



Gudhi Padwa - Monday, 19th March, 2007 Chaitra Shudh 1, Shaka 1929
Shri RamNavami - Tuesday, 27th March, 2007 Chaitra Shudh 9, Shaka 1929

Estd. Year 1923

Year 7

Issue No. 2

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O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are Thy Hanuman



*O Sai Ram !
I fall in prostration at Thy Holy Feet.
“...His state
Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;”*

Thus, sang the blind poet John Milton who opened our eyes to the Lord, and gave us wisdom. He laid down a path of wisdom and self-realization, after coming to the realization that God hath ‘thousands’ of devotees who ‘speed,/ and post o’er land and ocean without rest.’

Of course, one such devotee was Hanuman who, in order to get to Lanka, where Sita was held prisoner by Ravana, crossed the ocean. When Lord Rama asked him, “O mighty hero, how did you cross the ocean ?” Hanuman humbly replied, “By the power and glory of Thy Name, my Lord.” Hanuman is the living embodiment of Ram-Nam. He was an

ideal selfless worker, a true *Karma Yogi* who worked desirelessly and dynamically. He served Shri Rama with pure love and devotion, without expecting any fruit in return. He did, what others could not do – crossing the ocean simply by uttering Ram-Nam.

*O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.*

*O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.*

O Sai Ram ! You make Your devotees perform uphill tasks simply by uttering Sai-Ram. O my Lord ! You never prescribed any *Asan*, regulation of breathing or any rites to Your devotees, nor did You blow any *Mantra* into their ears. You simply told them to leave off all cleverness, and always remember “Sai” “Sai”. (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter X) Reciting Your Name, repeating it, recalling Your majesty and splendour, Your imminence and transcendence, Your omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, Your perfection – these are the ways in which one uses Sai-Nam for removing one’s all shackles and getting free.

Once, in a packed assembly, somebody questioned Hanuman, whether he really had Sita and Rama in his self, he literally tore open his chest to reveal both, in his heart. Seeing such zealous devotion, Rama embraced him and granted a boon :

“Wherever my Katha is being recited, you shall always be there... I shall never ever be estranged from you.”

Thenceforth :

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*Yatra Yatra Raghunath Kirtanam,
Tatra Tatra Krita Mastaka Anjalim;
Bashpawari Paripurna Lochanam,
Marutim Nammascha Rakshas Antakam.*

which means :

That wherever the deeds of Shri Rama
are sung

At all such places does Hanuman –

with his palms folded

above his forehead – cry

Tears of devotion and joy,

At all such places

does his presence

remove the fear of demons, –

we bow to him.

*O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.*

*O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.*

O Sai Ram ! You are one of those, Who incarnated for the welfare of the devotees. Supreme in knowledge and surrounded with divine aura, You – O Baba ! – are quite aware that standing on Mahendra Hill, Hanuman decided to cross the ocean with a jump and reach Lanka. Standing there, he observed the vastness of the ocean and the distant lands of Lanka. There was no doubt, there was no fear – absolutely no conflict within – for it was Shri Rama Who was working through him and not him. Wind was flowing freely above the ocean, the waves were traversing it to the other shore. After all, Who made the wind flow ?

It was Shri Rama Himself. And He Who made the wind flow can make Hanuman fly too – perhaps – or if he had other plans, it could be otherwise. As he repeated the Name of the Lord in his mind, his body started to horripilate and a few drops of tears dripped down the corners of his eyes. The whole world appeared to be filled with Shri Rama – the Lord of his heart – and without any intention his body started to expand. The others watched the whole scene in awe, spell bound and amazed and the noble devotee silently repeated his Lord’s Name in choked voice full of love.

Having completely surrendered to Shri Rama Hanuman leapt into the air towards South to cross the ocean, to get to Lanka, where Sita was held prisoner by Ravana.

*O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.*

*O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.*

O Baba, crossing the ocean to get to Sita is actually symbolic of crossing over one's attachments and desires to reach 'Devotion Incarnate' Sita. The attachments and subsequent desires are like a great ocean, one has to traverse to get one's spiritual goals as it is believed that one of the greatest impediments in the spiritual journey of an aspirant is his attachment towards material objects.

O Sai, our entire life is like the vast ocean, and hence, it is called '*Sansar Sagar*' (the ocean of life). The goal of life is to cross this ocean without falling down and drowning in it. This ocean of mundane existence is very hard to cross. Waves of attachments beat high against the bank of bad thoughts and break down trees of fortitude. The breeze of egoism blows with force and makes the ocean rough and agitated. Crocodiles in the form of anger and hatred move there fearlessly. Eddies in the form of the 'I' and 'mine' and other doubts whirl there incessantly, and innumerable fishes in the form of censure, hate and jealousy play there. (Shri Sai Satcharita, Epilogue)

Here, it is necessary to make a mention of a legendary Vedic sage Agastya, who acquired knowledge by practicing penance for 1000 *Yugas*. Once, a number of demons were harassing the hermits by disturbing them in their ascetic duties. These demons had taken refuge in the ocean, and it was difficult for the hermits to vanquish them. In their desperation the hermits appealed to the sage Agastya, who drank all the water of the ocean in order to carry out the orders of Anakara (incorporeal, shapeless God), and held it within him until the demons were destroyed.

Though, this ocean is so fierce and terrible, O *Sadguru* Sai ! You are the Agastya to destroy the *Bhava Sagar* (the ocean of worldly existence) or the sun, to destroy the darkness of ignorance. (Chapter XII)

O Sai Ram, to cross the *Sansar Sagar*, we need a boat and we need a helmsman to steer the boat clear of all dangers. Our body - mind can be thought of, as the boat and the *Sadguru*, who guides our intellect etc., as helmsman. O *Sadguru* Sai ! Thou art our helmsman, and those, who are fortunate and whose demerits have vanished, take to Your worship ! If one always says "Sai, Sai", You'll take him over the seven seas. (Chapter XIII)

O Sai Ram, seeing Your blissful form and Your inconceivable power is a bliss in itself. O Baba, how can I possibly describe Your forms, signs or qualities. O Sai, nurture me ! O Mother of this world, may I worship You steadfastly.

O Sai, with Your grace everything is smooth and easy. Listening to Your stories is, in a way, keeping Your company. The importance of Your company is very great. It removes our body-consciousness and egoism, destroys completely the chain of our birth and death, cuts asunder all the knots of the mind and takes us to You, Who is pure consciousness. It certainly increases our non-attachment to sense-objects and makes us quite indifferent to pleasures and pain, and leads us onward on the spiritual path. If one has no other *Sadhana*, such as worship or devotion etc., but takes refuge in You wholeheartedly, You'll carry one safely across the ocean of worldly existence. (Chapter X)

*O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.*

*O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.*

O Baba, there are several examples of Your sincere devotees who - using this very powerful tool to attain the goal, safely cross the ocean of worldly existence. O Sai, on seeing Your form, which is like eternal *Brahma*, self-luminous, peerless and pure, one loses mind's restlessness and becomes calm and composed.

O Sai ! O Foundation of righteousness, salutations to You. I bow to You. It is said that, when Hanuman was about to cross the ocean, he became big in stature. To be big, does not only mean to be tall or stout. To be big, also means to be wise, brave and courageous, to be able to perform such a difficult task. Though big, Hanuman was light in weight. To be light, does not only mean that he was thin and light in weight. What it means is that though Hanuman was so clever and brave, he had no ego and false pride. Humility is one of the most important requisites of the spiritual aspirant's personality, and true surrender is important in getting rid of one's ego and once ego is destroyed, bliss results.

O Baba ! O Mother of the Universe ! I bow to You ! I bow to You yet again !, and yet again and again ! O Sai, when You allotted the work of composing the Shri Sai Satcharita to Hemadpant, You made him big in stature, but light in weight. When he took the pen in his hand, You took away his egoism and wrote Yourself Your stories. The credit of relating Your stories, therefore, goes to You and not to him. (Chapter III)

O Baba, what You expect from devotees are *Bhakti* or devotion, truthfulness and simplicity. Your own life has always been a shining example of simplicity, devoid of ego. You always categorically said that You would ever be with Your devotees, who possess these attributes. O Sai ! Thou art the essence and embodiment of spiritual enlightenment and religious harmony. You awakened devotees to the eternal truth - '*Sabka Malik Ek*' (one God governs all). You wanted to provide each one with two powerful implements to make them stronger and wiser - one being *Shraddha* (faith) and the other being *Saburi* (patience).

*O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.*

*O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.*

O The One Who blesses us, I bow to You, protect me, I come to Your refuge, O Sai, as Hanuman crossed over the ocean different demonesses across his path. These demonesses that crossed the path of Hanuman are the obstacles that one encounters on the spiritual path.

O Sai Ram ! You always advocated dedicated effort in the path of spirituality. Here, it is worth recalling the story of V. H. Thakur, who was a clerk in the Revenue Department. Once, he - when on an official tour - came to a town, named Vadgaon, near Belgaoon. There, he saw a Kanarese saint (Appa) and bowed before him. After being benefitted from the saint's discourse, Thakur sought Appa's permission to proceed ahead. Wishing Thakur a happy journey, the great saint suggested him to make a thorough reading of '*Vichar Sagar*', authored by Nischal Das, to get his desires fulfilled; adding that, when he moves to the North in the discharge of his duties in future, he'll encounter the *Sadguru*, who would open his eyes of the intellect and show him the divine beauty of the self, and fulfil his tender longings of devotion. When this was done, his desire for sense - objects would vanish, twin fruits of *Vivek* (discrimination) and *Vairagya* (dispassion or non-attachment) would come to his hands and knowledge would sprout up even in his sleep.

The words of the Kanarese saint soon turned true. Thakur was first transferred to Junnar, and then to Kalyan, where he came in contact with Nanasahab Chandorkar, who - in turn, motivated Thakur to make a pilgrimage to Shirdi. He reached Shirdi, and fell at his *Sadguru's* Feet. The omniscient Baba said to him, "... In the spiritual path you have to put in your best exertion, it is very difficult. What Appa told you was all right; but these things have to be practised and lived. **Mere reading won't do. You have to think and carry out, what you read; otherwise it is of no use. Mere book - learning, without the grace of the Guru and self-realization is of no avail.** (Chapter XXI)

**O Sai Ram ! Thy Devotees are
Thy Hanuman.**

**O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.**

O Sai Ram, blessed and fortunate indeed is one, one who knows You. And O Baba ! You know that Hanuman's next encounter was with a golden mountain. The Lord of the golden mountain asked Hanuman to rest, before he continued the journey. The golden mountain is symbolic of material temptation.

O Sai, here – at this point - my mind goes to the story of a rich gentleman, who was the living embodiment of material temptation. Once, he went to the *Masjid*, fell at Your Feet, and entreated to get *Brahma-Gnyan* from You.

O Baba, without any loss of time, You swing into action to show him the *Brahma*. You made him sit near Your Feet and engaged him in some other talk; and thus, made him forget his question temporarily. Then, You called an urchin and asked him to arrange a loan of Rs. five, either from Nandu or from Bala grocer. But, loan was never arranged. In the meantime, the rich gentleman started repeating his request to You for *Brahma-Gnyan*.

O Sai Nath, now, You were straight forward in Your explanation – "O my dear friend, did you not understand all the procedure, that I went through, sitting in this place, for enabling you to see the *Brahma* ?" O Baba, then, You said to the gentleman, "Well, sir, there is in your pocket the *Brahma* in form of fifty times of five (Rs. 250/-) rupees."

O Sai Ram ! You are the living and moving *Brahma* Incarnate. You spoke to the *Brahma-gnyan* - seeker thus : "How can he, whose mind is engrossed in wealth, progeny and prosperity, expect to know the *Brahma*, without removing the attachment for them ? The illusion of attachment or the love of money is a deep eddy (whirlpool) of pain, full of crocodiles in the form of conceit and jealousy. He, who is desireless, can alone cross this whirlpool. Greed and *Brahma* are asunder as poles, they are eternally opposed to each other. Where, there is greed, there is no room for thought or meditation of the *Brahma*. Then, how can a greedy man, get dispassion and salvation ! For a greedy man there is no peace, neither contentment, nor steadiness. If there be even a little trace of greed in mind, all the *Sadhanas* (spiritual endeavours) are of no avail. Even the knowledge of a well-read man, who is not free from the desire of the fruit or reward of his actions, is futile and can't help him in getting self-realization." (Chapter XVI-XVII)

**O Sai Ram ! Thy devotees are
Thy Hanuman.**

**O Sai Ram ! I fall in prostration at
Thy Holy Feet.**

O Sai Ram ! I bow to You, O One Who is always changing places, O One Who is full of affection, I bow to You, I bow to You.

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Hemadpant, in 'Shri Sai Satcharita', says...

Just as Kakasaheb Dixit read the Nath Bhagvat in the day, every night he read the Bhavarth Ramayan (by Eknath).

It was so regular that some times even the offering of flowers to God could be missed, or he could miss other customary duties or neglect his bath; but the time, which he himself had allotted for reading them, was always adhered.

Both these books, written by Eknath, contained the essence of divine knowledge. Dixit thought them to be Sai Samarth's blessing to him.

In these two unique books, which were also very appealing, the knowledge of self, non-attachment and practice of ethics – these three qualities - continued to form the three-fold wick of flame, which shone with divine light.

He, who has sipped from the cup, containing the nectar of the preachings of these books, is fortunate. He overcomes the three-fold difficulties of the material world at the same time, and reaches the ultimate (*Moksha*).

By Sai's grace, Dixit needed a listener and I got the opportunity to listen to the Bhagvat and was thus obliged.

I began to attend the session, day and night, due to good fortune, which purified my ears.

So be it. One night, when the reading was in progress on the pious stories, an incident occurred. Listeners should listen to that story, which is a digression.

Well, how can I help it ? I am inspired by something else, while describing another. But, why should I ignore something, which I know to be interesting.

An interesting story from the Ramayana was being narrated about Hanuman who, on his mother's instructions, tried to test his master's powers and ended by experiencing terrible miseries.

When Hanuman was caught in the cyclonic winds, which were created by the feathers of Rama's arrows and went round and round in the sky, he was scared to death. At that time his father (*Vayu*) came to his rescue.

Listening to his father's advice, Hanuman surrendered to Rama. While this part was being narrated, something amazing took place. Listen to it !

Our mind was engrossed in the story. Each one was involved in the light of listening, when a scorpion, incarnation of death, appeared, God only knows from where !

I do not know, how he got fond of the narration and without my knowledge, he jumped onto my shoulder and settled himself down, enjoying the sentiments of the story.

Look ! Here too Baba was alert. I was not aware of its presence. But, God protects those who love His stories.

I looked casually and saw a terrible scorpion, calmly perched on my right shoulder, on the '*Uparna*'.

He did not move at all and was quietly paying attention, as a very attentive listener would, and was seated peacefully on his seat.

If, as was his nature, he had moved its sting just a little bit, he would not have allowed me to enjoy the freedom and peace and would have given me unbearable pain.

The story from the Ramayana was in full swing. The speaker and the listeners were engrossed in the story – all this would have been spoilt. Such was the ominous companion, whose seizure was difficult and a dilemma.

This is the greatness of the story of Rama. No possible obstacles can be more powerful than it. They have to become repentant and forget their innate nature.

By the grace of Rama, I was endowed with intelligence. I could ward off the difficulty quietly. One should not depend till the last moment on this creature of unsteady nature.

That '*Uparna*' with which I had covered myself, I gathered cautiously from two sides, folded the scorpion in it tightly, took it out to the garden and spread it out there.

Back

Experiences of Sai Maharaj

Excerpts from a letter written on 18/2/1920 by Shri Nilkanth Ramchandra Sahasrabuddhe citing his experiences and published in the 1st year's third issue of Shri Sai Leela.

Late one night in the beginning of December 1910, while reading the 'Panchadashi' at a fellow devotee's place, Shri Bhausaheb Dixit and Shri Nanasaheb Chandorkar arrived unexpectedly around 11 p.m. After some preliminary conversation, Nanasaheb asked me, "When are you going to Shirdi?" "Someday," I answered. They had asked me many times before and I had been putting it off. This time they insisted that I leave the very next day, a Sunday. I told them that I would collect my pension and go on Monday; but they were so insistent that Nanasaheb gave me Rs. 10/- for expenses and said, "Annasaheb Dabholkar will arrange to collect your pension," I was hesitant; but reluctantly agreed, wondering if I had to stay for more days in Shirdi, would Rs. 10/- suffice. But, Bhausaheb arranged for an unlimited amount to be paid to me by giving me a letter to a treasurer in Shirdi.

Reluctantly I left for Shirdi the very next morning. My co-passenger in the Manmad Mail was a young man, who was M.A. and studying for LL.B. Conversing with him I asked him if he knew anything about Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi. "I know that mad *Fakir*," was all he replied. My belief that Shirdi was a place of idiots was confirmed.

I reached Shirdi around 10 a.m. and went to Rao Bahadur Sathe's *Wada*, where I was supposed to look for Shri Madhavrao Deshpande, the treasurer mentioned by Bhausaheb. Just then, I met an old friend, Laxman Krishnaji alias Tatyasaheb Noolkar, seated there. Initially when I greeted him with a *Namaste*, he did not recognize me; but when he did, he gave me a bear hug and said, all my work was now his responsibility. He appraised Madhavrao of my circumstances.

After bathing, Tatyasaheb took me for the *Aarati* in the *Masjid*. As Tatyasaheb paid his obeisance by touching his head on Shri Sai Baba's Feet, I too followed suit as a matter of routine. Immediately Baba said, "Do *Namaskar* to Tatyaba, do *Namaskar* to Bapusaheb, there is no lowliness in bowing to anyone."

Tatyasaheb had introduced me to Bapusaheb Jog earlier. Shri Sai told me to serve Tatyaba in the noon *Aarati* repeatedly for the next three days. Though I believed that some great souls graced this earth, I was doubtful of Shri Sai Baba's authority. Hence, I jested with Tatyaba to give me some opportunity to serve him from the very first day. I continued to jest till one day Tatyaba told me to stop, as it hurt him immensely.

One day, I told Baba that I could not fathom the meaning of His words and that He should tell me clearly, what He meant. Unlike His other devotees, I could not deduce some hidden meaning. "Okay," He said.

A few days later, during one of His discourses, He said, "Our experiences are not indirect. Those that feel so can go and those who don't, should experience and then go." I realized that these words were for me and so, told him that I would not go, until I had proof. Once again, He just said, "Okay".

Madhavrao would keep asking Baba about the date of my return; but Baba kept saying, "We have to work on him. Let him lie around the *Masjid* like a dog." Another time He said, "He is mine; I have to do his work; whom does he have besides me?" I was thus assured by Baba.

Tatyaba, who had been in good health all these days, suddenly became extremely ill and I resolved not to go till he got well. But, he died in the month of March. Sai's words "Serve Tatyaba" thus came true and one day Tatyaba tearfully said, "Nilkanthrao, Baba brought you here, so that I may not suffer. Don't you think that is what He meant, when He first uttered those words to you?" Concentrating his sight and telling both his sons to recite the '*Abhang*', which means - "Please remain within my sight always", he left his body in the wee hours of the morning.

The previous day, before his condition worsened, Baba had said to Madhavrao, "Tatyaba listened to me and stayed here to achieve salvation." Not even is highly educated doctor son could have foreseen that Tatyaba's condition would turn for the worse so suddenly. "Such a death is really the fruit of great good deeds (*Maha Punya*)" was everybody's unanimous opinion as they recalled the *Shloka* from the Bhagvad Gita, which says that those who remember God, when the end is near achieve salvation. This was Baba's *Prasad*.

In the last 35-36 years, I do not remember a single week, in which I did not have dreams. But, while in Shirdi many months passed with dream-free sleep. There could be no other reasons except Baba's blessings. My health was good if not better in other places; but I had always had dreams.

Once, during noon *Aarati*, while Baba was distributing *Mithai* brought by a gentleman as *Prasad*, I wondered if my turn would come. Just then Baba smilingly gestured, "Nothing for you"; and then gave me the *Prasad* !

Once, referring to the fictitious name of Dadabhat Deshpande instead of mine, Baba described my proud nature, my family and circumstances. Bhausaheb Dixit asked, "Who is this Dadabhat Deshpande?" as he and I were the only two people, who completely understood whom Baba had implied. The others did not.

One day, as soon as I entered the *Masjid*, Baba said, "Come Ramayya !" and asked me to come up. After some days, when Baba was distributing '*Udi*' and it was my turn to do *Namaskar*, He blessed me by keeping His hand on my head and said, "Say Rama's name," as I had firm belief in thinking "*Shri Ramam sarvam karmani*", that is Shri Ram did everything.

Once, while I was musing for three days on the thought that saints made you like them immediately, Madhavrao as usual asked Baba as to when I would be allowed to return. Baba surprisingly replied, "He wants me to get up and make him sit in my place, a job which needs patience." Nobody, but I understood the meaning of His words !

I met the same young man I had met on the train to Shirdi, when he visited two months later. By now I had no doubts whatsoever regarding Baba's authority and so just repeated the same question to him. Amazingly, he had changed his previous opinion about Baba within half an hour. He could not explain, why.

The first time I met Baba, He asked me for Rs. 12/- as 'Dakshina'. After some days, He asked for Rs. 8/-. Some days later, a friend Shri Ramchandra Vaman alias Bhausaheb Modak sent Rs. 5/- by money order to Tatyasaheb, which he asked me to deliver to Baba. When I presented the amount to Baba, He said, "Keep it, you will need it for your expenses." But, since I had enough money, I requested Baba to keep it, when again He said, "You will need this for your expenses, I am telling you; so keep it with you !" Reluctantly I kept the amount. Later, when I got His permission to leave, I intended to go to Pune or Mumbai; but due to unforeseen circumstances I had to leave for Jalgaon. There was a shortfall of Rs. 5/- for the amount required to go there. I kept the note given by Baba in a sealed packet with a friend and borrowed Rs. 5/- from him. Later, I collected my sealed packet by returning the amount.

In later years, whenever I went to Shirdi, Baba asked me for exactly Rs. 15/- as 'Dakshina'. Once, when I did not have the requisite amount, He said, "Get them from Kaka (Bhausaheb Dixit) !" I could not meet Kaka then; but when I went once again, he said, "I do not know your money, I will take out the Holy Book (*Pothi*) and you can seek for yourself." But, I just returned to Baba without bothering to look in the Holy Book and telling Him, what had happened and asked Him to reveal the meaning of Rs. 15/-. But, He said, "Let it remain for the time being. We will see later; there is no hurry." So, I just kept quiet and mulled over the subject. Then I remembered some lines from Shri Nath Bhagvat, which I had noted in my notebook earlier. I found great satisfaction in them. The meaning of the two lines was that the five ways of *Yoga* and control of ten sense organs were the ways to self-realization. It struck me that the fifteen rupees, that Baba asked for every time must be these. As it is said in the Bhagvad Gita, those who believe, will find knowledge; and my belief was not blind.

On my last visit to Shirdi, as soon as He saw me, Baba said, "It is good you came; I was thinking about you." Words, I had never heard before. But, it never occurred to me that this would be His last *Darshan* until He left His mortal coil. This time, when I decided to return, I kept asking through Bhausaheb for permission to leave in the late afternoon, since we all believed the train left Kopargaon in the evening. But, every time, Baba would say, "Let him leave tomorrow morning." Finally, one day, I managed to get permission to leave in the late afternoon and reached Kopargaon station only to find that the timings of the train had changed to morning. I had to stay on the station overnight !

Once, my friend Rao Bahadur Ganpatrao Anjangaonkar had gone to Shirdi with some friends. Since he had to meet the public prosecutor in Thane regarding a District Court appeal on Sunday, he asked for permission to leave on Saturday; but Baba kept saying, "He does not need to go so early." But, how can ordinary people like us believe it ? Ultimately, after many appeals by Ganpatrao, Baba said, "Go, its your wish." When Ganpatrao reached Thane Court at the appointed time, he was informed that the appeal was postponed for another eight days.

- Shri Sai Leela, Year 1, Volume III,
Jyeshtha, Shaka 1845

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ELEVEN SAYINGS OF SAI BABA

- ***Whoever puts his feet on Shirdi soil, his sufferings would come to an end.***
- ***The wretched and miserable would rise into plenty of joy and happiness, as soon as they climb the steps of my mosque.***
- ***I shall be ever active and vigorous even after leaving this earthly body.***
- ***My tomb shall bless and speak to the needs of my devotees.***
- ***I shall be active and vigorous even from the tomb.***
- ***My mortal remains would speak from the tomb.***
- ***I am ever living to help and guide all who come to me, who surrender to me and who seek refuge in me.***
- ***If you look to me, I look to you.***
- ***If you cast your burden on me, I shall surely bear it.***
- ***If you seek my advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.***
- ***There shall be no want in the house of my devotee.***

Back

Message of the Saints Love, Compassion & Non-violence

**“Pothe padhi padhi jag mua,
Pandit hua na koi;
Dhai akshar prem ke,
Padhe so Pandit hoi !”**

In these words saint Kabir said that no amount of reading the scriptures makes a *Pandit*; but he who learns the word ‘love’ will surely become one.

The message of love has been spread by the Saints through the ages. *Bhagvan* Mahavir, Gautam Buddha and Shri Sai Baba, all spoke of love of humanity, so that ordinary people could achieve fulfilment in their lives. The message of love is universal, transcending all ages and true at all times.

They all preached *Ahinsa*, not only physically, but verbally and mentally as well. ‘*Kaya - Vacha - Mane*.’ Mahavir made it a basic tenet of religion. Buddha’s teaching is simple : “Cease to do evil, learn to do good; and purify your mind ! Hurt none by word or deed.”

Sai Baba laid special emphasis on verbal and mental non-violence. He used to say that vegetarians - who practiced physical *Ahinsa* - blatantly indulged in verbal and mental violence. To hurt people with bad words or even wishing ill for them was worse than hurting physically.

“Speak the truth,” exhorted Mahavir. “Be a lamp unto yourself,” said Buddha. “Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Seek your salvation in truth alone. One who denies the truth goes to hell, for *Karma*, the law of cause and effect ensures that every action has its result.” Baba always told His devotees to be truthful and not tell lies. “You should always be truthful. Then I will be with you, wherever you are all times,” assured Baba.

Love for all living creatures was the way of life of not only Mahavir, Buddha and Sai, but all the Saints, who have graced this earth, whatever religion they may have belonged to. “Give food to the hungry,” Mahavir and Buddha emphasized, while Baba said, “Know that those who give food to one suffering from the pangs of hunger, are really putting it in my mouth, and this is true everywhere.” He also said, never to shoo anybody away, be he a human, animal or bird. Giving food to the people with preference to the sick, blind, physically challenged, deaf, mute and poor over one’s relatives was the ultimate good deed or ‘*Punya*’ one could achieve. Since no one can shun the responsibility of good or bad behaviour, one should always have good deeds, good character and good thoughts to achieve *Moksha*, said Sai.

Love is the ultimate truth, say the Saints, be it Mahavir, Gautam Buddha or Sai Baba. Love is universal, all embracing, unconditional and abundant. “Love ye one another and I will love you all,” said Sai, and as Kabir mentioned, if one learnt the meaning of Love, one had gained the ultimate knowledge.

Come, lets spread the message of
the Saints,
Lets spread the message of Love -
for Love is the Life of the Soul.

- Jyoti Ranjan Raut

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Without having an association from some earlier life, no one, not just human beings, but even animals and birds, come across one another. Therefore, do not rebuff any one.

He, who definitely wishes to escape the bonds of birth and death, should follow the path of righteousness very meticulously and be always tranquil. Such a person should abandon harsh words; should not pick on others’ weaknesses; remain engaged in good acts concentrating on one’s own duties.

Baba has repeatedly said : “If any one speaks insultingly to another, then he has hurt me only and pierced my heart. He hurts me immediately, who speaks a volley of hard words to another; while I am immensely pleased for a long time, if one bears an insult patiently.”

There could be no lying before Sai. Falsehood does not gain Sai’s grace. Dishonesty leads to destruction and ultimately lies lead one to hell. To tell a lie would not serve any purpose, as Sai Maharaj was omniscient.

Just as ‘*Varanna*’ (highly tasteful dish of pulses) is the best among the six flavours (sweet, sour, salt, pungent, astringent and bitter), giving of food in charity is the most meritorious. A spire without a pinnacle does not seem befitting, nor does a lake without lotuses.

‘He will reap, what he sows.’

We have to reap, what we sow in our past life. One should endure one’s destiny calmly. There is no use crying about it.

Life is not to be lived only for doing work, to fulfil one’s wishes to acquire wealth and for earning money. Until one survives, one should study the philosophy of life. That is the aim of life.

Those wise men who have faith, who have acquired knowledge and who are non-attached, who have realised that ‘*Atma-tattva*’ (essence of the Supreme Spirit), which is experienced by them, know that they are really the fortunate devotees.

- Shri Sai Satcharita



In Sai's Proximity

Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

LAXMAN MAMA KULKARNI

Laxmanrao Kulkarni Ratnaparkhi was maternal uncle of Madhavrao Deshpande. He was a resident of Shirdi itself. He was an orthodox *Brahmin*. He used to follow the laws of touchability and religious rites very rigorously.

As Laxmanrao was the maternal uncle of Madhavrao, he was known as 'Laxman Mama' in the village. He was the *Vatandar Kulkarni* and *Gram Joshi* of Shirdi Village.

While the devotees were experiencing Baba's miracles, Laxmanrao maintained a distance from such things. He not only had no faith in Baba, but he was a very staunch opponent of Him.

An unlearned person is likely to fall into prey to bad company and habits. He may listen only to his ego and have belief only in himself. Gradually, he starts thinking that he is bigger than God. To bring such a person to the proper path, *Bhagvant* gives him certain jolts. The person starts coming back to his senses. Then, the Almighty enters his inner soul and gives him deliverance.

It so happened with Laxmanrao. The great egoist fell ill with an incurable disease. His sufferings knew no limits in spite of the various remedies he tried. Ultimately - as a last resort - he came to Baba's *Masjid*.

Baba looked at him with tranquil eyes, moved his hand over Laxmanrao's body and said, "Go ! *Allah* will set things right."

There was a miraculous change in Laxmanrao from the time he stepped into the *Masjid*. On top of it, he had the blessings of Baba. From that moment, he became a devotee of Baba.

On another occasion, Baba took a test of Laxmanrao.

Bappaji was the only son of Laxmanrao. When he was young, he ailed from some incurable disease. But, now Laxmanrao had faith in Baba. Therefore, along with other medial remedies, everyday he started bringing *Udi* from Baba's own hands and giving through water to Bappaji.

However, there came a time, when people felt that the body is going to be lost for ever. Laxmanrao rushed to the *Masjid*. He prostrated himself at Baba's Feet and cried, "Baba, save my son ! Oh, my God, I bow before you."

But, suddenly, Baba shouted at him, "Go away !" He even started showering abuses. Laxmanrao got scared. He was unable to understand Baba's strange behaviour.

In reality, now Laxmanrao had started believing in Baba. However, his old traits had not been completely eradicated. Some of his ego was still lingering. A few questions and doubts used to crop up in his mind - time and again.

With a heavy heart, Laxmanrao returned home. And after some time, Baba got up from His place. He came down the steps of the *Masjid* and straight away went to Laxmanrao's home. With love and affection, He moved His hand over Bappaji's body and immediately turned back. From that moment, Bappaji got relief.

Now Laxmanrao began believing that Baba is God Incarnat. He decided that in his every deed he will remember Baba.

Early every morning, Laxmanrao used to complete the rituals of *Snan-sandhya* and then came to the *Masjid* to avail Baba's *Darshan*. He used to wash Baba's Feet (*Pad-prakshalan*), used anoint *Gandha Akshata*, draw a *Tilak*, place flowers and *Tulsi* leaves, offer *Dhoop - Deep -Naivedya* and *Dakshina*. Thereafter, he used to prostrate himself before Baba and take His blessings. He used to distribute *Prasad* amongst those present. And then, he used to proceed to perform *Pooja* of other Gods and Goddesses of the village. This was his daily routine and he adhered to it till the end. With great devotion, he served Baba.

After the demise of Baba's loved devotee Megha, it was Bapusaheb Jog who used to perform Baba's *Pooja* at all times. In the afternoon of 15th October, 1918 - on the auspicious day of Dassera - Baba took *Maha-nirvan*. On the same night, He appeared in the dream of Laxmanrao and told him, "Bapusaab will not come to perform my *Kakad Aarati*. He thinks, I am dead. But, I am alive. You come and perform my *Kakad Aarati*."

There was havoc after the *Maha-nirvan* of Baba. Everyone was moved with deep grief. On that night, Baba's mortal body was placed in *Masjid* itself. Next day, it was moved to Butti *Wada*. Therefore, as instructed by Baba in the dream, Laxmanrao arrived at the *Masjid* with full preparations for performing *Pooja*. He prostrated before Baba, removed the cloth covering the face and took the last *Darshan*, and proceeded to perform *Pooja*. Many - who were present experienced Baba's hands moving at that time.

Time and again, Laxman Mama's eyes were getting filled up with tears. His body was trembling. In that state, he opened Baba's closed fist, placed *Vida Dakshina*, covered the body and departed from there.

Thereafter, the noon *Aarati* was performed by Bapusaheb Jog and in the evening Baba's body was brought to Butti *Wada*...

This was the way in which Baba showered His blessings upon Laxman Mama. Baba entered Mama's dream and made him perform the *Aarati*.

After Laxman Mama's demise, his only son Bappaji became *Vatandar Kulkarni* and *Gram Joshi* of Shirdi Village. Bappaji was fortunate enough to be around Baba for close to twelve years when Baba was *Dehdhari*.

Bappaji said that Baba believed in reincarnation of man.

In the year 1917, Lokmanya Tilak had come to Shirdi and offered coconut and garland to Baba. Baba returned the coconut as a *Prasad* to Tilak. Bappaji was present in the *Masjid* at that time.

Bappaji was a good *Keertankar*. He was well read as far as religious books are concerned.

MAHADU PHASALE

Mahadu Phassle was a old *Sevekari* of Baba. His real name was 'Madhav'; but in Shirdi, he was known as 'Mahadu'. Since his childhood, he developed an attraction towards Baba. As a young man, he served and stayed with Baba. From morning till night, he was always ever willing to serve Baba.

He used to do a lot of chores - sweeping the *Masjid*, cleaning the mat on which Baba sat, fill-up water in the tub kept near the steps, draw lukewarm water for Baba's bath, anxiously wait for Baba to finish His bath and then wipe His body, clean the *Hundis* (lamps) kept in the *Masjid* and Chavadi, help Abdulbaba in lighting up the lamps, look after Baba's horse, etc.

There was a room, adjoining the *Dhuni*, which was used for storing fire-wood. Baba had -with His own hands - constructed almost three-fourths of one wall of that room. At that time, Mahadu had assisted Baba by making mixture of mud. Baba had stacked the bricks and then plastered the wall with the mud.

At the time of Baba's mortal end, Mahadu handed over the *Chillum* and *Satka* used by Baba to Bapusaheb Jog. Bapusaheb had kept both these articles in his *Pooja Ghar*. Later on, when Bapusaheb shifted his residence to Upasani *Ashram* at Sakori, he took these sacred articles with him. In due course of time, these articles have been preserved in the Sai Sansthan.

This is a story of 1936. Baba's Muslim devotee Chhotekhan and Mahadu Phasale were sleeping in the *Masjid*. Chhotekhan heard Baba's voice saying, "Are Mahadu, get up ! I have to pass urine". But, Mahadu was fast asleep and could not get up. Next day morning, it was observed that at the place, where Baba used to sit, there was a poodle of water and a sweet fragrance was emanating from it.

(contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into
English by **Sudhir**

Shirdi Mahotsav – 2006

The 'Shirdi Mahotsav – 2006', organized by the Sansthan from Friday, December 29 to Sunday, December 31, to enable Sai devotees to welcome the New Year in the divine premises of Shri Sai Baba, was celebrated with great enthusiasm. This year the Sai *Samadhi Mandir* was kept open throughout the night on December 31, for Sai devotees to have the *Darshan* of Shri Sai Baba at the divine moment of the exit of the setting year and the dawn of the New Year. Sai devotees greeted this decision of the Sansthan.

Renowned artists were invited and variety of programmes were organized on the occasion. Prabhanjan Marathe's '*Bhaktigeet Gunjan*' programme was held on the first day of the festival at 7.30 p.m. on December 29. The participating artists were felicitated on behalf of the Sansthan by the Trustees of the Sansthan Shri Suresh Wabale, Shri Pandurang Abhang and Executive Officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure. Nitin Mukesh's '*Bhaktigeet*', a devotional music programme, was held on December 30 at 7.30 p.m. Nitin Mukesh and his co-artists were felicitated by the Sansthan Chairman and legislator Shri Jayant Sasane, Trustees Shri Suresh Wabale and Executive Officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure.

On the concluding day of the festival, Sachchidanand Appa's '*Ek Sham Sai ke Naam*', a programme of devotional songs, was held on December 31 from 6.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Chairman of the Sansthan Shri Jayant Sasane, Mrs. Rajashri Sasane and Trustee Shri Ashok Khambekar felicitated the artists, on behalf of the Sansthan. Vaishali Samant's '*Sai Bhajan Sandhya*' was held from 9 p.m. to 12 p.m. The participating artists were felicitated by the Chairman of the Sansthan, Shri Jayant Sasane, Mrs. Rajashri Sasane, Trustees Shri Eknath Gondkar and Shri Ashok Khambekar. A programme of devotional songs by Parvati Khan was held from 1.30 a.m. to 3 a.m. and Mrs. Sandhya Deshmukh's '*Bhajan Sandhya*', a programme of devotional songs, was held from 3 a.m. to 4.30 a.m. The participating artists in the programmes were felicitated by Executive Officer Shri Bhausaheb Wakchaure, Shri N. K. Kulkarni and Shri Chandrakant Mule, respectively.

Anticipating the huge gathering of devotees in Shirdi on December 31 and January 1, different arrangements were made by the Chairman of the Sansthan and legislator Shri Jayant Sasane, Vice Chairman Shri Shankararao Kolhe and all the Trustees. Temporary lodging arrangements for the occasion were made in the six schools in Shirdi. In all 52 cloth-covered *Mandaps* covering four and half lakh sq. ft. area in the *Prasadalaya* was erected.

Sai Baba *Dharamshala*, Sainath Secondary School ground, Sainagar ground, Sai Baba *Bhakta Nivas Sthan* surrounding and other places, were provided. Lodging facility for nearly 10,000 devotees was made. In the said schools and *Mandaps* mattresses, blankets, bed sheets, pillows, light, water, cleaning, bathing, mobile toilets and other amenities were provided for the devotees. Close circuit television sets were put up at several places to enable direct viewing of the temple telecast. Similarly, security guards and other staff were appointed to work in three shifts.

To savour the blessings of *Prasad* meals, arrangements for buffet lunch, tea, coffee, milk, snacks and *Prasad* meal was made at the *Prasadalaya* vehicle yard, Sai garden, Sai Baba *Bhakta Nivas Sthan* and Sainagar region and other places, besides the *Prasadalaya* hall. The canteen besides the *Prasadalaya* hall was kept open 24 hours, where tea, biscuits, coffee, milk and mineral water was provided. Breakfast packets were provided from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. to devotees. To ensure convenience to buy *Ladoo* packets, nine additional counters at the *Prasadalaya*, temple region, reception, *Dharmashala*, *Bhakta Nivas Sthan*, old Marathi School and other places, besides the regular *Ladoo* counters, were provided. To avoid any shortage of *Ladoo Prasads*, additional cooks, staff and gas burners were arranged.

Temporary information and guidance cells were erected at *Prasadalaya*, *Bhakta Nivas Sthan*, *Dharmashala* in front of bus depot, public relation office and other places, to provide right guidance to devotees during rush hours. Information boards for the guidance of devotees were put up at the additional lodging facility areas in the temple premises. So also primary medical care centres were started in the temple premises, additional bus facility was arranged.

