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"I do not perform miracles" - Shri Sai Baba

Saints and their Miracles

Amongst all the living creatures, human beings are blessed with the most intelligent brain. However, even such a brain has its own limitations. Sometimes, an event takes place which is against the laws of nature or science and defies all logic. Such happenings are beyond the comprehension of human beings. Therefore, they call them 'miracles'.

If we study the lives of various saints, we come across several such incidents. And, we say - "Saints perform miracles".

Did not saint Dnyaneshwar move a wall of bricks, transferred the marks of wounds from the back of a buffalo to his own, made a buffalo recite *Ved*, and gave life once again to Satchidanand Baba ?

Saint Namdeo brought back life of a dead cow, turned a mere stone into *Parees* (a stone whose touch turns iron into gold), gave life to a child who had lost his life to snake-bite, brought water to a well which had dried up. Lord Vitthal came in the guise of a dog and stole the *Bhakari* (bread) from the plate of Saint Namdeo.

Saint Eknath fed grass to Nandi (a bull used by Lord Shankar as His vehicle). Though the Nandi was made of stone, it ate the grass. Saint Eknath poured holy water on the palms of a *Brahmin* (who was suffering from leprosy) and the disease disappeared. He also freed a *Brahmasamandha* (a person possessed by evil spirits). Considering saint Eknath's ardent devotion, Lord Vitthal - assuming the guise of servant 'Shrikhandya' - served saint Eknath for as many as 21 years.

Saint Tukaram was forced to throw away his all note-books in which he had noted down his *Abhangas*. But, he continuously prayed to the Almighty and on the 13th day, the note-books emerged from the river Indrayani without being ever touched by water. Saint Tukaram was always immersed in the worship of the Lord Vitthal and neglected his fields. But, the fields yielded a crop which was many times more than the fields around. As is well-known, saint Tukaram made *Sadeh Vaikuntha-gaman* (not only his soul, but even his mortal body went to Vaikuntha – heaven – while he was alive).

Saint Ramdas broke open a life-less stone before the eyes of Shivaji Maharaj and a live frog appeared from its cavity. He also brought life to bird called *Ghar* (kite). Just like all other saints, he could reduce his body to a miniscule form not visible to human eyes and move to places where he wished.

Once, Swami wished to test his staunch disciple Kalyan's devotion. There was a very strong wind blowing and with it Swami's *Chattee* (robe) flew into a deep ravine. Swami alerted Kalyan and without bothering about his own safety, Kalyan jumped into the gorge to retrieve the robe. Swami brought him back from the jaws of certain death.

It is noted by the people of those times that when Saint Tulsidas recited Ramayan *Katha*, Lord Ram Himself anointed *Tilak* on his forehead and Hanuman used to take a seat and listened to the *Katha*.

Saint Swami Samarth of *Akkalkot* sprinkled his urine on a well which had dried up and the well got filled with water. One of his devotees was fed-up with the miseries of his life and decided to end his life by jumping in a well. With the powers of his *Yogsamarthya*, Swami dissuaded from the thought. Swami also used his own excreta and cured one of his devotees.

Like these saints, Shri Sai Baba lit lamps using water as a fuel. He gave eyes to the blind and cured many with the help of His mere glance or touch or words. He made an ordinary maid-servant sing a few lines of a song. These lines were actually explained the meaning of a few couplets from Ishawasya Upanishad. Baba showed that He is beyond the powers of *Panch-Maha-Bhoote* (the five elements of nature).

The list of such events is never ending and beyond our capacity to understand.

However, in the eyes of the saints, these happenings are not 'miracles'. They are spontaneous actions on their part. As these defy common logic and are beyond our intellectual capacity, we feel that the saints perform these acts to give display their own powers. In reality, they are trying to give us glimpses of the supremacy powers of the Almighty.

Saints are *Poorna Avatar* (complete incarnation) of the Almighty. It will be observed that in the early years of every saint's life, he is looked down upon by the society and his ways and behaviour are ridiculed. Some people even go to the extent of casting stones at them. Then suddenly, the people around the saint witness a miracle. Only then, people start bowing down in front of the saint and carefully listen and follow his advice. Unless and until a miracle is performed, the society at large fails to recognize the true nature of a saint. Thus, a miracle performed by a saint is not to show his power. It is a mere **Leela** and is intended to enlarge the flock of his devotees so that more and more people can benefit by his advice.

A saint may assume a miniscule form and become invisible. He may appear, give *Darshan* to his devotee in any guise - a human being or an animal - ant, dog, pig. His mere touch or glance may revive a dead person. There may be a situation when it may be feared that the food prepared for guests may be insufficient. And, a saint may, by his *Leela*, may increase it many folds. There

may be a case, when food may not have been cooked by for anyone and suddenly guests may come pouring in. And, one may find that the needful has been already done – seemingly by an invisible power. A saint may bring life to a lifeless thing. He may even create a thing out of thin air. He may take upon himself a disease of his devotee.

They have powers to perform several such *Leelas*. But, they do them as if it is an ordinary event. They do not take any pride in performing these acts and are disinterested in them.

Shri Sai Baba had several such *Siddhis*. Everyone knows how He used to sleep previously in the *Masjid*. He had a plank which was only about 6 inches broad and 4 hands long. It was tied to the ceiling with the help of pieces of tattered cloth. At the time of sleeping, earthen lamps were lit at the four corners of the plank. Then Baba used to reduce His mortal body to a miniscule form and climb on the plank and sleep there. Nobody ever saw Him climbing up or down. As the news spread around, people started gathering around the *Masjid* to witness the miracle. Baba ultimately grew wary of the crowds, and broke the plank into pieces.

Baba had amazing powers through *Yoga*. He could separate His various limbs. In Shri Sai Sat Charita we come across a unique event, where Baba had attained the state of a body which appeared to be 'dead' for three full days by moving His *Pran* to *Brahmanda*. Thereafter, once again He returned back to His mortal body. On the other hand, He could take the diseases of His ardent devotees on Himself. He had even the powers to bring back people from the jaws of death. Not only that, He could even put back life into the bodies, which were already pronounced to be dead. He brought a dead *Bhilla* (a tribal), as well as the lamb languishing in the jaws of death, back to life. On the other hand, when a tiger was languishing in the jaws of death, Baba released him from the pains by giving him *Mukti*.

Sitting in the *Masjid*, with the help of *Atindriya Shakti*, He could go to any places at His will. Once, Dasganu wished to go to the holy city of Prayag to take bath in the river on a particular auspicious day. However, water from holy rivers of Ganga and Yamuna began sprouting from Baba's feet and Dasganu's desire was fulfilled without there being any need to travel all the way to Prayag.

Though the saints have such amazing and divine powers, they never claim credit for the same. This is because they are humble, polite and unassuming.

Through His ardent devotee Nanasaheb Chandorkar, Shri Sai Baba put forth an important message and lesson. He said,

"Nana, I don't perform miracles. For example, take an astrologer from a village. He tries to foretell some of the events that may happen in next two to four days. Some of his predictions turn out to be true and some false. My vision covers a period which is much vaster. Therefore, what I say does take place. One way, it is my science of astrology. But, you people do not understand this. Your eyes do not reach the distant things which I see. Therefore, you say, I perform miracles.

After I tell you my predictions, you focus your devotion on me. I turn it towards the Almighty and plan for your well-being.”

Later on, He continues and cautions His devotees :

“If you come to me with the hope that I will save your children and other relatives, then you are coming for the wrong reasons. I don't have any control over birth and death. They depend upon your past deeds. Even the Almighty cannot interfere in their occurrence. Will the God ever tell the sun or moon to rise from a different direction ? He cannot do it and He will not do it. Because by doing so, a chaos will get created in the Universe.”

The saints can and do perform such feats for the well-being of their flock when the need arises. Some of them are *Siddha Yogi* from birth; because of their past good deeds. Some attain *Yog Siddhi* through *Tapascharya* or study of plants having medicinal properties or through *Mantra Prayog*. But – as the *Siddhis* are detrimental to *Paramartha* – the saints do not accord any importance to them. Some get carried away by the powers of their *Siddhis* or use them to increase their own popularity. In such cases, it is observed that their *Siddhis* gradually become ineffective.

Therefore, majority of the saints have cautioned people to maintain a safe distance from such 'fake' *Sadhus*.

Ramdas Swami has said those who only recite *Mantras* are not *Sadhus*.

Parnerkar Maharaj has expressed his disinterest in performance of *Siddhis* in no uncertain terms. He used to always say :-

“I am not a Maharaj of miracles. Those who wish me to perform miracles should give up being my follower.”

Sai Baba always said, “I am not a *Guru* who will bite one's ears.”

He said that some people move away from the path of *Satsang* and instead go after *Siddhis* to fulfil their wishes. They are fools. On the other hand, there are others who follow the strict rules of *Vairagya* and gain the eternal knowledge. In such cases, the *Siddhis* go after them instead of, they going after the *Siddhis*.

In short, the amazing powers of saints are sometimes expressed through their *Siddhis*. But, their real aim is to take human beings to the ultimate goal of mankind 'Moksha'. The saints achieve this by teaching the people to observe *Shraddha* and *Saburi*.

(Translated from an article in Marathi by Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar, published in SAILEELA, September – October 2009, Shri Sai Punyatithi – Sai Anubhav Visheshank)



Sai Samartha abandoned His body as per His own will and burnt the body in the *Yoga Agni* (fire). He became one with the unseen but remained externally in the hearts of the devotees. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 64)

How could there be birth or death for Sai, Who is *Parabrahma* Himself ! Knowing that *Brahma* is Truth and the world a mirage, how could He have body consciousness ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 58)

Sai Samartha, the cloud of bliss, Who did not know about the birth of His body, how could His body experience death ! He does not know about the body's existence. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 57)

Know that He Who has reduced the body to ashes even before acquiring it, how can He have any fear of death ! Death is reduced to ashes before Him. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 55)

It is also not proper to say this. One Who is beyond birth or death, how could there be a departure for Him or the necessity of an auspicious time for it ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 42, Verse 77)

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Experiences of Sai Maharaj

Experiences recorded by late hon. Hari Sitaram Dixit :-

(7)

HOW THE *BUVA* FROM HARIDWAR LEARNT HIS LESSON...

The *Buva* from Haridwar always sat near the column opposite Shri Sai Baba during the morning *Baithak*. Once, the *Buva* was late, and a little girl sat in his place. She did not get up when the *Buva* arrived. So, he asked her to get up and took his usual place. After five minutes, Sai Maharaj said, "Go and sit in the *Sabha Mandap* downstairs." He left; but came back after some time and tried to take his seat. Maharaj told him to go down once again. *Buva* understood that this was a lesson for making the little girl get up.

(8)

HOW BABA FULFILLED MY *DASSERA POOJA*...

Once, I left Nagpur and reached Shirdi at the beginning of *Navratri*. I stayed on till *Dassera*. Many devotees had brought various types of fruits and *Mithai* according to their choice for Baba. I did not have any fruits with me. My *Pooja* was simple as usual. I felt sad and felt that, it would have been better, if there were some fruits in my *Pooja Thali*. A little while later, Sai Maharaj distributed some grapes to all. He gave some to me; but did not keep any for Himself. When I saw this, I felt, I should give Him some and did so. Sai Maharaj accepted the grapes and ate them, fulfilling my desire of *Dassera Pooja*, and I felt happy once again.

(9)

HOW BABA ACCEPTED A FLORAL OFFERING TO HIS PORTRAIT...

A friend of mine from Bandra was worshipping Baba's portrait. There were some flowers in his *Pooja Thali*, amongst which a large '*But Mogra*' flower stood out. He felt like offering this flower to Sai; but since it was big, it would not have stuck to the picture with sandalwood paste

(*Gandha*). It then struck him that, Baba always smelt a flower by taking it close to His nose. So, he took the flower to Baba's nose in the picture. He had planned to touch the picture and put it down; but surprisingly it stuck and stayed there till evening !

(10)

HOW BABA SAVED THREE - YEAR OLD SHANTI FROM FALLING IN THE WELL...

There was a *Brahmin* called Babu Khirvandikar in Shirdi. His three year old daughter Shanti fell in the well behind Sathe's *Wada* and remained there till she was missed. Later, she was saved and pulled out of the well. She said, Sai had caught her while falling and held her midway. She called herself Sai's sister and Sai Maharaj always held affection for her.

(11)

HOW BABA SENT *UDI* TO HIS DEVOTEE IN THE TRAIN...

Shri Chidambar Keshav Gadgil was a devotee of Sai Maharaj. He was a government servant. For some time he was the secretary to the collector. Later he became the *Mamledar* (district revenue officer) at Sinnar. He often came to Shirdi for Sai *Darshan*. When he was transferred to a far off place, he was asked to join immediately and so had no time to go to Shirdi and take Baba's *Darshan*. His train went via Kopargaon; but he had to go on and so kept feeling sorry for not being able to visit Baba. While the train was moving, a small packet of paper came through the window and fell on him. He opened it and found an *Udi*-like powder which he kept carefully. Later, when he could visit Baba, Sai Maharaj asked him, "You could not come; so I sent you some *Udi*, you got it didn't you ?" Gadgil was overwhelmed. Later, he put that *Udi* in a talisman and wore it all his life.

(12)

HOW BABA FULFILLED MY WISHES...

I had to go to Indore for some work. Since I was passing through Manmad, I decided to visit *Sadguru* Sai Baba in Shirdi and then proceed. My friends dissuaded me from going to Shirdi. They said, "Baba will not leave you in time." I said, "I have two more days in hand to reach Indore and my mind is bent on visiting Baba in Shirdi." I went to Shirdi as planned. As soon as I went for *Darshan* in the *Masjid*, Baba inquired, when I would be leaving. I said, "If You want me to leave today, I shall go; but I have two days in hand." "Okay, stay for two days and then go," He said. Accordingly I stayed for two days and then left for Indore. My wish was fulfilled and my friends' fears were meaningless.

(13)

"I AM NOT ONE TO LEAVE ANYONE."...

When Sakharam Hari Jog alias Bapusaheb's mother passed away, he decided to go to Nasik for the funeral rites and asked for Baba's permission to leave. But, Baba kept delaying the permission day by day. Ultimately Bapusaheb said that there was no *Brahmin* from his branch in

Shirdi and he had to go to Nasik that day. Baba said, "Let's see in the afternoon." Hardly had Baba uttered these words, a highly educated *Brahmin* from Jog's branch arrived. Now, there was no reason to go to Nasik and all the funeral rites were completed in Shirdi only. The last time Bapusaheb Jog asked for permission to go to Nasik. I was present. I had said, "Baba ! Lets the three of us go – we will leave Bapusaheb in Nasik and then proceed to Mumbai." Upon this, Baba had commented, "I am not one to leave anyone."

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BABA'S WAYS OF TEACHING WERE BEYOND DESCRIPTION...

Once, one of my friends came for Sai's *Darshan* and started pressing Baba's feet while he sat there. Suddenly, Baba said, "Don't press my feet; move aside." The gentleman complied. After sometime his eyes were seen to be filled with tears. Sometime later he started pressing Baba's feet once again. Sai did not say anything.

Later, when my friend returned to the *Wada*, he said, "When I first started pressing Baba's feet, an unpleasant thought occurred in my mind. Immediately Baba told me to move aside. I felt extremely ashamed and sorry. I mentally asked Baba to forgive me. Afterwards, when I started pressing Baba's feet once again, He did not stop me."

Baba's devotees always had such experiences. Truly, Baba's ways of teaching were beyond description.

(15)

BABA – THE GREAT CARE-TAKER...

One morning, when I went for Baba's *Darshan*, He was standing near the *Dhuni*. As soon as I touched His Feet He said, "Why are you worried ? I take care of everyone." I folded my hands in a *Namaste* and said, "Truly, You worry for everyone." Since we experienced his caring for all, I agreed whole heartedly. Yet, I did not understand, why He uttered those words at that time. The matter was cleared, when I returned to Mumbai. When Baba had spoken those words, my little daughter was playing in the living room. While playing, she tried to climb up on the cupboard in the corner; but it came crashing down with her. She fell down and it landed on top of her. There were some glass and metal toys on top of the cupboard; but as though the great care-taker Baba had put the toys aside, the little girl was not hurt, except for a broken bangle which grazed her hand.

Another time, when this girl was five years old, she went to the toilet at night. There was a huge snake inside; but the servant accompanying her, happened to see it, before she did and quickly took her away.

(16)

HOW BABA TAKES CARE OF HIS DEVOTEES...

Uddhavesb Buva of Dahanu once went to Dwarka on a pilgrimage. His entire entourage went from Mumbai by ship. The tickets were with *Buva*.

The tickets were in two parts - one for the ferry that carried them from the coast to the ship and one for the ship itself. Uddhaves *Buva* separated the two parts and kept the ferry tickets in his pocket and the ship tickets in his wallet.

While he was on the ship, he had to remove his wallet for some reason. He happened to be standing next to the railing at that time. Somehow his wallet fell overboard and everything in the wallet, including his money and the tickets became an offering for the sea.

While getting off the ship one had to give the tickets to the ticket-collector. *Buva* narrated the entire story to the ticket-collector and as proof showed him the ferry tickets; whereupon he was satisfied and he let them go.

In Dwarka, they had to pay taxes for bathing in the Gomati, touching the feet of God and to do a *Puma*. Since *Buva* had no money left and he did not believe in asking anyone; but Baba for help, he wrote a letter to Shirdi.

The day he posted the letter to Shirdi, a wealthy man from Dahanu dreamt of Baba who asked him to immediately give money to *Buva* who had lost all his money at sea. The gentleman immediately sent an insured money order of Rs. 50/- to *Buva* and also wrote a note narrating the dream with it.

(17)

"BABA WILL PROVIDE"...

When Shankarrao Kshirsagar *Mamlatdar* came for Baba's *Darshan*, Baba asked for *Dakshina*. He gave all the money in his pocket to Baba. After he returned to the *Wada*, someone asked him, "Where is the money for your return journey ?" Shankarrao said, "Baba will provide."

That evening, the post-master of Rahata came to Shirdi along with a guest. This fellow happened to have borrowed Rs. 20/- from Shankarrao some years ago. He returned the amount without being asked for it. Thus Shankarrao was provided with all, he needed for his return journey.

(18)

'HE THINKS I AM DEAD. BUT, I AM ALIVE'...

Sai Maharaj took *Samadhi* on Tuesday, the 15th of October 1918, in the late afternoon. That night, Laxman Bhat dreamt of Baba Who said, 'Bapusaheb Jog will not come to perform the *Kakad Aarati* as he thinks I am dead. But, I am alive. You should come and perform the *Kakad Aarati*.' As per Baba's orders Laxman Bhat went early in the morning to the *Masjid* where the body was kept and performed the *Kakad Aarati*. Many people thought, they saw Baba's hand moving whilst the *Aarati* was being performed.

The *Madhyanha Aarati* was again performed at the *Masjid*. On the following day (16th), the body was brought to Butti's *Wada* and the *Shejarati* was performed there at night. Since then *Kakad Aarati*, *Madhyanha Aarati*, *Dhooparati* and *Shejarati* are regularly performed in

the *Wada* (which is now the *Samadhi Mandir*) and the ritual continues till today.

(19)

THE YELLOW PITAMBER...

2-3 days after Baba took *Samadhi*, He came in the dream of the sister-in-law of Moreshwarrao Pradhan of Santacruz and said, "You have a yellow *Pitamber* in your trunk. Send it to be placed on my *Samadhi*."

The lady had kept this *Pitamber* aside many years ago and had forgotten all about it.

She told Moreshwarrao about her dream and immediately gave him the yellow *Pitamber* to be sent to Shirdi. It is in Shirdi now and is sometimes put on the *Samadhi*.

(20)

'TODAY IS THE 30TH DAY !'...

One day, at dawn, Baba went to Kaka Mahajani in his dream and said, 'Why are you sleeping ? Get up ! Today is the 30th day of my passing. Observe it !'

When Kaka Mahajani woke up, he thought the 30th day must have already passed; but when he counted the days, he realised that it was indeed the 30th day. He called a *Brahmin* and performed an *Abhishek* to Sai's *Padukas*, called some people for lunch and observed the first month of Baba's *Samadhi*. After that he observed the day of Baba's *Samadhi* every month.

Shri Sai Leela, Year 1,

Shravan Shaké 1845, Vol. VI

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HOW BABA INFORMED HIS DEVOTEES ABOUT HIS SAMADHI...

The day Baba left His mortal body, my nephew Madhav, who lived in Vileparle, Mumbai, dreamt that a great *Yogi* took *Samadhi* in Nasik. Similarly in the house of a North Indian astrologer, named Hanuman Prasad in Mumbai, Baba's portrait suddenly began to shake. In the same way Baba informed all His great devotees about His taking *Samadhi* in some way or other.

(22)

'TAKE ME TO THE WADA'...

Just before leaving His body Baba uttered the words 'Take me to the Wada !' After He left His mortal coil, people started discussing as to where the body should be kept. Taking His last words as a hint, some people said, the *Samadhi* should be built in Butti's *Wada*. Others said that, instead of building it in an open place. After fighting for a day, it was ultimately decided to be kept in Butti's *Wada* and so it happened.

Initially this *Wada* or mansion was built by Bapusaheb Butti as a private residence. After a part of it was built in 1916, Baba felt ill and Nanasaheb Chandorkar was inspired that, it should not be just be a private mansion, but there should be a temple in it. When Baba was consulted about it, He gave consent for a temple to be built. So, it was decided that, the central part would be a temple and the rest residential. Craftsmen from Nagpur were called to build the temple. But, due to some reason they had to return and the temple remained unfinished till Baba's passing away and the *Samadhi* could be built in that area. Of course, it is now Baba's temple and His words '**This is our place and we shall all live here**' which He said time and again had come true.

(23)

HOW BABA FULFILLED THE WISHES OF CHILDLESS COUPLES...

Many childless couples have been blessed with Baba's grace and they are happy. Rao Bahaddur Hari Vinayak Sathe, Damu Seth Kasar of Ahmednagar, Ratanji Seth of Nanded, Gopal Gund, Deshmukh of Raver, all came to Sai Maharaj to be blessed with a son and Baba blessed them all. They are all hale and hearty. But, you will also find many other childless devotees among the common people who have been similarly blessed by Baba.

Innumerable childless women came during the *Ramnavami Yatra* and even every Thursday. Some took vows in their own homes and Baba fulfilled their wishes too. Once, a woman from Pune who was anxious to have a son took a vow. Soon after, Baba visited her in her dreams and gave her a coconut. When she awoke, there really was a coconut kept near her bed. She was thrilled and later on, in due time gave birth to a son. When he was a year old, she came to Shirdi and did the *Javal* ceremony (shaving off the baby's hair) in Baba's presence.

It was observed that whenever a woman came to Baba desiring a son, she was blessed with a baby boy.

And, this happened whenever they took a vow even after He had taken His *Samadhi*.

A recent example is that of Jagannath, who used to look after Baba's horse. After Baba's *Samadhi*, he became a holy man and sat in the Shiva temple at Ulve village in Panvel district. There he met Umabai, the wife of Seth Shankarraoji. The couple did not have a son and so she coaxed her husband to take a second wife. But, she did not conceive either.

One day, at Umabai's behest, Jagannath placed a coconut in the second wife's *Pallu* and said, "If this lady begets a son, you will visit Baba's *Samadhi*." Umabai took a vow - 'If the co-wife begets a son, I will come for your *Darshan*.' Within a year, a son was born. And, Umabai came to Shirdi to fulfil her vow. Jagannath had later left Ulve village; but when Umabai visited Shirdi for Baba's *Darshan*, he too happened to be there. Umabai offered a coconut with a specially made golden grain of salt tied to its tip. The coconut is still there in the *Sansthan's* warehouse.

(24)

RETURN OF THE LOST SON...

A gentleman's son was lost for many years. He prayed to Baba about his son. Baba said, "You will meet him soon." After two days Baba gave him permission to leave. He lived at Thane. As he alighted at Thane

station, his son too got down from a train coming from Mumbai. Thus he met his long lost son in his own town as soon as he returned from Sai Maharaj.

(25)

"DID YOU VISIT GOVAR-DHANDAS ?"...

Once, Madhavrao Deshpande had a dream. In it, Baba visited him and asked, "Did you visit Govardhandas ? His mother passed away. We should visit him." When Madhavrao visited Govardhandas in the late afternoon he found that he had indeed lost his mother a couple of days ago.

(26)

'IS SHE GOING ?'...

Shri Dwarkanath Pradhan had gone to Maharaj for *Darshan* and had taken his father-in-law's letter to Baba. When he gave the letter to Baba, He held it upside down and murmured, 'Is she going ?' I heard these words; but the others did not. He then asked the letter to be read out. It spoke of Dwarkanath's wife's illness. Dwarkanath asked Baba, "When will you bring her here ?" Maharaj replied, "After four days." Everyone was surprised, when the lady died four days later. Only I was not surprised, as I had heard Baba's words.

(27)

BABA KNOWS EVERYTHING...

Once, when Shri Govind Raghunath Dabholkar alias Annasaheb visited Shirdi during *Guru Poornima*, his money was over. Later Shri Hari Sitaram Dixit and Shri Moreshwarrao Pradhan visited Shirdi Pradhan finished all his money on the second day. Baba once again asked him for *Dakshina*. He said, "I do not have any money." Baba said, "Ask Annasaheb." Now, everyone knew since the previous day that Annasaheb had no money left, and it was true. However, obeying Baba, Pradhan went to Annasaheb and asked for money. *Annasaheb* was surprised as just a little while ago, someone had delivered the money, he had asked for from his home in Bandra and nobody knew about it. When Annasaheb asked Pradhan, "How did you know I just received some money ?" He said, "How would I know ? I came because Baba sent me !"

Obviously, Baba knows everything !

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The eight *Siddhis*, such as '*Anima* and *Garima*' do not increase or decrease by the coming or going of the people, for such persons. These are their own, eternal glories. They are famous for that. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 78)

An actor plays many roles, but fully knows his own identity. Those Who manifest themselves resume their own identity after their work is done. What is death to them ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 42, Verse 144)

The manifestation of such great souls is only for the welfare of the people. Their appearance, their existence and their disappearance happens as a natural phenomenon. The saints are ever ready to get the people to follow them. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 79)

Birth is an illusion. Death is a delusion. Oneness of the soul is the state beyond decay - in fact, the highest bliss in a dream. Such is the condition of the saints. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 80)

Even otherwise, for Him Who is a store of knowledge and is always One with the Supreme Spirit, to take care of the body or to leave it is the same. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 81)

Deities leave for Their abode. Saints remain *Brahma* state. There is no coming and going for them. They merge with the Supreme Spirit blissfully. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 149)

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Shirdi Sai Baba's Tremendous Belief in **Vishnu Sahasranam**



The **Vishnu Sahasranam** is one of the three jewels of the Mahabharat - the other two being, the **Bhagvad Gita** and the **Sanatsujatiya**. While the **Bhagvad Gita** was expounded by Lord Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the **Sanatsujatiya** was told to Dhritarashtra by Sanatkumar on being requested by Vidur. The **Sanatsujatiya** is contained in the *Udyoga Parva* of the Mahabharat. It is the sublime message of salvation imparted to Dhritarashtra, the father of Duryodhan, by Sanatsujat, also called Sanatkumar. The central teaching of the **Sanatsujatiya** is the realization by Dhritarashtra of the transitory nature of life and its miseries consequent on ever-recurring birth and death, and his desire to get liberation therefrom.

It is interesting to contemplate on the circumstances under which the **Vishnu Sahasranam Stotram** came into existence.

The **Vishnu Sahasranam** was expounded by Bhishma (He was reverentially called Bhishma Pitamaha) at the end of the Mahabharat war, and is contained in the *Anushasanaparva* of the Mahabharat (Chapter 254). Yudhishtir, the eldest of the five Pandavas, was mentally depleted because of the war with the Kauravas and the misery of death and suffering that was created by the war in which he had been a major player. Yudhishtir, goaded by Lord Krishna went to Bhishma, who was lying on the bed of arrows waiting for the *Uttarayan Punyakal* to leave his mortal coil. He had the boon of *Ichchamrityu*, the power to die whenever he wished. With his passing away, his irreplaceable wisdom, based on the experiences of his long life of virtue, righteousness and devotion, was about to be lost to the world. Sage Vedavyas and Lord Krishna advised Yudhishtir, who himself was an epitome of righteousness and virtue, to seek the advice of Bhishma Pitamaha on any and all aspects of life on which he had any doubts. Lord Krishna who gave the discourse of the Gita to Arjun did not advise Yudhishtir Himself but made him go to Bhishma to learn about *Dharma* because He wanted Yudhishtir to learn the greatness of Narayan *Bhakti* and also to show the world the greatness of Bhishma Pitamaha.

Yudhishtir did as advised, and a series of dialogs ensued between the two, witnessed by Lord Krishna Himself, and by other great sages including Sage Vedavyas.

In one of these sessions, Yudhishtir sought Bhishma's advice on the easiest and best means, by which mankind can attain lasting happiness, peace of mind, and relief from all bondages and sorrows. This was the setting in which the **Vishnu Sahasranam Stotram** was imparted, with the

welfare of future generations also in mind, by Bhishma to Yudhishtir, as part of the advice given by Bhishma in response to the above question.

The following *Shloka* in the prolog to the **Vishnu Sahasranam Stotram** identifies some important aspects pertaining to the composition of the **Stotram** :-**Vishnor Nama Sahasrasya Vedavyaso Mahamunih |**

Chandonustup Tatha Devo Bhagavan Devaki Sutah ||

Vedavyas is the *Rishi* of Lord Vishnu's one thousand names, i.e., the sage who strung together the thousand names as they were revealed by Bhishma to Yudhishtir. *Anushtup* (eight syllables per quarter) is its meter. Krishna, the son of Devaki, is the Lord being worshipped.

Lord Krishna willed Yudhishtir to ask the questions **"Kimekam Daivatam Loke"** and **"Ko Dharmah Sarvadarmanam Bhavatah Paramo Matah"** in order to elicit the **Vishnu Sahasranam** from the mouth of Bhishma, for his own benefit, as it purifies the one who recites as well as the one who hears it.

Yudhishtir, after listening to the discourse on *Dharma* from Bhishma, asked him six questions :-

1. **"Kimekam Daivatam loke"**, who is the supreme Deity ?
2. **"Kimvapyekam Parayanam"**, which is the supreme goal ?
- 3 & 4. **"Stuvantah Kam, Kamarchantah Prapnuyurmanavasshubham"** , praising whom and worshipping whom men attain happiness ?
5. **"Ko Dharmah Sarvadarmanam Bhavatah Paramo Matah"**, what is, in your opinion, the best *Dharma* of all ?
6. **"Kim Japan Muchyate Jantuh Janma Samsarabhandhanat"**, meditation on whom leads one to salvation ?

Bhishma replied, "If man, with constant endeavour praise the Lord of the universe, the unlimited Supreme Being, with his Thousand Names, if he worships daily and with devotion the same imperishable Being, meditating on Him, praising Him, bowing to Him, and making offerings to Him, if he sings daily the praise of that Great Lord of the whole universe, Vishnu, Who has neither beginning nor end and presides over the world, he overcomes all unhappiness. If man should constantly adore in devotion the lotus-eyed Lord with hymns, that according to me, is supreme over all the *Dharmas*. The God of Gods, He Who is the eternal Father of all living beings, from Whom all beings proceed on the advent of the primary aeon and into Whom they disappear again when the aeon comes to an end, of that Lord of the whole world, the Chief of all beings, hear from me O King, these Thousand Names which drive away sin and fear ! The celebrated names of the great Lord which are based on His qualities, and which the sages have sung, I shall proclaim for the weal (of the world)"

Shirdi Sai Baba's belief in the **Vishnu Sahasranam** was tremendous. It's clearly evident when one goes through the Chapter XXVII of Shri Sai Satcharita. Shama was a very intimate devotee of Sai Baba, and Baba

wanted to favour him in a particular way by giving him a copy of the **Vishnu Sahasranam** as *Prasad*. This was done in the following way.

Once, a Ramdasi (a great devotee of Lord Ram) came to Shirdi and stayed there for some time. The routine that he followed daily was as follows :-

He got up early in the morning, washed his face, bathed and then after wearing saffron-coloured clothes and besmearing himself with sacred ashes, read the **Vishnu Sahasranam** (a book giving a thousand names in praise of Lord Vishnu) and the **Adhyatma Ramayan** (The Adhyatma Ramayan is an epic spread across 4200 double verses, and considered a treatise of Vedantic philosophy and study of *Advaita* (non-dualistic) philosophy. It is supposed to have provided Tulsidas (1511-1637 A.D.) the inspiration to write his seminal work the **Ramcharitmanas**.). The Ramdasi read these books often and often, and then after some days Baba thought of favouring and initiating Shama with the **Vishnu Sahasranam**.

One day, while the Ramdasi was reading the **Vishnu Sahasranam**, Baba sent him out on an errand. He obeyed Baba and stopped the *Parayan* in the middle. After the Ramdasi left, Baba took the **Vishnu Sahasranam** book of the Ramdasi and gave it to Shama, saying, "Oh Shama ! this book is very valuable and efficacious; so I present it to you, you read it. Once, I suffered intensely and my heart began to palpitate and my life was in danger. At that critical time, I hugged this book to my heart and then, O Shama ! What a relief it gave me ! I thought that *Allah* Himself came down and saved me. So, I give this book to you; read it slowly, little by little, read daily one name at least and it will do you good."

Shama thought that Baba wanted to set him up against the Ramdasi by this act of His; but he had no idea of what Baba felt for him. Baba must have thought to tie this necklace of the **Vishnu Sahasranam** round the neck of Shama, as he was an intimate devotee, and thus save him from the miseries of the worldly existence. The efficacy of God's Name is well-known. It is so easy and so effective. This *Sadhana*, Baba wanted Shama to practise, though he did not crave for it. So, Baba forced this on him. The reading and study of the **Vishnu Sahasranam** is a broad open way of purifying the mind, and hence Baba thrust this on His Shama.

Shama hesitated to take the book as it belonged to the Ramdasi who was an angry and quarrelsome person. Shama replied that he did not want it and that the owner of it, the Ramdasi who was a mad, obstinate and irritable fellow would certainly pick up a quarrel with him; and besides, being a rustic himself, he could not read distinctly the Sanskrit letters of the book.

But, Shama in fact failed to understand that Baba's aim was to do him good. On his return, the Ramdasi learnt about this and created a scene even though Shama narrated the facts. Then, Baba called Ramdasi and said to him, "O Ramdasi, why are you in an angry and quarrelsome mood ? Shama had nothing to do in the matter. I gave the book to him. Is he not my child ? Why are you so turbulent ? Why are you quarreling with him unnecessarily ? Can't you speak soft and sweet words ? Even though you read sacred books daily, your mind still is impure and your passions uncontrolled. What sort of a Ramdasi you are ! A real *Rambhakta* should practice equality and detachment and not attachment. With money you can purchase any number of books, but not persons. You ought to think well

and act intelligently, and be indifferent to all things. Is it not strange that you should covet this book so strongly ? You know this book 'by heart'. Let Shama also read this and be benefitted. If you desire, you can have some other book from Shama in exchange for your book." How sweet were these words of Baba, soft, tender and nectar-like ! Their effect was wonderful.

Hearing this loving advice from Baba, the Ramdasi cooled down and accepted the **Pancharatna Gita** from Shama, in exchange for his own copy of the **Vishnu Sahasranam**.

Here, we see the wonderful effects of *Guru's* grace. Anger was quenched with love and Baba loved Ramdasi in spite of his quarrelsome qualities. He gave loving spiritual instructions and the words took root. The *Sadhana* of the Ramdasi for all those years bore fruit.

The above speech of Baba was not only intended for Ramdasi but to all of us. Even though we read a lot of religious books or spend our time in the worship of God, there will not be any benefit unless our hearts get purified. Baba favoured not only Shama but also the Ramdasi by giving him some valuable spiritual lessons.

We should get rid of '*attachments*' to outside things and the words '*I*' and '*mine*'. We must always think that all are one and equal. Everyone should try for such a change of hearts.

When one's physical life or spiritual life is in danger, one has to seek God and surrender to Him. That is what Baba conveyed by saying that He hugged the book to His heart. Intellectual reading is necessary; but what is read has to be absorbed into the heart, i.e. one's whole heart and mind has to be imbued by the divinity. Then only one reaches the true state of spirit and is free from the chain of birth and death and is free from the danger of falling back into the old ways of ignorance.

God's name saves us from all sins and bad tendencies, frees us from the cycle of births and deaths. There is no easier *Sadhana* than this. It is the best purifier of our mind. It requires no paraphernalia and no restrictions.

It is also reported that long ago, Eknath Maharaj, similarly, forced the **Vishnu Sahasranam** on a poor *Brahmin*, and thus saved him from ruin. This *Brahmin*, living in Eknath's neighbourhood, was an impious and wicked merchant, who never even bothered to have a *Darshan* of a saintly soul as like of Eknath. Moreover, he by no means attended temple programmes, and always hated being part of the *Hari Kirtans* and *Bhajans*. Besides, though he lived permanently by the side of the river Ganga, he preferred to take bath at home with hot water. Furthermore, he always ignored and neglected to recite the names of his ancestors of a glorious past. When Eknath Maharaj spotted the lifestyle of this man, his pity put him upon devising means for the good of this reduced *Brahmin*.

"By greatest good fortune this man got a human birth", Eknath soliloquized, "but he will needlessly go to hell. I must adopt some means whereby good desires may spring up in his heart and he may seek after the *Supreme Attainment*." Thus thinking, Eknath went out into the street hoping to meet the *Brahmin*, where they exchanged salutations by word of mouth. Out of respect for Eknath, the man stood still for a moment. Now, Eknath began to question him, "Who are your dependants ? What business are you

engaged in ? How do you care for your family ?” The merchant listened patiently, first, and, then, replied, “I live with my wife and sons at home. I serve a money-lender, and he provides sustenance for our entire family.” To this, Eknath replied, “I have now a request to make of you.” Great fear sprang into the mind of the man, blinded by his attachment to objects of sense, and a great miser withal, and so he made no answer. Eknath wasted no time in sensing his underlying mood. Going back to clarifying the nature of his own request, he said, “I have no desire to obtain from you any money, or any substance of any kind. I simply ask you to take a moment’s time to come to my house for the *Hari Kirtans* and *Bhajans*.” The *Brahmin* replied, “I basically have no leisure time away from me because of my preoccupation with the arranging of my daily necessities.” Eknath suggested, “Listen to what I tell you ! I will repeat to you a *Shloka* from the **Vishnu Sahasranam**. Commit that much to memory. That will fully satisfy me.” As the *Brahmin* listened to Eknath’s voice, a reverential feeling filled his mind. Eknath wrote the words on a bit of a paper and requested him with a gentle-toned voice to daily read those words. And, as Eknath gently caressed the *Brahmin* with his lotus-like hand, his heart was at once transformed. He took the words of the *Shloka* to the heart, and quickly committed them to memory. On the next day, he came and asked Eknath for another *Shloka*. In a few days time he could commit to memory the whole of the **Vishnu Sahasranam**. Eknath then told him still further that after his bath he should sit in fixed contemplation, keeping himself to himself by repeating the **Vishnu Sahasranam**. The *Brahmin* listened and assented, and did as advised. His heart now started somewhat transforming and he began to visit Eknath’s house longing to have a direct vision of God. He daily prostrated at the feet of Eknath before setting out for his daily routine. Many days thus passed, when suddenly he became desperately ill with a ninety-day fever. As he was reaching the end of his life span, the servants of Lord Yama came to take him to hell. His voice was already choked; but somehow he suddenly began to repeat loudly the **Vishnu Sahasranam**. All were greatly pleased and exclaimed, “Blessed is his fortune.” The angels of Lord Yama, as they heard the sound of his voice repeating the names of Lord Vishnu, ran away. The angels of Lord Vishnu then came, and paying their respects to him took him with them to heaven (*Vaikuntha*).

Almost all the great *Acharyas* of yore commented on the greatness of the **Vishnu Sahasranam**. Adi Sankaracharya, the *Advaita* philosopher, in verse 27 of his hymn, *Bhaja Govindam*, said that the Gita and the **Vishnu Sahasranam** should be chanted and the form of the Lord of Lakshmi, Vishnu should always be meditated on. He also said that the **Vishnu Sahasranam** bestowed all noble virtues on those who chanted it :-

geyam gètánámasahasram

dhyeyam ùrèpatirüpam ajasram

neyam sajjana-saṅge cittam

deyam dènajanáya ca vittam (27)

Parashar Bhattar said that the **Vishnu Sahasranam** absolved people of all sins and had no equal.

Acharya Madhva said that the **Vishnu Sahasranam** was the essence of the Mahabharat which in turn was the essence of the *Shastras* and that each word of the **Vishnu Sahasranam** had 100 meanings. Madhva has given quotes in many of his works for the different meanings of the names of Vishnu in the **Vishnu Sahasranam**.

The recitation of the **Vishnu Sahasranam** brings unwavering calm of mind, complete freedom from stress and eternal knowledge. Nothing evil or inauspicious will befall a man here or hereafter who daily hears or repeats these names. Whichever devoted man, getting up early in the morning and purifying himself, repeats this hymn devoted to Vasudev, with a mind that is concentrated on Him, that man attains to great fame, leadership among his peers, wealth, that is secure and the supreme good unsurpassed by anything. He will be free from all fears and be endowed with great courage and energy and he will be free from diseases. Beauty of form, strength of body and mind, and virtuous character will be natural to him. One who reads this hymn every day with devotion and attention attains to peace of mind, patience, prosperity, mental stability, memory and reputation. Whoever desires advancement and happiness should repeat this devotional hymn on Lord Vishnu. Never will defeat attend on a man who adores the Lotus-eyed One (*Kamalnayani*), Who is the Master of all the worlds, Who is birthless, and out of whom the worlds have originated and into whom they dissolve.

– Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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So, at present, this is the belief that devotees should hold. Sai Samartha is always there, permanently and continuously. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 148)

He, Who espoused the cause of the devotees, has abandoned His body in Shirdi and is all-pervasive with the movable and the immovable. He is capable of taking Avatar again. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 73)

Though we cannot see Him with our naked eye He is everywhere. Though He is hiding in a subtle form, He keeps us engrossed in Him. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 44, Verse 111)

"Even when I pass away, believe in my words. From my tomb my bones will give you assurance." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 105)

"Not only I, but my tomb would be speaking, moving and communicating with those who surrender themselves whole heartedly to me." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 106)

"Do not worry that I shall be hidden from your eyes. You will hear my bones speak and discuss your welfare." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 107)

"Always remember me only. Believe in my heart and soul. Pray without selfish motives and you will attain your welfare." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 108)

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In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

NANASAHEB CHANDORKAR

(Contd. from last issue)

Seeing Bannumai, Nanasaheb's joy had no bounds. He bowed before her and began removing the thorns which were pricking her body. However, she once again disappeared in the bushes. Nanasaheb was on the verge of giving up all hopes. But, once again resolved firmly and asked Khirvandikar, "Peg a tent here. Erect a small shelter and make preparations for her holy bath !"

Khirvandikar began the work. After taking out all the articles one by one, he realized that they have forgotten to bring a *Choli*. But, just then, he spotted a tailor who was on his way back from the weekly *Bazar*. On enquiring, he said that he indeed had a *Choli* with him. Now, the preparations were complete in all respects.

Nanasaheb once again prayed to Baba. On opening his eyes, he saw Bannumai standing in the shelter ready to be given a bath ! Nanasaheb then proceeded to give a ritualistic bath. He removed the thorns, combed her hair, anointed *Utane*, made her wear *Saree*, *Choli*, *Mangalsutra* and applied *Kumkum*. Then, he performed her *Pooja*, placed *Naivedya* on her hand, gave her *Dakshina* and bowed before her.

But, as soon as this was over, Bannumai threw away all the articles and once again disappeared in the *Jungle*.

This news spread in the village very fast and also reached Bannumai's mother. She became furious. She came rushing at Nanasaheb and started accusing of misbehaving with her daughter. Nana tried his best to explain the whole matter; but she was not prepared to get convinced. Ultimately, Nana handed over all the articles he had brought for the *Pooja* to her and only then she got pacified.

Nanasaheb and Khirvandikar were devastated with the events and in a sad mood, they returned to the village temple. As the time to leave the village approached, the only thought in Nana's mind was 'How will I now get Bannumai's *Darshan* ?' Around 4-5 in the morning, when he awoke, he saw her sitting near his pillow. Nana placed his forehead on her feet and once again she rushed out of the temple. Nana now realized that whenever he wishes, Baba blesses him with Bannumai's *Darshan*. He was overjoyed with Baba's miracles !

In reality, Bannumai had come to her mother's place to sleep. When her mother awoke, she realized that Bannumai was not around. She went searching for her at various places and ultimately reached the temple. There she came to know about the above incident.

Nanasaheb was large hearted. He honoured her mother properly and then set on his way back to Nagar.

UDDHARI SANKATI BHAKTANTE

(In times of perils, the Almighty comes to the rescue of His devotees)

From 1902, for some years, Nanasaheb was the Mamledar of Jamner Taluka of Khandesh province. It is during this period that Baba gave him a miraculous experience at the time of pregnancy of Nanasaheb's daughter Mainatai.

The doctors had predicted Mainatai's delivery date to be in the early months of 1905. Nanasaheb had, therefore, brought her to Jamner from Pune. Finally, the time

for delivery of the child arrived. Doctors and nurses were trying their best to help her in delivering the baby. However, their efforts were proved to be futile. Nanasaheb then resorted to invoking the blessings of the Almighty. He arranged to perform religious rites like Navachandi Havan, Saptashati Pathan etc. But, the child's birth was not taking place. Even the life of the would-be mother was now at stake.

Then, at about 5 in the evening, as per his usual practice, Nanasaheb started fervently praying to Baba. While praying, a thought came to his mind - 'If I get Baba's Aarati and Udi, then even if the Lord Yam (God of death) comes himself, he will have to return empty handed.'

At the same time, here in Shirdi, Ramgeer Bua suddenly developed an urge to go to his native village in Khandesh area. He, therefore, went to Baba to seek His permission. Baba replied, "Bapugeer, you be rest assured. But, on the way, do go to Jamner. Stay with Nana and then proceed to your village. And one more thing - give him this Udi and this piece of paper of Aarati !" Baba instructed Shama (Madhavrao Deshpande) to copy down 'Aarati Sai Baba' (composed by Madhavrao Adkar) on a piece of paper and pass it on to Ramgeer Bua.

Ramgeer Bua said, "Baba, I have only two rupees in my pocket. In that amount, how will I be able to undertake the journey to Jamner ?" Baba assured him, "Don't worry about it. Everything will get arranged." Satisfied, Ramgeer Bua took leave of Baba and set on the journey - carrying with him the Udi and paper of Aarati.

By the time he reached Jalgaon, he had spent one rupee and fourteen Anas on the train fare - leaving with him only two Anas. And, he had yet to cover a distance of about 44 kilometers between Jalgaon and Jamner. He was unable to think of any way out. Just then he spotted a sepoy at a far away spot. The man was searching for Ramgeer Bua ! He said, "Nanasaheb has sent me to fetch you. He is anxiously waiting for you. Let us not waste any more time." Hearing this Ramgeer Bua was overjoyed. His worries over, he immediately sat in Tonga brought by the man.

From the type of moustache, beard and clothes worn by the sepoy, he appeared to be a Muslim. The duo travelled through out the night. In early hours of the morning, the sepoy halted the Tonga by the side of a stream to give rest to its horse. He fetched water from the stream and took out some snacks. Ramgeer Bua was worried about eating food from the hands of a 'Muslim'. But, the sepoy immediately resolved the issue and clarified that he is a 'Kshatriya Rajput'. They shared the food and set on to complete the remaining journey.

On entering the town, Bua located Nanasaheb's office. He rushed inside as he had to answer call of nature. On returning, he found that the sepoy, the Tonga and the horses were nowhere to be seen ! Bua was surprised. He again went back inside the office. There he came to know that Nanasaheb was at home only.

Bua met Nana. At that time, the religious rites (Havan, Yadnya, Pathan etc.) were going on. Bua gave Nana the Udi and paper of Aarati. On seeing these, Nanasaheb felt relieved - In spite of the difficult circumstances prevailing around him at that time. He immediately called his wife and asked her to feed the Udi through water to Mainatai and he himself began reciting the Aarati. The moment the Udi entered her stomach, Mainatai's pains began subsiding and in due course she delivered the baby. Everyone around heaved a sigh of relief.

Bua now enquired with Nana, "I don't see the Tongevala you had sent to fetch me. Where is he ?" Nanasaheb got confused. He replied, "I did not send anyone. No one here knew that you were coming. Then, where is the question of sending some one to fetch you ?" Bua narrated in detailed the story from its very beginning. On hearing it, Nanasaheb was stunned and moved. Tears started streaming from his eyes.

Unfortunately, the child delivered by Mainatai did not live long. Mainatai had lost her husband just before the birth of the child due to the epidemic of plague. This second death was a tremendous blow to the family. In a disheartened mood, Nanasaheb went to Shirdi along with his wife. He sat at the feet of Shri Sai Baba. But, he realized that Baba is not paying His usual attention to him. Nanasaheb was restless on noticing that Baba had not even asked His question enquiring about his wellbeing. Ultimately, he could not hold back himself any longer and asked Baba, "We are always under the shelter of Your blessings. Even then, we are facing so many hardships and unfortunate calamities. What shall we do ?"

The advice that Baba imparted on this is worth pondering on.

He said, "Nana, if you were coming to me only to save the lives of your son-in-law and grandson, then it is your mistake. Don't come to me for such reasons. Because, I don't have control over birth and death. They are dependent on the deeds of your earlier births. Even the Almighty God does not interfere in the matters. Will He ask the sun or the moon to change the times of their rising or setting ? He cannot do it and He will not do it. Because, it will create a chaos in the Universe." Nana then asked, " Then, how do you predict, what is going to happen in future ?" Baba gave clarification about the 'miracles' that He performed. He said,

"Nana, I don't perform miracles. Only I am able to look into the future events and I narrate them to you. You feel that these are miracles. When I predict such events, you direct your devotion towards me. I redirect it to the Almighty and ensure your welfare."

This shows, how concerned Baba was about wellbeing of His devotees !

When the Bhakta is Param Yogya (deserving), the Almighty showers His blessings incessantly. Baba did everything for Nanasaheb. This leaves no doubts about Nanasaheb's credentials as a 'Param Yogya Bhakta'.

(Contd.)



In the *Chavadi*, He is present invisibly; in the *Masjid*, He is *Brahma* Incarnate; in the *Samadhi (Mandir)* He is in *Samadhi*. The bliss of His presence is everywhere. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 147)

"Any one of you, wherever you are, whenever you come to me, with your hand outstretched, with devotion, I am there to respond to your faith, day and night." (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 15, Verse 67)

"My tomb shall belss, speak and fulfil the innumerable needs of my devotees." (Shri Sai Baba's Promise)

"I shall be ever active and vigorous even after casting away my body." (Shri Sai Baba's Promise)

"I am ever vigilant to help and guide all those who come to me, who surrender to me and seek refuge in me." (Shri Sai Baba's Promise)

He gives visions to many; He appears in dreams to quite a number; and He grants miracles to several people secretly. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 43, Verse 145)

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