

Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust, Shirdi



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Heaven walked on earth...

The Divine Role Of Shirdi Sai Baba

The divine role of Sai Baba of Shirdi through His physical presence covered a period of about 64 years between 1854, when He made His first appearance in Shirdi, and 1918 when He left His body. However, His sixty years of stay at Shirdi on His second appearance between 1858 and 1918 manifested the depth and expansiveness of His unique role. India was in a cross - road of cultural and religious mix. Religious and cultural intolerance were on a rampant growth. It could not have been possible for any one to bring about harmony among the divergent religious, cultural groups in such a situation. It was only a God in human form who could accomplish the task of bringing unity between the different religious and social groups. Sai Baba was really the God Who descended on earth, and had large number of Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Parsee, and Muslim devotees spread all over the world. All were treated by Him alike. Under His cover, both the Hindus and Muslims happily took part in each others religious festivals. He had introduced the tradition of group worship, group prayer and group dinning for all and would share His '*chillum*' (tobacco pipe) with all. He even showed highest compassion for animals and birds, and encouraged His devotees to feed and take care of them.

Sai Baba founded no religion or sect, developed no trademark, started no movement, initiated not a single disciple, and left behind no apostles. He simply practiced and preached humanism and universal brotherhood, and established the superiority of love and compassion above egoism. He taught simplicity of livelihood and excellence of human virtue reflected in day to day conduct. Significantly, the Shirdi phenomenon defies easy explanation. It perhaps owes itself to the will of Baba Himself, Who is considered an *Avatar* of no less than the Almighty.

Today, the mundane world is looking ahead for a magical solution to its problems of cultural, racial, national and religious differentiation. All intellectual exercises to bring about peace in the world and happiness to mankind have failed for these efforts are not based on humanism, universalism and love as taught by Sai Baba. With His captivating teachings He rules the heart of millions of His devotees, whose number is ever growing with each passing day. The ever growing number of Sai temples and devotees of Baba in India and abroad establishes the ever- increasing relevance of His preaching today. What Baba preached was actually quite simple. According to Him, real sorrow is the cycle of birth and death and the real happiness is liberation. He suggested :-

- Accept your lot cheerfully. If you acquire wealth, become humble the way a tree laden with fruit bows down. Money is a necessity, but don't get obsessed with it. Yet, don't be a miser, be generous.
- Perform your duty conscientiously and with detachment, not regarding yourself as the doer.
- Surrender the fruit of action to God, so that action does not bind you. It is ties of indebtedness from previous births, which bring human and other beings together.
- Give reins to the negative states (avariciousness, anger, hatred, pride, etc.) only as much as is essential to go through the *Karma* earmarked for this physical existence.
- To steady the mind, idol worship is a way, even though the idol is not God. If you do *Pooja* with devotion and emotion, you can concentrate better.

• Herculean effort is necessary for God-realization. There are four elements in *Sadhana* : Discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral : that *Brahman* alone is true, the world is not. Next, renouncing all desire about this life or the thereafter. The third is to inculcate these qualities : control of the mind, bearing without anguish the fated pain and sorrow, remaining ensnared by *Maya*, knowing that money, wife, children and relatives are all ephemeral. The fourth is an intense desire for liberation.

Though Sai as a human embodiment is gone, His spirit remains. Although His body cannot be seen, yet the magnetic pull of His Divine Soul is felt by all those who merely think of Him and particularly, those who visit His *Samadhi* (Tomb) at Shirdi. Baba had promised that whosoever would put his feet on the soil of Shirdi, his miseries would end.

All devotees of Baba find His promise come true, even after He left His mortal coil. Baba used to call His devotees as children; and like the true father, kept them busy day-in and day-out for their temporal as well as spiritual upliftment. In today's world His children, torn asunder by religious, social and sectarian strife, should run to Him to experience that love which can only unite them. The lesson has been preached Him. It is for us to practice to make the world a paradise to live.

– Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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Sadguru Sai Baba's Boundless Glory

Food preparation, *Handi* and

Annadaan

Baba considered *Annadaan* (donating food) as the holiest of the holy deeds. He followed the practice Himself and set an example for others. He Himself cooked food, gave *Fatiya* to each item of the food at the hands of a *Maulavi* and distributed the food with His own hands after performing *Fatiya* saying it was *Guruprasad*.

Baba had in His store only two *Handis* (large cooking vessels made of copper) – one sufficient for 50 and another for 100 people. Baba used the same *Handis* for cooking food for Hindus as well as Muslims.

In *Adhyay* 38 of Shri Sai Sat Charita, there is a long list of various dishes that were cooked by Baba. He lit an earthen stove and cooked *Mutton*, *Khichdi* or *Mithe Chawal* (sweet rice). He also cooked Hindu dishes. He Himself ground grains of *Daal* (pulses), wheat and *Jondhalas* (jowar). He prepared *Bhakris* from the flour. He soaked *Daal* in water, ground it, added condiments and made '*Watli Daal*'. He kneaded balls of *Kanik* (wheat flour) and made very wide *Polis* (bread). He even fermented *Ambil* in the *Handis*.

Those who ate meat were served non-vegetarian food. But, He never forced others to do so. However, Baba did make attempts to see whether the vegetarians were steadfast at staying away from meat.

Tatya Patil has noted down in his experience that, "During His first 40 years in Shirdi, Baba never ate meat." However, in the later period, it is observed that Baba broke this rule – at least to some extent. May be it was in an attempt to bring Hindus and Muslims together or to keep His own religion a secret? Baba always preached, "Don't abstain from food. But, be regular in your habits." He ate all the food articles brought by Hindu devotees with relish.

Baba helped several Muslims to progress in their *Adhyatmik* journey. Several *Rohilas* came to Him and – under His umbrage – stayed in Shirdi. Baba served the food to them. This has been noted in Shri Sai Sat Charita as well as in Diary of Shri Khaparde.

Moulu/Qauwwali/Fatya

Programs of *Moulu* and *Qauwwali* were performed before Baba.

He Himself recited *Fatiya* or asked others to do so. Bayaji Kote writes in this regard that, "Only on Saturdays Baba gave *Fatya* at His hands."



Atithe Poojan

In the Hindu religion, substantial importance is accorded to *Atithe Poojan* (worship of guests) and Hindus believe that the God comes in the guise of guests. Baba adhered to this belief by practicing it Himself. He gave great respect to Bade Baba - a well-known and learned Muslim named Bade Baba.

Bade Baba had come and stayed with Baba for several years. He was given a place to sit on the right hand of Sai Baba. Baba took *Chillum* only after Bade Baba had first smoked it. Similarly, Sai Baba also commenced having food only after Bade Baba commenced doing so.

Ultimately – unanswered !

Abdul Baba and Imambhai Chhotekhan have stated in their experiences that Sai Baba performed *Namaaz* and also taught *Quran*.

On the other hand, in his article titled ‘Baba – Hindu or Muslim’, Balasaheb Deo states...

“Baba mostly spoke Marathi language. Very rarely or on special occasions He spoke *Yavani* (Muslim) language. However, His *Yavani* was not the pure *Yavani*. He treated both Hindu and Muslim religions as equal. Therefore, outwardly there were some features in His behaviour which appeared to be similar to *Yavani*. Due to this, the question, whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim, has become a riddle to even researchers and scholars. However, from the *Hindu Lakshans* stated above, there should be no objection to deduce that He was a Hindu.”

He further adds :-

“Baba never taught *Quran* to any Muslim. He never observed *Namaaz*. He knew Sanskrit very well. He taught *Bhagvad Geeta* to Nanasaheb Chandorkar very expertly and accurately. I feel only this fact is sufficient to prove that Baba was a Hindu.”

Of course, it appears that Balasaheb Deo has averred that “Baba is a Hindu” – though it is only outwardly so. But, in the same article he writes :-

“I fully believe the facts narrated by Nanasaheb (Chandorkar). I have no preconceived notions in doing so. I am also not being adamant in the matter. I have placed before the kind-hearted devotees, the facts that I know. Whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim, He remains equally worthy of worship. Even if He was a Hindu, the Muslim devotees need not rue. On the other hand, if He was a Hindu, then His Muslim devotees need not get disheartened. And, in reality, a true devotee – whether Hindu or Muslim – does not feel sad with such issues.”

It would be worthwhile to consider the opinions of other prominent devotees in this regard.

Justice Meghashyam Bhagwant Rege : “Muslim devotees considered Baba to be *Paigambar* and worshipped Him considerably.”

Prof. Ganpatrao Narke : “Baba is not a mere *Satpurush*; but the God Himself. I am positively convinced that He is the *Ishwar* of my heart. He is *Sarvadnyani*, *Sarvasaakshi* and makes event happen as per His will.”

Baba talked about His deeds not only in *Bhulok* but also in other worlds. In His talks there are references to the long journeys He has undertaken in invisible form. Sometimes He also talked about experiences after death. One used to get convinced about His ‘*Nirantar Astitva*’ from His ‘*Vishwa-sanchar*’ in invisible form and His knowledge about the various events and His power to control the events. I have many times heard His utterances, ‘Where are you ? Where am I ? Where is this world ?’ On some occasions He touched His body and said, ‘This is my home; but I am not there. My *Masjid Guru* has taken me far and away.’ Even when He was in His mortal body, His powers were not limited to the body or by the body.

His utterances were not confined by any rigid frame.

Baba never declared that He belonged to any particular religion, caste or *Panth*. However, from His speech and action, it was clear that He had very close relations with the Hindu religion.

I have heard Him saying, ‘My *Guru* is a *Brahmin*. I shivered with fear before my *Guru*.’

He always said, ‘My *Gharane* (family tree) is different.’ ‘Every dog, cat, pig is my form.’

In our eyes, though Baba was a God, certain limits had been definitely imposed on Him due to His adopting a mortal body.”

Rao Bahaddur Dhumal : To understand “Who is Baba ?” one must experience Him.

The District Magistrate, who was British, asked me, “How does your Sai Baba appear to be ? Is He a Hindu or a Muslim ? What are His teachings to you ?” I replied, “Sai Baba is neither Hindu nor Muslim; He is surpasses all religions. Those who want to understand His teachings, must come themselves to Shirdi and experience His teachings.”

Once, a discussion was going on about God. Sai Baba uttered, “What is God ? He is in my pocket.”

Mainatai Kuvalekar (nee Mainatai Chandorkar) : “I went to Him for the first time in 1900. At that time He appeared to be grey haired and about 50 years old. Surprisingly He appeared same even in 1918.”

Balasaheb Deo : Keeping aside his earlier steadfast opinion in above article, he adds in the same article,

“Ultimately, the basic principle is only one ! The ocean accommodates countless water sources – from large rivers to tiny brooks. In Baba, a similar conversion of different castes and religions must have taken place. However, how can this towering idea enter into the minds of mere mortals ?”

Baba really belongs to all religions – Muslim, Hindu, Parsi, Christian. And, that is the only truth !

Saisha

– Translated from original Marathi into

English by **Sudhir**

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E x p e r i e n c e s o f S a i M a h a r a j

Continuing the experiences of Shri Vinayak Sitaram Mulherkar...

Once, I went to Shirdi via Pandharpur, after duly taking *Darshan* of Lord Pandurang. There was a sweetmeat shop near the *Mahadwar* at Pandharpur. I asked the shopkeeper to give me one and quarter seer of the best *Pedhas* he had as I had to go for Sai's *Darshan* in Shirdi. He really gave me the best.

The next day, when I reached Shirdi for Baba's *Darshan* and offered the *Pedhas*, Baba said, "These *Pedhas* are from Pandharpur aren't they ? You have brought them for me ?" I replied, "Yes Baba, I have brought them for You. Only if You accept them shall I be gratified." "Yes, you brought them for me," Baba said and right away took a couple of *Pedhas*. He gave back the rest saying, "Shri Pandurang's *Prasad*." The very fact that He called them *Pedhas* from Pandharpur underlines the fact that Baba was omniscient and fulfilled His devotees' wishes without doubt. Thoughts of this benevolent figure increased my devotion day by day.

Every time I went to Shirdi for Baba's *Darshan*, another such miracle would take place. I went to Shirdi every 2-4 months; but there was never any hitch in my reaching there.

Once, I left for Shirdi along with the Late Hon. Nanasaheb Chandorkar. We alighted at Kopargaon and bathed in the Godavari. We took tea made by Nanasaheb's *Brahmin* there. Nanasaheb had taken five seers of milk with him and there were many other pilgrims from Mumbai who had come there. They too bathed in the Godavari and were arranging for tea for their families.

When Nanasaheb started distributing the milk to the children, the women and children clamoured for the same and created a commotion. I was sitting in Nanasaheb's *Tonga* nearby, waiting to move as soon as Nanasaheb was seated. I told the people, "Do not trouble him. He is not an ordinary pilgrim. He is the district's Deputy Collector and a *Pucca* devotee of Shri Sai Baba."

Later, when we both reached Shirdi in the *Tonga*, it was time for the *Aarati*. After the *Aarati*, when we prostrated in front of Baba, He looked at me and said, "So Nana is a *Pucca* devotee and what are you - a *Kuchha* devotee ?" I was surprised and remembered my words to the pilgrims in Godavari. It clearly shows, how Baba gave the experience of His omniscience at every step. Besides He gave the benefit of His profound wisdom to His devotees, so that they shunned any sort of conceit. Just as *Sant* Namdev prayed to Lord Vishnu that His devotees should be devoid of pride, similarly Baba lovingly narrated stories to guide His devotees on the right path.

Till today, I am living my life in this *Sansar* experiencing the blessings of Shri Sai Baba. It is all happening as *Sant* Tukaram said, "Simply touching the feet of the saint, the seed of greed burns away. "We should place our heartfelt trust at the feet of the saint as per the following *Abhang* of *Sant* Tukaram -

"For the *Paras*, the hands and feet are both made of sandalwood. No part of the body is inferior to it.

For a lamp there is no darkness around or within. Sugar is sweet inside out.

Thus in a good person, Tuka says, you can find no flaws."

So be it. Please excuse me for this long letter. I hope you will publish it in your magazine and oblige.

Vinayak Sitaram Mulherkar

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Jyoti Ranjan Raut

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IS BABA LIVING AND HELPING NOW ?

– Compiled by **Jyoti Ranjan Raut**

Seema Verma (148/H-19, Sector 7, Rohini, New Delhi - 110 085.) :-

All of us in our family are staunch devotees of Baba. Over the years there have been umpteen incidents of Baba's grace; but I would like to particularly share one my mother experienced recently. I truly appreciate and earnestly thank my mother for her sincere devotion to Baba by following, what He preceehd. We all are benefitted by her prayers.

My mother regularly visits the Sai Baba temple in Noida twice daily. It was November 25th, 2004, the *Sthapana Divas* of Baba's statue. The festivities of the day began with a morning *Snan* with milk. My mother too wanted to offer a packet of milk for the occasion. Hence she requested our domestic help (who brings the milk everyday) to bring the milk a little early, so that she could reach the temple in time. Since the domestic help did not bring the milk on time, my mother left for the temple around 6.30 a.m., thinking she would be late if she waited any longer.

While walking, she was continuously praying to Baba, that her wish of offering milk be fulfilled. As she neared the temple, a car stopped beside her and a lady with a milk packet in her hand asked my mother to offer it to Sai Baba.

The car then sped off. My mother was too stunned to react. Her eyes were filled with tears. How Baba had fulfilled her wish ! How did that lady know that my mother was going to the Sai Baba temple ?

Baba once again proved that he who loves Him whole-heartedly gets response from Him at any time at any place. He is always by our side and will take any form to appear before the devout *Bhakta* and gratify him/her.



A Follower (Ahmedabad) :-

No one in this world can help you except God - Shri Sai Baba. Many a time, even friends, relatives, siblings or parents are helpless even though their intentions are good. At such a time, the only one who can give you solace is Shri Sai Baba. He will help you and surprise you by showing His miracles in different ways. What he has in mind could be different from what you have ever dreamed of; but it is something which is best for you. "Have PATIENCE & FAITH in me and stop thinking, analysing, calculating or planning. Just REMEMBER ME and I am there for you. "

I am an ordinary devotee of Shri Sai Baba, who remembers Him most in times of need. I am selfish enough to remember Him in difficult times and greedy enough to keep asking for favours. Sometimes He favours me and sometimes He delays to meet my demands; but still He listens to me.

I am a well-educated doctor and Sai Baba has helped me in my studies. I met with a major accident, in which I lost my sister, while I survived with severe injuries. Baba helped me to recover, cope and lead a normal life after that accident. I am unmarried and could have strayed from the right path or someone could have cheated me; but Baba has always helped and protected me.

May Baba give me physical, mental, emotional and financial strength to remember HIM always and PATIENCE in times of difficulties. He is always there to take care of me in this highly populated world. I say infinite *Namaskars* and thanks to this Great Mathematician of the world through this article.



Dr. Ushakar Jha (Sarisab Pahi, Madhubani-847 424, Bihar.) :-

Lord *Samarth Sadguru* Sainath saves His devotees who have '*Shraddha*' and '*Saburi*' from all types of miseries and even death. As a humble devotee of the Lord, I am narrating one such incident in my life.

In August 1997, with the blessings of the Lord, I got an opportunity to attend The International Eurasian Congress on Environment and Peace held in Giresum, Turkey. At the International Airport, Istanbul, I was in the lift, going to the toilet. It was midnight, and the place was very calm and peaceful. The other delegates were at a distance. Suddenly the light in the lift went off and it was stalled. For a second I lost all hope of survival. But, then I called Lord Sai for help and miraculously the light was restored and the lift also started moving. I feel, I was saved from death by Lord *Samarth* Sainath. It was a thrilling experience of the Great Sainath. My faith and devotion towards Lord Sainath became stronger and I visited His abode - SHIRDI to offer my thanks. This is Sai Baba – ready to save and help HIS devotees.

Devotees should visit SHIRDI often, if one wishes to get rid of this *SANSAR*.



Sunjay Raina (3/3, Vasant Vihar Enclave, Dehradun - 248 006, Uttaranchal.) :-

On Thursday, 19th August 2004, I was returning from the temple along with my mother.

I must mention that I visit the Sai Baba temple every Thursday, wherever I may be. Suddenly three school boys sped from the side and banged my scooter, resulting in my falling on the right side of the road and my mother on the left. Although

I had minor scratches on the hand, my mother had a rupture of the artery in the thigh area. She fell with the photograph of Baba and the *Prasad* in her hands – both intact. She is much better now and recovering fast.

In another incident, my elder brother's son was playing with his four and a half year old younger brother, when by accident the plastic stick with which he was playing went into his right eye. By the grace of Sai Baba, the doctor said that the stick had hurt his cornea, but the retina was unharmed and he was out of danger.

I would like to apprise the readers of Shri Sai Leela that Baba thus saves His devotees in difficult times through His myriad *Leelas*. qqq

G. Venu K. Gopal (6-119, Naidu Quarters, Gopalapatnam, Vishakhapatnam - 530 027, Andhra Pradesh.) :-

Once, while returning home, my wallet fell down in the bus. I was oblivious of it. An hour after I reached home I looked for my wallet in the trouser pocket; but it was not there. I searched everywhere; but could not find it. There were about Rs. 50/- and some visiting cards in the wallet, which were not significant. The only thing which was important to me was my two-wheeler driving licence, which I kept in my wallet.

I was very depressed and did not tell anyone at home, thinking that my parents would scold me for the next two-three days. So, I kept the matter to myself and did not speak to anyone. That evening I went to the temple as I thought only He could save me from all fears and calamities. I told this matter to the ONLY one Whom I trusted the most, my *Guru*, Sai Baba. I spoke to Him from my heart and asked Him to help and save me in this matter.

For two days there was no reply from Him. I felt depressed and went to my uncle's house to continue with my job as a sales marketing executive. On the third day, I got a call from my mother, inquiring, whether I had lost my wallet. I said, "Yes". It seems a student from a nearby college had returned the wallet. I was unaware that I had kept my address and telephone number in the wallet. To my surprise, nothing was missing from it. Not even a single rupee, neither the cards, nor the licence.

I was very thankful to the student who honestly returned my wallet. He had personally come to my house to return it. He asked my mother to check the contents of the wallet to see if anything was missing. It was a complete shock to my mother who knew nothing about the missing wallet.

This incident happened in 2001.

Another incident took place in February 2006. In the early hours of the 8th of February, around 3 a.m., I was working in a call centre and had a class in the morning. It was a training session. Just before the break, I had kept my mobile in the silent mode. Since most of my friends worked in call centres, they usually gave me missed calls. I wanted to check if I had received any. Suddenly, to my surprise, I could not move my eyes from my mobile. What I saw was a small faded picture of Sai (1/4 size of wall paper). It flashed on my mobile for 2-3 minutes continuously. I felt very happy at that moment and throughout the day as well.

I wanted to share this experience with my friends; but thought, they wouldn't believe it and so, kept it to myself. I did not utter a word to anyone in the class-room; but I want to share this with you, dear readers of Shri Sai Leela.

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In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

BHAUSAHEB DHUMAL

Shri Sakharam Balwant Dhumal, an ardent devotee of Baba, was a well-known lawyer from Nasik. His word carried considerable weight in government offices. He was a staunch social reformer. From 1917 to 1925, he worked as the first non-government chairman of district local board. Due to his pre-occupation with this chairmanship, he could devote limited time to his private practice. However, the government considered his this sacrifice and honored him as 'Rao Bahaddur'. After 1925, Dhumal once again concentrated on his private practice. Due to Baba's blessings, his practice flourished in spite of being away from the field for 8 long years.

He was extremely pious. Before he became a devotee of Baba, he was a follower of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He first went to avail *Darshan* of Shri Sai Baba in the year 1907. And he was at once got attracted with the radiant personality. In the first visit itself, Baba asked him for a *Dakshina* of Rs. 2. On receiving it Baba promptly returned the amount to Dhumal and said, "Preserve these ! Don't spend or give them away !!"

He was a close friend of Bapusaheb Butti of Nagpur. Therefore, soon Dhumal took Bapusaheb Butti with him to Shirdi. Like Dhumal, Butti also became an ardent devotee of Baba in the very first visit.

Once, Baba said to Dhumal, "Are Bhau, I take care of you at every moment. If I don't do so, I don't know what will happen." On one more occasion, Baba said to him, "Bhau, whole night I was unable to sleep." Bhausahab enquired "What was the reason Baba ?" Baba replied, "The entire night I thought about you and only about you." Hearing these words of Baba, Bhausahab was moved with mixed emotions – surprise, love and gratitude. He was sad that Baba was doing so much for a mere mortal like him. But, he was convinced that Baba was the only saviour Who will protect him from evil happening in future.

Dhumal's entire life was spent in his ancestral house at Nasik. Once, there was an epidemic of plague all around and on top of that he found a dead rat – a deadly carrier of a fatal epidemic of plague – in his house. He did not know whether he should move his family out of the house for sometime and save everyone's life. He sent his query in a letter to Baba, Who asked him to move into another house. He did accordingly. However, in this also another dead rat was found in the same night. Dhumal again enquired, whether he should leave the second house also. Baba replied in negative. Dhumal acted accordingly keeping full faith in Baba.

A few days later, some more dead rats were spotted at different places in the same house. Dhumal once again sent a letter to Baba and in the meantime, anticipating a positive reply, packed his belongings to move to a third house. Baba replied, "Why move ? Stay where you are !" Dhumal did likewise and continued staying in the house. Around him, he saw daily 14-15 deaths because of the epidemic. But, no harm came to him or his family.

In 1909, when Dhumal was only 36 years old, his wife died an untimely death. He was young, dashing and a well-known lawyer. His friends and relatives began persuading him to get married once again. However, Dhumal was firmly of view that such a marriage was possible only if permitted by Baba. A famous lawyer from Nagpur – Bapusaheb Kinkhede – took him to Baba to seek the permission. Baba just glanced at him and Kinkhede realized that the permission has been declined. Till his death, Dhumal adhered to Baba's wishes and remained single. He had earned a lot of fame and money in his profession. However, he gradually absolved himself of family responsibilities and turned toward *Virakti*.

After the death of his wife, Dhumal concentrated his energies on further studies in the legal professional and started planning for Barrister-ship. Bapusaheb Butti showed readiness to finance his study abroad as well as expenses of Dhumal's family in India. However, Baba declined permission saying, "Your *Vilayat* (England) is here only." Dhumal adhered to Baba's wishes.

This is an incident which took place in the year 1910. At that time, there were two warring groups in Shirdi. One of the groups targeted Raghujji Shinde (elder brother of Bhagoji Shinde, a *Sevekari* of Baba) and 4 others and falsely implicated them in a case of molestation of a Marwadi woman. Tatyapa Patil was confident that these people are innocent. But, several learned persons like Dadasaheb Khaparde, Kakasaheb Dixit, Raobahadur Sathe etc. felt that it was difficult to prove so.

Tatyapa Patil approached Baba and He advised him to go to Dhumal. Dhumal felt that a lawyer from Mumbai would be necessary to handle the case. However, Tatyapa pointed out that Baba had Himself suggested his name. Then, Dhumal studied the matter in detail and prepared necessary papers. He visited the British district magistrate at his residence and presented his papers.

The district magistrate said, "At a first glance, there appears to be a prima facie evidence. What do you say?" Dhumal replied that "This case and its witnesses is a work of fabrication and is a result of enmity between two warring factions." The district magistrate enquired, "Are you fully convinced about this?" Dhumal expressed his utmost faith. The district magistrate issued orders releasing the persons. British district magistrate expressed interest in Sai Baba and said that he would like to visit Him.

The persons were released without discussing the matter with police prosecutor or without studying and reading any other papers. Dhumal knew, what power had come to the rescue of the concerned persons.

At the same time in Shirdi, Kakasaheb Dixit's 7 years daughter passed away. Everyone was making preparations for her funeral when Baba uttered, "Wait for a while ! I am going to show you a miracle." Everyone thought, there would be a miracle concerning the dead girl. However, as nothing happened, after sometime they went ahead with the funeral. Just then Dhumal reached there and declared that the innocent persons had been released. First, people found it difficult to believe the good news. But, after sometime they realized that this was the miracle Baba was referring to.

From 1930 to 1932, Dhumal worked as revenue member of Devas Sansthan. During that time he often travelled between Devas and Nasik. During the journey, he carried Baba's photos with him. His nephew, as well as the cook did not approve of this practice and expressed their displeasure. To take a decision on the matter, Dhumal – as was his practice – placed two chits in front of Baba's photo. The answer came, "Keep the photos always with you !"

One of the photos that Dhumal carried with him was given to him by Radhakrishnaai. Whenever he looked at it, he remembered Baba's sentence, "The entire night I thought about you and only about you."

Once, he was carrying this photo while passing from Dwarkamai. Baba called him and enquired, "What are you carrying?" Dhumal replied, "You are here." Baba asked him to give Him the photo. Baba kept it in His hands for sometime and turned His gaze all over it. Baba returned it to him and said, "Keep it with you !" Dhumal always craved that Baba should give him a photo for performing daily *Pooja*. His silent desire was thus answered. He never parted company from this photo.

From time to time Baba gave a total sum of Rs. 67 to Dhumal. Then in 1918, He suddenly took back the money and demanded Rs. 7 more. Dhumal said, "I don't have any more money." Baba replied, "Borrow from someone else !" This was Baba's way of teaching Dhumal not to have false pride about money. Dhumal always remembered this lesson. After Baba's *Mahanirvan*, he even followed Baba's practice of collecting *Bhiksha* from selected houses.

In 1918, just prior to Baba's *Maha-nirvan*, Dhumal's sister-in-law became seriously ill at Pune. Dhumal took about Rs. 80 and set on his journey from Nasik to Pune. En-route he halted at Shirdi to avail Baba's blessings and *Udi*. However, Baba took away the Rs. 80 that he had and also denied him permission to go to Pune. In the meantime, Dhumal received a telegram informing him that the lady had passed away.

After a few days, Baba set on His last journey. Dhumal realized the reason for Baba keeping him back at Shirdi. Baba knew that the lady's death was inevitable. Further, if he had gone to Pune, he would have missed the few last memorable days in company of Baba.

After Baba's *Mahanirvan*, the district court appointed 5 trustees to administer the Sansthan property. After one of the trustees expired, Dhumal was appointed in his place. In his capacity as a trustee, he used his legal knowledge and experience to set the rules and bye-laws for the Shirdi Sansthan.

On Saturday 29th June 1940, Bhausahab breathed his last at his own home. He always wished that at the time of his death, he should be in Shirdi. But, Baba desired otherwise.

(contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into
English by [Sudhir](#)



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Shri Sai Baba Sansthan's 'Prasadalaya'

The very mention of the name Shirdi evokes in the mind of crores of devotees the serenely beautiful, peaceful and pleasant image of Shri Sai Baba and spontaneously the mind prostrates with faith and the hands fold on their own, both, of the believers and non-believers too. The name Shirdi is no more like earlier days. Not merely in the whole of India, the benevolence of Shri Sai Baba on His devotees and His strange *Leelas* (doings) have spread the fragrance of faith worldwide, which attracts these devotees to Shirdi through various paths and even without those devotees being aware about it. For, the urge of Baba to meet His devotees and the devotees' urge to meet Baba is uncontrollable.

Shirdi is located near Kopargaon in Ahmednagar district. It was earlier known as 'Shiladhee' It is now very easy to come to Shirdi. Almost all state government transport buses in India and private passenger vehicles ply continuously to and from Shirdi. Shirdi is about 300 kms. from Mumbai and about 165 kms. from Pune. It is convenient to get down at Kopargaon on the Dound-Manmad railway line. Shirdi is 60 kms. from Manmad railway junction. Shirdi is located at a distance of 90 kms. from Ahmednagar and 145 kms. from Aurangabad district places. The black Mother Earth on either side of the road soon-after crossing Nasik draws our attention. During the monsoon days, the black Mother Earth, draped in a shawl filled with splashes of green, pleases the mind and in that blissful state of mind one enters Shirdi. Totally away from any thoroughfare, habitat boundless concern for devotees and the lure for spiritual, divine knowledge and as one sets foot on (Baba's) *Karmabhoomi*, in the reign of that knowledge, the mind is over-whelmed with extreme joy, faith and satisfaction.

In *Kaliyug*, charity has an extra-ordinary significance and amongst the charitable duties, offering food (*Annadan*) is considered supreme. One should regularly do *Annadan* and satiate the pangs of the hungry. One should do some *Annadan* to those asking for food. Shri Sai Baba popularly followed (the practise of) *Annadan*. Baba Himself sat to grind the spices and prepare meals. Baba Himself purchased all the ingredients to prepare the meals maintaining perfect account of all requirement. Boiling food in the *Handi*, He satiated His devotees, poor and destitutes by serving them with His own hands. Truly, how blessed were they who savoured meals prepared by Baba Himself. Shri Sai Baba Sansthan continues this *Annadan* work perenially through *Prasadalaya*. Shri Sai Baba Sansthan's *Prasadalaya* has become a centre of faith for Sai devotees, who savour the food here with faith as 'Sai Prasad' (blessing). If one understands that this is merely not an eating house or a food joint but a '*Prasadalaya*' then one can know the sentiment of the Sansthan behind this service. The sumptuous meal for merely Rs. 5/- is the special feature of this *Prasadalaya*.

Considering the growing number of devotees coming to Shirdi every day, the Sai Baba Sansthan has erected a *Prasadalaya* that can accommodate 6000 devotees for *Prasad*-meals at one time. This has become the largest *Prasadalaya* among the religious organizations in the country. This single storeyed grand *Prasadalaya* on 7 acres of land has been erected at a cost of Rs. 20 crores. In this, a dining hall of 44,567 Sq. ft. has been built. In this 3500 devotees can have *Prasad*-meals at one time. The flooring of this dining hall is of white refine and dado has been laid and the walls are gypsum plastered. The *Prasadalaya* has been beautified with tiled roofing. An additional dining hall that can accomodate 1000 devotees at one time has also been built. And for very important people three dining halls spanning 20240 Sq. ft. have been built, in each of which 300 people can have meals. An *Annadan*-hall to accommodate 250 *Bhikshus* (who beg for food) has also been built. A big kitchen worthy of this building has also been built. Ultra-Modern appliances are being used here. Solar system will be used for preparing food. A separate kitchen for preparing *Prasad-laddus* (sweet) and a hall for drying them has been built. Apart from this, an office for the management and godown facilities have been provided. Rs. 18 crores for equipments and Rs. 2.5 crores for interiors have been spent for constructing this building.

This is the biggest and noteworthy project of the managing committee under the leadership of legislator and chairman of the Sansthan Shri Jayant Sasane and vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe. This *Prasadalaya* located about one km. from the city to the west of Nagar-Manmad highway and behind Shirdi police station

will be very convenient for the devotees. The present *Prasad-alaya* of the Sansthan can accommodate one thousand devotees at one time and daily an average of fifteen to twenty thousand devotees avail the *Prasad-meals*, informed (ex) executive officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure.



Nandurkhibudruk village is 5 kms. from Shirdi. A progressive farmer and the village *Sarpanch* Shri Arjun Vishnu Chaudhary offered a horse named 'Raja' on January 10, 2008 at the feet of Shri Sai.



The bronze-white shaded horse is 2½ years old and the market price is about Rs. 2½ lakhs.

(Ex) executive officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure received the horse on behalf of the Sansthan. This horse is going to be included in the *Palkhi*-procession every Thursday, as also in the *Palkhi* and chariot processions of festivals.

Golden Throne of Rs.10 crores offered to Shri Sai

Shri A. M. R. Reddy, managing director of M. R. Construction of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh recently offered a Rs.10 crores golden throne weighing 95 kgs. for the idol of Shri Sai Baba.

Shri Reddy is an ardent devotee of Baba. He organizes *Satsang* in Shirdi every year on Datta *Jayanti* since the last 15 to 20 years. Shri Reddy had expressed the desire to offer a golden throne of 100 kgs. for Baba's idol on July 15, 2007, and had requested permission for the same from the Sansthan. The chairman of the Sansthan - legislator Shri Jayant Sasane, vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe, trustee - legislator Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and the managing committee deliberated on Shri Reddy's appeal on July 28, 2007, and decided to grant the said permission. After that Shri Reddy gave the work contract to Padmalaya Metals, Bangalore and commenced the work. 41 artisans of Padmalaya Metals did this work in 2 months and 10 days. 95 kgs. of gold and as support for the gold sheet, 80 kgs. of silver and teak wood were used to make the golden throne.

The 95 kgs. gold included two golden lions, golden *Prabhaval* (a plate forming the back of an Idol's pedestal), golden seat, one umbrella and golden sheet on the back wall of the throne. After completing the throne on December 19, 2007. It was immediately despatched to Shirdi. After reaching Shirdi on December 20, it was taken to *Samadhi Mandir*. After removing the silver throne there, a practical demonstration of installing the golden throne was made. After the practical installation, necessary corrections were made, and the throne was duly arranged. On December 23, 2007 on the occasion of Datta *Jayanti*, at 7.30 a.m., the throne was ritually offered to Baba amidst loud chanting of *Mantras*, by donor, Sai devotee Shri Adinarayan Reddy, his wife Mrs. Sulochana Reddy, Mahesh Reddy and Girish Reddy.

After that the idol of Baba was showered with flowers. The occasion was graced by chairman of the Sansthan Shri Jayant Sasane & Mrs. Rajashree Sasane, vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe, trustees Shri Suresh Wabale, Shri Krishnachandra Pandeya, Shri Ashok Khambekar, Shri Pandurang Abhang, Dr. Eknath Gondkar, the chairperson of Shirdi Munciple Council and trustee of the Sansthan Mrs. Sumitra Kailas Kote and (ex) executive officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure and other dignitaries.

The chairman Shri Jayant Sasane and vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe presented a marble idol of Baba and Shri Sai Sat Charita book to the donor Sai devotee Shri Adinarayan Reddy and on behalf of Shirdi villagers, Municipal Council chairperson Mrs. Sumitra Kote heartily felicitated Shri Reddy and his family.



Remarkable performance in sports by players of Shri Sai Baba English Medium School

Players of Shri Sai Baba English Medium School in the Educational Complex run by the Shri Sai Baba Sansthan displayed excellent performances during the academic year 2007-08. By participating in fencing, volleyball, chess and other outdoor and indoor sports at the taluka, district, regional, state and national levels, the players representing the Shri Sai Baba Sansthan carved a place of pride and earned a reputation as the leading educational institution in sports in Ahmednagar district for the Shri Sai Baba Sansthan Educational Complex.

Rakesh Gyanchand Yadav of Shri Sai Baba English Medium School captained the Maharashtra State Volleyball team at the 53rd All India National Schools Volleyball Tournament in this academic year in the field of sports. This tournament was held at Banglore (Karnatak) in which teams from 22 states participated. The Ahmednagar district was honoured with the captaincy in the volleyball game for the first time due to Rakesh Yadav. He also represented Maharashtra at the national games in Bhilwada (Rajasthan). Holder of a government sports scholarship, he has till date represented Shri Sai Baba Sansthan in volleyball tournaments at the all-India level three times. The sports trainer of the Sansthan, Shri Rajendra Kohokade has been selected this year as the chief coach of the Maharashtra volleyball team. At the volleyball tournament in Rajasthan, under his guidance the Maharashtra team exhibited spectacular performance in their game. He was also decorated with selection as member in the state-level schools volleyball selection committee. Ahmednagar district was bestowed both the honours in the field of sport for the first time.

Chess players of Sai Baba English Medium School, Tanmay Badhe, Kanhaiya Sahani, Pritam Patil, Pratik Patil, Akshay Varghude, Dharamvir Sahani, Sandip Sahani, Kiran Jape and Prajakta Tambe, scored successes at the district and regional chess tournaments. Vikas Borkar, Pritam Chiranjilal and Rishikesh Maind exhibited worthy performance at the state-level fencing tournaments in Kalyan and Sandeep Sahani excelled in the state-level fencing tournament in Nanded.

The under-14 years boys volleyball team of the school beat famous teams at the taluka and district levels and emerged champions. They were runners-up at the Pune regional tournament. Swapnil Jambhulkar, Abhishek Dunakhe, Hirsingh Rajput, Madhavsingh Rajput, Sajid Shaikh and Akash Gondkar exhibited excellent play skills.

At the under-16 years boys volleyball tournament organized by Sports Authority of India (SAI), the school displayed grand performances to trounce 10 teams at the district level and 4 teams at the regional level and clinch the championship. This team was selected for the state-level volleyball tournament at Solapur. The team bagged 3rd place in the tournament and added one more feather to the schools cap in the field of sports. Similarly, the team scored a hatrick by winning the general championship for the third consecutive year at the Ganesh *Kala-Krida* festival at Rahata. Taking special note of this victory, trustee of the Sansthan & legislator Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil felicitated the team with a momento and honoured the players. 45 schools and colleges in Rahata region registered their participation in the *Kala-Krida* festival. The most remarkable aspect of this academic year is that 8 students of X Std. will be getting 25 sports points (4.50%) in their X std. marksheets, as per Maharashtra State Education Board rules based on their performance in various sports at the state-level. This is indeed a matter of great pride for Sai Baba Sansthan and its educational complex.

The players and sport trainer of Sai Baba English Medium School were congratulated for their successes by the chairman of the Sansthan & legislator Shri Jayant Sasane, vice-chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe, other trustees of the Board of Trustees, (ex) executive officer Shri Bhausahab Wakchaure, administrative officers Shri Prakash Deshpande, Shri Subhash Jagtap, Shri Prakash Joshi, Shri Eknath Wagh, Shri Ramesh Sable, principal Mrs. Z. V. Inamdar and others. All the players were guided by sports trainer of Shri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shri Rajendra Kohokade.



Saipradkshina bears fruit

My wife Vanaja and I experience several tidings of Shri Sai Baba. She started doing 100 *Pradkshinas* (going round) of Nandadeep after coming to Shirdi. Nowadays she does 1000 *Pradkshinas*. I also started doing *Pradkshinas* with her. Thereby I got rid of the ailment of pain in my legs immediately.

– **B.Vijaykumar** (Hyderabad, A. P.)



In the *Shastras*, for the different epochs different, means are prescribed for attaining *Nirvana*. Penance for the *Krita Yuga*, Knowledge for the *Treta Yuga*, Sacrifice for the *Dwapara Yuga* and Charity for the *Kali Yuga*.

Performance of charity and righteous action is always important. Pacifying hunger is the best of all. Therefore, giving food in charity should be done regularly. It takes precedence over all other actions.

When it becomes noon, we suffer from the pangs of hunger. Just as we feel, so do others. One who understands this inner feeling is virtuous.

According to the code of conduct laid down by the *Shastras*, giving food in charity has the first place. When considered, there is nothing greater than that.

Food is *Parabrahma*. From food all beings are born; by food lives are sustained and having departed, into food again they enter.

When an uninvited guest arrives at any odd time, a householder should make the guest happy with food. Those who send them back hungry invite trouble to themselves.

Giving charity of money, property, clothes etc. requires some discrimination; but in the matter of food, no such consideration is necessary. Whoever comes at any time to the door, it is not good to disrespect him.

Such is the greatness of giving food in charity that there is evidence of it in the *Shrutis* also. Therefore, Baba too offered food to the people behaving as long established tradition.

Giving money or doing any other charity is imperfect without giving food in charity, as is the constellation of stars without the moon or a necklace without its pendant. Would they look beautiful ?

Just as '*Varan*' is the best among six flavours, giving of food in charity is the most meritorious. A spire without a pinnacle does not seem befitting, nor does a lake without lotuses;

nor *Bhajan* without devotion, nor a married lady without the *Kumkum* mark on her forehead, nor singing without a sweet voice which is tedious, nor buttermilk without salt which is tasteless.

When offering food, the diseased, the weak, the blind, the crippled and the poor should be served first - the relations and others people afterwards.

- 12-23, Chapter 38, Shri Sai Sat Charita

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