mystery.

Instead, an attempt could be made to find out how He was perceived by the men and women living in His time and around Him. In this series of articles, an effort is made to trace information about these people who were fortunate enough to see Sai Baba, experience the shower of His blessings and teachings through miracles, love and affection.

Sai Baba was first sited under a Neem tree in Shirdi around the year 1854. At that time, He had just entered His youth. At the outset, His fair complexion, sharp features, tall body attracted many of the villagers to Him.

In the whole of Shirdi, it was mother of Nana and Bala Chopdar who first spotted Sai Baba sitting beneath the Neem tree. Like other villagers, this elderly woman was also curious about this young Boy.

This incident as narrated by her and mentioned in SHRI SAI-SAT-CHARITA is

"In the initial period, every one was amazed by the magnetic personality of Baba. Let it be day or night, harsh sunlight or heavy rains, Baba was always alone sitting in the open under the Neem tree. He rarely talked to anyone. Because of this, hardly any information was known about Him – Who was He ? Who were His parents ? Where from He came ? All these and similar other questions remained unanswered. And this deepened the mystery surrounding the Baba."

Villagers believed that sometimes the Spirit of God Khandoba possessed the bodies of a few devotees. Villagers, who were curious to know more about this Boy (Baba), asked questions to few such 'spirited' devotees. The God responded by saying 'Bring pick-axes and dig at such and such place. You will know the origins of this Boy'. As instructed by the God, the ground below the Neem tree was dug open. A layer of bricks was revealed. Underneath was a grinding stone. When it was moved away, below it was found to be a wooden seat in the shape of mouth of a cow. It was surrounded by prayer beads with light from oil lamp in each four corners shining brightly.

The villagers asked repeated probing questions about this to Baba. He replied in a jestful manner :- 'This is the place of My Guru ! It is a sacred place for Me. Preserve it in the state in which it is. Burn ood (incense) at this place on every Thursday and Friday. It will be beneficial to you all.' "

It was under this Neem tree that Baba performed *tapascharya* for 12 years. Due to this *sadhana* performed at such a young age, there was uniqueness in His behaviour. The villagers were now getting convinced that this was no ordinary human being.

Slowly the word about Baba's fame started spreading in and around Shirdi. People started forming quees to get the *darshan* of Baba. Prior to this, Baba's devotees were mainly the ordinary villagers from Shirdi – farmers, ladies, children, goldsmiths, tailors, carpenters and the like.

Several residents of Shirdi were getting convinced about the extra-ordinary personality of Baba. Chief amongst them were – Shreemant Ganpat Kote Patil, his wife Bayajabai, his son Tatya Kote Patil, Mhalsapati Sonar (goldsmith), Kashiram Shimpi (tailor), Appa Jagale, Appa Bhilla, Kashinath, Daji Kote Patil, Ganpatrao Patil Gayke, Waman Mankojirao Gondkar, Vitthal Gondkar, Dagdubhau Kalu Gayke, Bhagchand Marwadi, Nandram Shivram Marwadi, Kondajibhai Musalman, Balaji Bapuji Jagtap, Appaji Kote Patil (father of Bayaji Kote Patil), Santaji Bhivsan Shelke Patil, Gabaji Sutar (carpenter), Bappaji Kulkarni, Salubai Shelke and others.

However, the several people were still opposed to Baba particularly belong to *Teli*, *Wani*, *Bhat-Bhikshuk* communities and having orthodox set of mind. Outwardly, Baba's behaviour was eccentric and due to this those opposed to Him called Him a 'Mad Fakir.' Over the passage of time, as they experienced the truth themselves, they also realized the greatness of Baba.

Bayajabai



The first person to comprehend the divine nature of Baba's personality were Ganpatrao Kote Patil and his wife Bayajabai Kote Patil from Shirdi. By nature, this couple was extremely pious, helping and religious. They always accorded due respect to any virtuous persons visiting Shirdi – touched their feet and looked after their needs.

This Boy, Who had renounced the worldly pleasures and had a radiating personality, was the subject of curiosity of the entire Shirdi village. It was but natural that the eyes of the Patil couple fell on the Boy and they were overcome with paternal feelings of love and affection for Him. Bayajabai felt that her fondness for the Boy was pulling her towards Him. Those were the days when a group of powerful villagers were very strongly opposed to Baba. Under such circumstances, this Kote Patil couple got devoted to Baba from His first *darshan* and it continued till their last breaths ! They loved Baba as their own son. When majority of the populace was dismissing Baba as a mere 'mad man', Bayajabai gave Him the warmth of her love and affection.

The detailed description of happenings, when the Kote Patil couple went to take Baba's *darshan* for the first time, have been described by Shri Pandurang B. Kavade in his book titled '*SHRI SAI MAHARAJ YANCHE CHARITRA*' (Life of Shri Sai Maharaj).

"As soon as Bayajabai came for His *darshan*, Maharaj immediately arose and stood up. He expectantly looked at Bayajabai like long lost calf looks at his mother. It was as if, in this birth, Baba was confirming their relation since their previous births. Some time lapsed in this state. The Maharaj spontaneously uttered 'Mami' (Aunty). This loving call and the child age of Maharaj, opened the floodgates of Bayajabai's heart. Her motherly instincts were aroused. Since the time of this incident till the time Bayajabai was alive, Maharaj looked upon her as a mother."

Shri Kavade further adds -

"It is only Maharaj Who knows as what Bayajabai appeared to Him during the first meeting ! Because till that time it was His vow to renounce the worldly relations between human beings and treat all the mankind with an equal and same view point. This vow was easily broken in case of Bayajabai. She imprisoned this great soul in the bonds of motherly love."

In Shri Kavade's opinion :-

"There were few apparent reasons because of which Baba made Shirdi His permanent residence. Chief among these reasons appears to be the love of Maharaj as a son for Bayajabai and her affection for Maharaj as a

'mother'."

Whatever it may be. But it is true that Baba had given Bayajabai the place of mother. No one else had the power to convince Baba against His wishes. Baba used to set aside His own pride and chit chatted with Bayajabai. He answered her questions very lovingly.

From the very beginning Bayajabai was regularly sending *bhakaris/rotis* to Baba. She used to trace Baba by going through the various routes of the forest. She used to feed Him with her own hands. During the life time of Bayajabai and even after her passing away, a single day did not pass without Baba eating *bhakari/roti* from the Kote Patil household. Similarly, Bayajabai did not have her meals till she had fed Baba. After her demise, her son continued the tradition.

Written proof of this has been provided by Bayajabai's son and Baba's favourite devotee Tatya Kote Patil. On 25th December 1915, he has written :-

"I am Tatya Ganpat Kote Patil, resident of Shirdi. On request I am furnishing the following information in the presence of Diwan Bahadur Shri Sai Abad Sansthan.

I have been staying at Shirdi. Since my birth, I have been brought up by Shri Samartha Sai Baba. My both parents have been always in the service of Shri Samartha. We have always treated Shri Samartha as an elderly person from our household and as our family deity. Till some 12 years ago, Shri Samartha did not accept alms /*dakshina* from anyone. He used to manage His livelihood by asking for *bhiksha* at certain houses only.

Till I was a small child, whenever needed, my parents used to provide for His needs. Since the time I attained manhood, I have been doing so after my father's demise. As the days passed, the *sadhana* of Shri became more intense. The number of devotees also increased substantially. From time to time, I have been financing the required expenditure. I have been incurring the expenditure assuming that I am the son of Shri Samartha. Day by day the expenses have been rising and now they have increased to daily about Rs. 75 to Rs. 125. I have been meeting all this expenditure mainly from the *dakshina* being received by Shri and balance from my own assets. My present state is hundred times better than the state in which I was earlier. This is due to Shri Samartha's blessings."

At the end of this statement, the signature of Late Tatya Kote Patil appears and is witnessed by prominent persons of Shirdi such as Ramchandra Dada Kote Patil, Bayajabai Appaji Kote, Pandurang Bhikaji Shelke and Sakhararam Mahadu Kote Patil. Further, it is stated that at this event Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, Dr. Pillay, Chinchanikar and others were respected devotees of Baba were also present.

Later on, after Baba settled down in the *Masjid*, He started going out for *bhiksha* / alms. On some days, He used to go 4-5 times to Bayajabai for *bhiksha*. However, Bayajabai never sent Him back empty handed. On the contrary, Bayajabai used to invite Him inside her home. Very rarely Baba entered their home. Bayajabai always coaxed Him to have His meals in her house. On such occasions, Rambhabai (Tatyaba's wife and Bayajabai's daughter-in-law) served the food. She stood in a corner and listened to their conversation between Baba and Bayajabai. In this regard, Rambhabai states -

"Their conversation was full of love and affection - as if it is a conversation between a mother and her son. Before starting the meals, Baba used to inquire whether they have prepared any non-vegetarian food. Because, for about 40 years, He had not even touched non-vegetarian food. Bayajabai also used to invite Baba for meals only when she had prepared only vegetarian food. Baba used to have *bhakari*, *pithale*, onions, chillies, pickles etc. He did not have any other item even if coaxed by Bayajabai. On some occasions, He used to have little milk.

Bayajabai was curious about Baba's earlier years. She used to ask several questions about it. But Baba did not give any clue about the matter. Bayajabai used to repeatedly insist 'Bring the members of Your family at least once. Or give us their whereabouts and we will bring them.' But Baba did not make even a passing mention of region, caste, parents or acquaintances. If asked 'Where from did you come ?' His answer was 'From far-far away !' I have heard this type of conversation between the two on several occasions."

Rambhabai further adds -

"Even after Shri Baba took *Samadhi*, every morning and evening, the *naivedya* of *bhakari* is sent from our home. Even on auspicious days it is *naivedya* of *bhakari* only. Baba never left it untouched. He at least tasted some portion of it."

Even today, no one from Bayajabai's household touches any food, till *naivedya* is first offered to Baba.

As her end came nearer, Bayajabai became bed-ridden. At that time, on one or two occasions, Baba came to their house and gave some advice.

At the time of her death, Bayajabai was around 75 years of age. Her funeral procession was progressing by the usual rout. At that time, Baba sent a message, saying that it should be taken to *Dwarkamai*. As the procession was passing, Baba stood on the foundation of *Dwarkamai* and lamented in resonant voice..... "Oh ! My Kote's mother is going away. My aunt has gone."

The entire village was shaken up by this vibrant cry.

Several generations of Bayajabai's family were rich. Therefore, Baba asked them to perform the rites of 13th day on a grand scale. Thousands of poor people were given food on that day.

Baba had asked His ardent devotee Megha to perform *Gayatri - Purascharan*. On 3rd January 1912, the rites were completed and meals were served to some Brahmins. On the same day evening, Ganpatrao Kote Patil (husband of Bayajabai and father of Tatyā) passed away.

– *Translated from original Marathi*

into English by Sudhir



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IS BABA LIVING AND HELPING NOW ?

DEVOTEES EXPERIENCES AFTER BABA'S MAHASAMADHI ON 15TH OCTOBER, 1918 FROM BOOK ENTITLED 'AMBROSIA IN SHIRDI' WRITTEN BY SHRI RAMALINGAM SWAMI, INSPIRED BY SHRI SIVANESAN SWAMIJI OF SHIRDI

(Contd. from March-April, 2005 issue)

78. BABA RECOVERED THE REMAINING AMOUNT OF RS. 50/- PROMISED BY SHRI THAKKAR OF MUMBAI.....

Once, a devotee by the name of Thakkar of Mumbai, prayed and promised to Baba that if his troubles were averted by Baba, he would pay Rs. 55/- to Baba.

Accordingly, his prayers were answered and his troubles were averted. He went to Shirdi, took *darshan* of Baba's *Samadhi* in the *Samadhi Mandir* and offered only Rs. 5/- in Baba's *hundi* (box), instead of Rs. 55/- as promised by him. He then returned to Mumbai.

While climbing the steps of his house in Mumbai, Baba reminded him in an invisible threatening voice to pay the remaining amount of Rs 50/-. He realised, he would not be able to deceive Baba. He went to Shirdi once again and offered Rs. 50/- in the *hundi* and returned to Mumbai after duly apologising to Baba.

79. BABA CURED THE SWOLLEN LEG OF SMT. AHALYA KRISHNAJI UPARKAR, MUMBAI.....

In August 1963, Smt. Ahalyabai was struck by a nail in her leg and it bled. She left it uncared for, as there was no pain. On 24th August 1963, she suffered from fever as the wound turned septic.

Her sons requested her to take treatment from a doctor; but she did not agree.

After this, Baba manifested as a stranger and promised her medicine for her leg. In front of her house was a military depot. He went inside the depot and with their permission got the medicine and asked her to apply on the afflicted part. She did as told. No sooner was the medicine applied, the swelling lessened and the pain also decreased.

One night, in her dream, a nurse came and injected her. On another night Baba appeared in her dream and told her that a hole would be made in the affected part and then the wound would heal and the leg would become normal with no pain.

One day while she was sleeping, a rat came and broadened the wound with a big hole, thereby letting all the pus and worms flow out. She awakened her son and showed him how Baba had managed to cure her

leg. After some days her leg was completely cured by applying Baba's *udi*.

80. BABA CURED THE PARALYSIS OF SHRI PARSHURAM KRISHNA GORE, JAMSHEDPUR.....

Shri Parshuram Krishna Gore was serving at the Tata factory in Jamshedpur. On 9th July, 1966, he had a paralytic attack in which one side was paralysed, all of a sudden while returning home in the evening. The doctor tested him and directed him to be admitted to the hospital the next morning.

In the morning, in addition to his paralysis he suffered from a mental disorder. He was admitted to the factory hospital. He suffered much during the first two days of his admission. At that time, the members in his house prayed to Baba and promised they would send Rs. 10/- to the Shirdi Sansthan if he was cured immediately. Twenty days after admission he was sent home without any improvement.

He was given treatment in his house and improved with the grace of Baba. They sent Rs. 5.50/- to Baba's Sansthan instead of Rs. 10/- as per their vow. The Sansthan sent a book of Das Ganu's four *adhyayas* on Sai Baba; but Baba's *udi* was not received.

However, after full improvement, he went to work, once a month, thrice in three months. Each time the factory doctor declared him unfit.

They seriously thought over this and remembering their fault sent Rs. 10/- to Baba's Sansthan.

On 24.11.1966, Baba, in the body of an old man came begging at his threshold. His daughter was cleaning rice; but she forgot to bow in her ignorance. However, her mother gave 2 n.p. to Him. After receiving the same, He told her, "Your husband will be alright." On 25.11.1966 (the very next day) Shri Parshuram again went to the factory. This time the doctor declared him fit for work.

Is this not a *leela* of Shri Sai Baba ?

81. BABA RETAINED HIS ABHISHEK TIRTHAM IN A TIN WITH A HOLE AT THE BOTTOM, FOR DAYS TOGETHER. AN ESTEEMED JUDICIAL OFFICER WROTE TO HIS HOLINESS B. V. NARASIMHASWAMY, FOUNDER PRESIDENT OF ALL INDIA SAI SAMAJ, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI ON 25-2-1940.....

My wife is better and I trust it is due to Shri Baba's grace. You will be surprised to hear the following incident. You will remember that when you were here, you wrote to the Sansthan to send me a tin of *Abhishek Tirtham* for the use of my wife. It was duly received within a few days after you left and a portion of it was used everyday for pouring on my wife's head. After some time this was stopped. But the tin containing *Abhishek Tirtham* was kept on the table for a number of months. Last month it was removed to the *almirah* and kept there.

Yesterday, when my second daughter, thinking that it was a tin of oil, took it and found something trickling out. When she turned it, she found a hole big enough for the little finger to pass and some quantity of water came out. She then poured the entire contents into a vessel. It was surprising that the tin which was nearly 3/4 full of *Tirtham* could have retained water intact all these days though there was a big hole at the bottom. Surprisingly,

the water was good and clear without any kind of smell and as tasty as it was originally. It created a good impression on the children and I had the entire contents poured onto my wife's head this morning. I am writing this after I came to know about it.

Evidently, the incident about the *Tirtham* is to infuse faith. Otherwise I fail to see why there could have been a hole at the bottom of the tin which was received intact and nobody interfered with it. It was merely kept on a marble table for some time and then in a wooden *almirah*.

– Jyoti Ranjan

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PANCHAMUKHI SADGURU

SHRI PANT MAHARAJ

AS A STUDENT

In Balekundri there was no school. Datta at the age of 8 years had to go to Daddi for primary education. Thread ceremony of Datta was done at this time only. The primary education at Daddi was in Kannada medium in the small school. There was impact of *Das Sahitya* and *Sampradaya* influenced by Kannada language on the young mind of Datta could be experienced. At home His maternal uncle Shripadpantmama, with whatever Marathi language he knew, read, slowly tried to narrate the important sequences and stories from Ramayan and Mahabharat. Shripadpantmama many times read Harivijay, Bhaktivijay, Jnaneswari texts and explained to the ardent Datta.

Along with knowledge from the epics Datta had opportunity to know the culture of a big household, the dignified manners, the mode of living in righteous way. The environment in Shripadpantmama's household moulded Datta to learn fundamentals of ordained life.

At this tender age, Shri Gurucharitra - Shri Dattabhakti, *aradhana*, *bhajan* and *pooja* with ritual worship - all firmly rooted in the mind of Datta. Many times Shripadpantmama, narrated the incidents stressing the basic points. The valour of Shri Ram, the *Karmayoga* - the doctrine of Shri Krishna, along with lucid *shloka* from Jnaneswari toned Datta with divinity. His father Sri Ramachandrapant and grandfather Shri Balakrishnapant used to bring books like Gurucharitra, Dattamahatmya which made Datta to know Datta *Sampradaya*. Shripadmama regularly narrated the teachings and life of Shripadvallabha, Shri Narasinha Saraswati - the basics of selfless love, *seva*, the essence of brotherhood - which all in a way carried Datta safely on the right path at this stage of a student's life only.

On weekly holidays Datta along with his classmates and neighbours used to move in the nearby forest Nandikatti and play, *tipri*, *hututu*. Datta was not just a bookworm. He played almost all the games in style and with enthusiasm. He, a born leader, could gather His friends and often narrate the chivalry of Shri Ram, the sharp intellectual acts of Shri Krishna, and the devotion and dedication of noble saints and seers. He told them, they listened. The years from 1864 to 1872 were spent so pleasantly in Daddi under loving care of Bahinamavashi, Sundermavashi and Godamavashi.

In the years He stayed in Daddi an incident worth to be noted is this. While playing in the nearby forest, some of His friends came running and took Datta to the small river bank where one lady was staring at the water and was crying. On enquiring the lady told that her husband had drowned in the river while taking bath. Datta stared at the water and told that lady, "Your husband is alive and will return after 8 days." As He forecasted, after 8 days that lady's husband came back alive and told his wife, "One young Boy of 12 years came to my rescue when I was drowning and saved my life." When that man saw Datta he immediately said, "This is the same Boy who came to my rescue and lifted me from the water." This incident conveys the spiritual content in Datta exhibited at that tender age.

For His secondary education in English He had to move to Belgaum. In the year 1872 Datta enrolled His name in London Mission School at Belgaum. His father Shri Ramachandrapant made temporary arrangement of a small room for Datta to stay. At the starting His father used to help Him financially; but due to some problems His father could not help Him further. But Datta did not lose His courage. He decided - come what may - I will work hard, I will study and will complete My matriculation. He had to cook, wash utensils, give tuitions to manage Himself in Belgaum. Datta was lucky to have guidance from a very able teacher Mr. R. G. Khot. At this time Datta passed 1st standard and was in 2nd standard.

Mr. R. G. Khot could readily make out a good and brilliant student in Datta. He liked Datta. Datta respected the noble teacher and used to help him in daily routine at his home as he was bachelor. Khot teacher took special personal interest in Datta and taught Him a lot of literature and many specific things from English language. He taught and Datta learnt. The blessed stage of *Guru Shishya Sampradaya* in full swing continued.

One basic change in the life of Datta when He started learning English language. At that time the impact of English language on the mind of people was very much. The British rule and adequate patronage for the English language by the Government made it more agreeable to people. Khot teacher taught Datta English language, not only the grammar but also

the beauty and worth of English language. By and large Datta read many excellent works of W. Shakespeare and Milton - the great literary geniuses.

Datta's mind basically accepted and respected Christ, Christianity - the brotherhood and compassion attitude towards all, irrespective of cast, creed or social status of the people. Datta being a good student could complete home-work and study. He could guide and help His class-mates. He being a born leader could gather the class-mates and teach them. He could get a wider opening to express Himself. Knowingly or unknowingly all this lead to the making up of a ideal teacher of future.

Datta was good as a excellent student in the school and favourite disciple to Khot teacher and a guide, a companion to His fellow mates. Engaged Himself after the school hours to solve the difficulties of His classmates and giving tuitions to few to earn as a honest means of livlihood. In the year 1874 the constant coaching of Khot teacher continued and Datta passed 2nd, 3rd standards and was promoted to 4th standard in the same year.

In the year 1875 the golden year in the life of Datta - the realisation of truth, grace of the Supreme - all happened suddenly. He met the great perceptor Shri Balmukunda by a very strange and memorable incident.

Prior to 1875 Datta's cousin Ganapatrao Marihaalkar had become an ardent devotee of Shri Balmukund Avadhoot. He praised often Balappa - citing certain incidents. Datta never liked it. Datta did call Balappa lunatic, hypocratic and ascetic. The repeated appreciation of Balappa by Ganu did not impress Him at all. Once Ganu showed the collection of poems of Balappa and Datta tore off the pages and in anger broke the *Ektari* too. Further He wrote a letter cautioning Ganu and advised him not to get carried away by such persons but to control himself. Ganu did not dare to show the letter to Balappa when he was asked by him. But Balappa insisted and was forced to read out the letter. Balappa listened and said, "The one who has written this will not survive." Ganu in deep agony pleaded, "Guruvara, please do not curse Him as He is my cousin." Balappa smilingly said, "Are what I meant is 'I' of Him the ego, self pride won't be there anymore. He is my favourite disciple. I am waiting for Him only all these years." This was somewhere in January 1875. In May or June approximately a letter from Ganu and message from Balappa made Datta unstable. Prior to this for few months Datta suffered from acute stomach pain and was not all that well for a quite a long time. The *vibhuti* and *teertha* sent by Balappa and direction to do *namasmarana*, really eased the pain and in a short time He felt better and was ultimately cured.

The uneasiness haunted day in and day out and all the time He felt overwhelming urge to see the lunatic, mad person Balappa. Unknowingly a deep adherence and devotion towards Balappa started taking shape in Him. Becoming well Datta decided to see Balappa. So He went to Virupaksha Girmaji at Kardeguddi. In His mind there was a constant tumult questioning Him repeatedly, "What a way You abused ? What will happen now ? Will he get very angry ? Will he allow Me to see him ? Will he see Me ? Will he pardon Me ?" Datta was too much worried. But the noble soul overlooked and with good intension and compassion sent *vibhuti*, *teertha* and a direction to do *namasmarana* and stood by Datta. Datta felt shaky to ask forgiveness from him. Balappa Himself came to see Datta. Datta bit embarrassed and feeling defident and with fear hid Himself in the stable covering Himself with dry grass. Balappa reaching Him lovingly said, "Oh ! My eternal Child, my Son, enough now. Come out. Get up. I am waiting for You for a very very long time." Balappa holding Datta close to him in deep embrace asked, "Why are You getting scared or afraid of coming to me, my divine Child ?" In that dismay Datta fell at the feet of Balappa. At that very moment all His fear, doubts, haunting thoughts cleared and with no debate or enquiry or incisive anxious logical questions - He submitted Himself to Balappa.

The Guru met the disciple and Shishya met His Guru - a spiritual, divine union and on *Guru Dwadashi Ashvin* month. In 1875, in a graceful way secretly Balappa preached and blessed Datta imparting eternal from time immemorial knowledge of Avadhoot *Sampradaya* and gave *diksha*.

In verse no. 2725 Pant says - "Brahmananda Paramadvaita Shuddha Buddha Sadguru."

In adoration Pant has said - "Any other thing you want - you may get some or other time but to get *Sadguru* is not easy - until it is the will of the Supreme - one will not get if you place the grace of *Sadguru darshan* in one pan of the balance and whole of cosmos or universe in the other pan - the pan of *Sadguru darshan* does not move a bit. *Sadguru darshan* is a blessed event or a day in the endless *yuga* (era) - many life's sacred gift. A *uttarayana* of the sun and the opening of the gate of heaven and liberation or *mukti*. It is an wonderful amalgamation of all sanctity of pilgrimage, all *sadhana*, all rituals, all *yajna* and *upasana*. In a moment only *Sadguru yoga* (*Sadguru* entity) becomes fruitful." In verse no. 986 *Sampradaya Sadgurucha ! bahu paramparecha !* (*Sadguru* tradition is ancient).

This event ultimately changed and transformed Datta. After *Sadguru - anugraha* (blessing) His life style changed. Datta was hardly 20 years old and was in 5th standard. Balappa had strictly instructed not to leave education under any circumstances. "Let it be all on me. I will be at Your call. I will be always with You." Balavadvoota frequently visited Belgaum and many others Bhagoji Kopp, Gumaste, Venkatesh, Parshuram became disciples of Balappa. Balappa did bless them and showed the ultimate path of devotion. During holidays Balappa as a practice took Datta to Deshnoor and Kardeguddi and taught Him *Yoga sadhana*, *Guru bhakti*, the fundamentals of Avadhoot *Sampradaya*, Advait philosophy and the solemn truth. "Visualise me everywhere" - "Sarvatra mama pashya". He even imparted Sankhya and Taraka doctrines to young Datta.

In the year 1876-77 the severe famine really worsened the family set up and goings at Balekundri. It was difficult for them to help Datta - as they had the responsibility of maintaining the farmers and other house-hold servants. At that time Datta got help from Ramachandra Sunthankar and advocate Athavale. Datta managed well, giving tuitions and maintaining Himself, adjusting to the calamities. In 1877 Datta passed public service examination which pleased Balappa very much. In 1877 Balappa decided to go on pilgrimage to Shri Shailya, to see and worship his ardent Giri Mallikarjun Dev. While going Balappa placed his blessed hand on Datta's head and said, "I am blessing You the divine power of *Brahmaswaroopa* and I am giving you the complete rights of Avadhoot *Sampradaya*. You are the one to pursue and propagate the Avadhoot *Sampradaya* further. You will be the successor of mine."

In 1878 Datta took a teacher's job in a Marathi school with salary of Rs. 6 per month as He did not pass matriculation. In 1880 He appeared once again for matriculation examination and with complete concentration as well as hard work he passed matriculation. He decided not to go in for higher studies knowing the financial conditions of His family. Thus came the end of Datta's student's life.

– Naresh Dharwadkar



All of us know that the recitation of the *Ishta Devata*'s name, praying, doing *Arati* and paying tribute to the *Ishta Devata*, in correct and clear words, on fully understanding the meaning of the words, gives the desired results.

I hope that the devotees who read these books and adopt the right code of conduct will be immensely benefitted, as Madhavrao Deshpande and Nana Saheb Chandorkar were.

– Abstract from the 'Foreword to the Second Revised Edition'

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