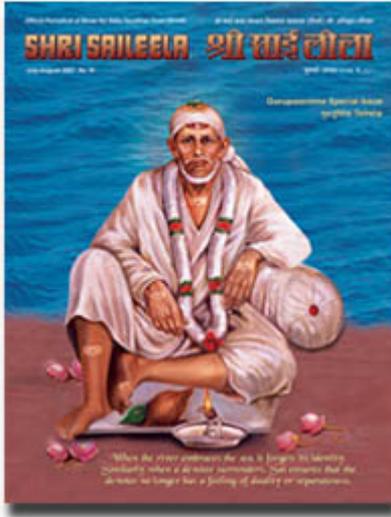


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Homepage

GURU OF ALL GURUS – SADGURU

***Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu,
Gurur Devo Maheshwarah,
Gurureva Parabrahma,
Tasmay Shree Gurave Namah.***

This is the prayer that elaborates the stature of the *Guru*. He is Brahma, He is Vishnu, He is Maheshwar. He is the embodiment of the *Parabrahman*, I offer my prayers to him.

What does ‘*Guru*’ mean ? ‘*Gu*’ stands for darkness and ‘*Ru*’ means one who removes it. So, just as the sun brings light to dispel the darkness of the night, a *Guru* removes the darkness of ignorance to enlighten his student / disciple.

Our first *Guru* on this earth is our mother. She is the one who teaches her infant to eat, walk, talk, and also the joy of sharing and caring. When the child grows older she teaches her child to read and write. The school going child now has another *Guru* – the school teacher. As the child grows through school and college many such *Gurus* come into the individual’s life.

While learning academics, the individual learns other skills like dancing, singing, sports, drawing etc. and specialized *Gurus* step in.

As the person progresses in life, the ups and downs in life also teach the art of coping. Books on various subjects also impart knowledge. One can learn from the smallest creature on earth. Lord Dattatreya made 24 different *Gurus*, including an ant and a honey bee.

But, the *Guru* of all *Gurus* is the *Sadguru*.

He is the one who guides us spiritually to fulfill the task assigned to us and helps us attain ultimate enlightenment and oneness with the creator. **Sai was one such *Sadguru*.** As *Sant Dnyaneshwar* rightly said, “A *Sadguru* is like the philosopher’s stone (*Paras*) who turns the iron-like disciple into gold. He also compares the *Sadguru* to *Amrit* or heavenly nectar.

Let us see, what Shri Sai Satcharit tells us about the *Sadguru* and devotion to him...

Brahma’s *Brahmanand* cannot exist without the *Sadguru*. Offer body, mind and wealth completely at the feet of the *Sadguru*. Spend the entire life serving the *Sadguru*. The tremendous power in him after he has tested the devotee will take the devotee to the threshold of ‘*Moksha*’ without him being conscious of it. The association with the *Guru* is like the sacred Ganges water which cleanses and makes one pure. It also stabilizes the otherwise fickle mind on God. Continuous observance of the teachings of the *Guru* and firm adherence to them brings unshakeable faith and unwavering stability.

Such is the marvel of *Guru*’s grace that it makes a dry and stiff plant effortlessly and profusely blossom in the most arid soil. It is the ardent wish of the true disciple that his devotion to the *Guru* should grow; that he should become detached from the world; his urge to remember his *Guru*’s name should become intense and his mind becomes pure.

Just as the worm by constantly thinking of the bee itself becomes the bee, in the same way, when a disciple constantly contemplates upon his *Guru*, he becomes similar to the *Guru*. By using the word ‘similar’, a distinction still remains.

Even that is not tolerated by the *Guru*, even for a moment, because a *Guru*'s existence is not possible without the disciple and the disciple is not separate from the *Guru*. If one wishes to surrender at the feet of the *Guru*, one should sing the praises of the *Guru* or recite the life-story of the *Guru* or listen to the tales about the *Guru* with devotion. The devotion to the *Guru*'s feet will develop and the well-being will tremendously increase gradually. These were the words of Baba.

There are eight ways of worshipping God by doing *Poojas* of images, sacrificial fire etc.; but compared to everything, the *Guru* is the best.

Krishna himself was the Supreme *Brahman*. Yet, he bowed at Sandipani's feet and said, "Remembrance of the *Sadguru* is the surest way to please me, who is Narayana. Singing the praises of the *Sadguru* rather than my praises is dearer to me a thousand-fold." Such is the excellence and profound significance of the *Sadguru*. He who turns his back on the praise of the *Guru* is an unfortunate sinner. He endures the painful cycle of births and deaths and becomes the cause of his own ruin.

The individual soul itself is the Supreme Spirit which gives joy to the whole world. And the Supreme Spirit is the *Guru* himself – Shankara - the giver of bliss. Lord Shankara Himself narrates to Parvati the bliss of having a *Guru* in the 'Guru Geeta'.

When the *Sadguru* determines, he himself will give the inspiration. He puts into words that which is indescribable, through his chosen people. Whether in worldly or spiritual life, whenever the *Sadguru* is the captain of the ship, he will steer the ship and its passengers to the opposite bank.

The *Guru* only is Truly *Brahman*

Brahman is eternal, the world transient. The *Guru* only is truly *Brahman*. After abandoning the transient concentrate on only the *Guru*. This constant feeling is a means of achieving spirituality. *Guru* and *Brahman* are not two separate entities. One who has realized the oneness, he (as it were) has practiced devotion. This realization is the easiest way to overcome *Maya*. *Jeeva* is the *Atma* troubled by ignorance, while *Shiva* is the *Atma* troubled by *Maya*. Only the *Samartha Guru* is capable of eliminating the distinction between the two. *Guru* is actually God himself. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. *Guru* in reality is God Almighty. He is the Supreme *Brahman*. *Guru* is the mother and *Guru* is the father. *Guru* is the protector, when God's wrath is incurred. But, when the *Guru* is angry, nobody can protect you. Remember this always.

The path of the world is full of confusion and dim. The words of the *Guru* shine like rays from a lamp to make it smooth and perceivable. *Guru* is the guide for worldly behavior, the rituals and pilgrimages to holy places. He is the guide, to what is right and what is wrong, and to practice non-attachment. He is the exponent of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. A living being enjoys the worldly experiences (good or bad) and God grants them to him. But, *Sadguru* is the only one who grants salvation. He is the store of all the *Atmas* who have oneness with him. When the *Sadguru* is pleased, he grants us celestial perception, by which the whole creation is seen in one divine vision.

The root cause of worldly existence is 'Agyan'; and when the *Anjan* of *Guru*'s grace is put in the eyes, then the veil of *Maya* will be removed and what remains is the real 'Gyan'. The *Guru* knows better than us, from head to toe, our stage of development, our part in life and our own inclinations. He is the means of the final salvation. What the *Guru* says is the holy book as well as the 'Puran'. Give attention to his chief advice. That is the word of the *Vedas*.

Qualities required to please the *Gururaya*

A disciple should be modest, able, free from envy, unselfish or disinterested, always ready to serve the *Guru*, eager to have spiritual knowledge and of steadfast temperament. He should have no hatred, nor engage in loquaciousness. These are the qualities required to please the *Gururaya*. Develop companionship or association with those who are well-known, virtuous and divine, have selfless love at the feet of the *Guru*; have inclination to tell stories about the virtues of the *Guru*. He who keeps himself away from the sinful life, who humbles himself at the feet of the teacher and the *Guru*, who has given up the longing for the fruits of action, can only attain the *Atman*. He who discards the fruits of action and expectations with the help of full concentration of mind and surrenders to the *Guru* whole-heartedly, then the *Guru* accepts him.

Who is the *Sadguru* ?

Know that he is the *Sadguru* who does not, even in his dreams expect any service or profit from his disciple. On the contrary, he wishes to serve the disciple. Only such a *Guru* is beneficial who does not consider that a disciple is insignificant and is egoless. He believes that the disciple is '*Purna Brahman*', treats him as his own son, and does not expect anything from him for his maintenance. Such a *Sadguru* is the best in the world. He is the abode of Supreme Peace, has no pride of learning, does not distinguish between the young and the old and the rich and the poor.

Sadguru has no desires of his own always; therefore what can a disciple do to fulfill his wishes ? It is he who serves his disciples and makes them desireless. In all the three worlds there is not another generous giver than the *Guru*. Surrender to him and only to him by being the humblest of the humble.

If we compare him to the *Chintamani*, the *Chintamani* only gives that which is wished for; but the *Guru* gives something which is not even imagined, to the astonishment of the devotee. If we compare him to the *Kalpataru*, the *Kalpataru* only fulfills the wishes that are asked for; but the *Gururaya* will grant the *Nirvikalpa* unexpectedly. The *Kamadhenu* fulfills the wish that is expressed; but the *Guru-dhenu* is still greater. He is famous as 'He, who gives that which is inconceivable'. Who else can deserve this title?

Faith in the *Guru*

We may try hundreds of means or *Sadhanas* to attain the spiritual goal, but without the grace of the *Sadguru*, it is not possible to achieve the goal of life. Constant and eternal remembrance of the benefits conferred by the *Guru* is the ornament of the disciple. He who tries to repay that obligation, loses his happiness. He, who with complete faith engages himself in the service of his *Guru*, the Lord is indebted to him always. No one can view him with evil intentions. He who does not waste even a moment and has a liking for the worship of the Lord and the *Guru*, they will give him infinite or perpetual happiness and enable him to cross over to the other shore.

Those who desire to end the cycle of birth and death, this wearisome coming and going should enjoin themselves to the *Guru*'s feet and constantly remember and chant his name with devotion. Ultimately, remembering the *Guru*, constantly at the time of leaving the body, the disciple will be absorbed in *Brahman*, undoubtedly goaded by the *Guru*.

Love your *Guru*, whole-heartedly surrender to him. Just as there is no darkness before the sun, there is no sea of mundane existence for you to cross.

As Hemadpant says in the *Sai Satcharita*, "The very word *Sadguru* immediately brings to mind Sai, as he stands in front of me and blesses with his hand on my

head.”

Om Sai ! Shri Sai !! Jai Jai Sai !!!

– Jyoti Ranjan Raut

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O My *Sadguru* Sainath ! To me, Thou art God !

Sunday, the 29th of July ! The auspicious occasion of *Guru Poornima* !

It's morning !

The sun shines in the (eastern) horizon with his rays of beneficence. The power of illusion cannot snare those contemplate on the *Guru* at this auspicious hour. Hence, let us pray ardently to our *Sadguru* with folded hands. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires.

Guru Poornima is observed as the day for honouring the *Guru*. The 'Guru Gita' describes the meaning of the word '*Guru*' as such : "The syllable '*Gu*' is darkness, and the syllable '*Ru*' is said to be light. There is no doubt that the *Guru* is indeed the Supreme knowledge that swallows the darkness of ignorance. '*Gu*' represents the principles such as *Maya*, and '*Ru*' is the Supreme knowledge that destroys the *Maya*. The syllable '*Gu*' is that which transcends all attributes and the syllable '*Ru*' is that without form. The *Guru* is said to be the one who bestows the state beyond attributes(and form)."

'*Poornima*' refers to the full moon with all its sixteen aspects being illuminated by the sun. In man there are sixteen black spots : the six enemies, viz., lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy, the two *Gunas*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and the eight types conceit (*Mada*) based on lineage and scholarship, wealth, youth, beauty, position and penance. It is only when man gets rid of these sixteen evil traits that he will be able to realize his oneness with the divine i.e. attain self-realization. Only *Guru* enables man to achieve this state of self-realization :

Just as the sun drives out darkness, the *Sadguru* dispels the nescience from our hearts. Yet, it is not apt to compare the *Guru* with the sun. Because, the darkness driven away by the sun returns (by night); but the nescience removed by the grace of the *Guru* never recrudesces. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires !

The *Vedas* and the *Shastras* declare that it is impossible for a man to achieve self-realization without the help of a *Sadguru*. In the *Bhagvad Gita*, Lord Krishna enjoins upon Arjuna -

Tadviddhi pranipatena

pariprashnena sevaya

Upadekshayanti te jnanam

jnaninah tatva-darshinah

-Chapter IV : 34

(If you wish to know the truth of the *Paramatman*, you must seek such Masters who have an awareness of it themselves. Learn from them by surrendering unto them, by devoted service and by right questioning. Thus you will come to know the Supreme Truth.)

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! please guide me and let there be no showiness in this interactive place, forgive me for all the errors and shower Your infinite loving grace. Until You wish, not even a leaf moves. You are the Light, You are the Guide - it is Your wish and Your command with which my each word gets jotted down. With due apologies to Rabindranath Tagore :

O *Sadguru* !

When Thou commandest me to write it

seems that my heart would break with
pride; and I look to Thy face, and tears

Come to my eyes.

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! remove the veils of ignorance in me, purify me, drown me
in Your love and let me see, feel and experience Your presence with Your divine
grace alone :

**The sun rises and rouses us to activity by restoring energy to the exhausted
souls. Similarly, the *Guru* invigorates our souls by removing all the mental
weaknesses, which impel us to indulge in ignoble deeds. Leaving all
prejudices and proclivities, let's contemplate on the holy feet of our
Sadguru. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts'
desires !**

O Baba ! now "all that is harsh and dissonant in my life melts into one sweet
harmony - and my adoration spreads wings like a glad bird on its flight across
the sea." (Gitanjali, Song II)

In actuality,

Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu,

Gurur Devo Maheshwara

Gurur Saakshat Para Brahma

Tasmai Shree Gurave Namah.

The above *Shloka* addressed to *Guru* mentions salutations to the noble teacher
'who is verily the representative of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva'. He creates,
sustains knowledge and destroys the weeds of ignorance.

However,

Even the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar cannot be equal to our
Sadguru Sainath. None can be found to match Him in His ability to uplift human
beings from a downfall. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all
our hearts' desires !

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! A *Guru* is absolutely necessary for every aspirant on the
spiritual path. It is only the *Guru* who will find out one's defects. The nature of
egoism is such that one will not be able to find out one's defects and, therefore,

**O *Guru*, arise from Thy *Samadhi* (mystic trance) and come and take Thy
seat at the *Masjid*. By Thy sweet utterances remove (the bitterness of) our
sufferings. *Sadguru* Sainath, Thou art the friend of all and cherish no ill will
to anyone. Thou art the destroyer of all sins. May Lord Sainath, the
Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires !**

O Sai ! The personification of spiritual perfection and the epitome of
compassion ! You, once, gave a beautiful discourse in the *Masjid* regarding the
necessity of a *Guru*, saying that a *Guru* was like a guide who would take one to
one's destination (self-realization). O Baba ! You taught, "The spiritual path
which one wishes to travel is like passing through *Jungle* where there are
wolves, tigers and other ferocious animals in the form of anger, passion,
jealousy etc. If the aspirant takes a guide with him (i.e., *Guru*), then there is no
difficulty as he will take the aspirant straight to his destination (self-realization)
avoiding all obstacles." (Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter II)

Jee karta hain mere Sai... main

Shirdi mein hee bas jaaon

Lekin jab tak too na chaahe... main

Shirdi main kaise aaon

Shirdi mein mujhe bulaale re...

Shirdi mein mujhe bulaale re...

(I wish, I could come, stay in Shirdi for ever and ever O Sai !

But, how could I ? Unless You wish I could ! Call me to Shirdi my Sai... Call me to Shirdi !)

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! Why do I have an immense longing to come, stay in Shirdi for ever and ever ? This is because You live there in unbroken communion with the Supreme Truth and You chose - out of compassion for the world - to live there and play the part of an ordinary human being.

O Baba ! I'm not bothered, whether or not God has come in Shirdi in Thy form - to me, Thou art God.

Again,

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! why do I have an immense longing to come, stay in Shirdi for ever and ever ? This is because the aspirant who is under Thy guidance is safe from being led astray. *Satsang* or association with You is an armour and fortress to guard the seeker against all temptations and unfavourable forces of the material world.

Over and over,

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! why do I have an immense longing to come, stay in Shirdi for ever and ever ? This is because those indescribable *Shakti* or Power of God, known as Pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, incarnated in Thy form in Shirdi. The physical presence of a devotee in Shirdi, the taste of its water, soil and breeze, the perfumes of the air and the chanting of the *Aaratis* in Thy presence has a magical effect. Standing in the *Samadhi Mandir*, in front of Thy piercing eyes of love and compassion does away with the pain and suffering of the visitors with one stroke. The assurances of material and spiritual wealth come to reality. Once, a devotee steps on the soil of Shirdi, his life is set on a different course. One immense yearning that a devotee leaves Shirdi with is that he should return to Shirdi. The power of the magic soil is such.

With due apologies to the great English poet, John Keats,

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! I am 'already with Thee' in Shirdi !, and certainly

Lo ! This hour is auspicious. The *Guru* has arisen (from His *Samadhi*) and by His gracious glances warding off the troubles of His devotees who have taken refuge in Him. There is no benefactor equal to Him in this world. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires !

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! while all seekers else have had their teachers, and even all the sages, saints, prophets, world-teachers, incarnations, great-men, have had their *Gurus*, however great they might have been; then, why should I alone be without one ? Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrgu from Varun, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones, practised vigorous discipline and learnt *Brahma-vidya* (the science of God) from them. Lord Krishna and Balram attended to Their *Guru* Sandipani Rishi with gratitude. In order to attain Knowledge of self, Lord Rama devoted His precious time to attend to His *Guru* - Vasishtha Muni. Lord Shiva Himself accepted His son Subrahmanya as His *Guru*, when He learnt the meaning of *Pranava* (*Onkar*)

from him. Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even *Devas* (celestial beings) has Brihaspati as Their *Guru*. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of *Guru Dakshinamoorti*.

O my *Sadguru Sainath* ! You Yourself had a *Guru* by the name of Venkusha. Upon completing the spiritual training, Venkusha had ordered You to go and practise, what You learned. At that time, O my *Sadguru* ! You had asked for Your *Guru*'s blessings. Venkusha was fully aware that You were none other than God-Incarnate. He, therefore, hesitated to bless You saying, "How can I bless the Supreme God ?" Then, O Baba ! Your reply was, "*Guruji*, I understand your hesitation. But, in every human incarnation, there is need for *Guru* and as a *Shishya*, I have a right to be blessed by my *Guru*... Please do not deny me that right. Recollect the fact that Rama and Krishna - and other incarnations - had *Gurus* to lead them in the right direction." Thus satisfied by Your explanation, Venkusha blessed You with his two hands wide open; but quickly converted the posture of hands into a '*Namaskara*' by joining the hands together. In a way, Venkusha blessed You as well as prayed to You !

O *Sadguru* ! let me pray at Your lotus feet. You are the incarnation of all Gods and protector of all. O Sainath ! please show mercy on me, and increase my devotion towards You; because

Without the grace of the *Guru*, no one, however clever he might be, can achieve his lives' objectives. Such a one merely trifles his time in fruitless pursuits. Only by obtaining steadfast devotion to the feet of the *Guru*, can one's heart's desires be fulfilled. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires !

O *Sadguru Sainath* ! even if, through determined effort and ruthless self-examination or devotional practices, a seeker does have the vision of God, the final attainment of realizing God as one's own self and as the self in all beings can be accomplished by only through the grace of a *Sadguru*. The story of Namdev, the great saint of Maharashtra, illustrates this :

Once, Jnanadev with his brothers and sister Muktabai had gone to the Pandharpur temple. Saint Namdev, who always lived there, was also sitting near the image of the Deity. In fact, Namdev had, even in his childhood, received the vision of God and used to consider Lord Vithoba to be his own friend. He used to be able to freely see Lord Vithoba and speak to him. He was slowly becoming egoistic as he thought he was dearer to Lord Vithoba since he was always near him.

Jnanadev and his brothers prostrated before the Deity as also did Namdev. Muktabai, however, who could read the innermost thoughts of others, saluted the Lord; but did not do so to Namdev saying, "Mere staying in the company of God does not make a man worthy of salute. Namdev does not deserve any since he has had no spiritual guide as yet." A discussion took place and finally it was decided to go to Gora Kumbhar, the potter - the well-known saint - to judge, whether Namdev was a perfect saint or not.

Namdev, accordingly, went with Jnanadev and others to Gora Kumbhar to the nearby village, where they found a congregation of other great saints like Changdev, Rohidas, Chokhamela, Savta. Nobody recognized or paid attention to Namdev, and he took his place in the crowd. Jnanadev asked Gora Kumbhar to check and see if the 'pots' assembled there were 'baked' or not. So Gora Kumbhar tapped the head of each person in the assembly with his stick. They all sat without moving except Namdev. When Gora came up to him and tapped him with the stick, Namdev sprang to his feet and cried out angrily, "How dare you hit me with this stick ? Don't you know who I am ?" Hearing this Gora turned around and said to Jnanadev, "All are baked except this one." The whole assembly burst into laughter and Namdev felt terribly humiliated. Then

Muktabai stepped forward and said to Namdev, "How can one without a *Guru* have a place in this congregation of saints ?"

Greatly mortified, Namdev went back to his Lord Vithoba, and complained to Him of his humiliation. He said that he saw no necessity for himself to have a *Guru* as he had intimate relationship with Him. Lord Vithoba said, "Namdev ! you did not really know me." Namdev denied this. Lord Vithoba challenged Namdev and asked him to find out His identity that day. Namdev agreed. Lord Vithoba took the form of a Pathan - horseman and passed before Namdev. Namdev could not recognize the Lord. The Lord then spoke thus, "Namdev, you are most dear to me. But, it is true that man does not attain perfection except through the grace of *Guru*," and advised Namdev to adopt Visoba Khechar as his *Guru*.

Visoba Khechar was one of the disciples of Jnanadev and was living at the time at a village called Avandhya. Namdev proceeded to the village immediately and arrived there at about noon. He took shelter in a temple in order to take some rest. There in that temple he saw a man sleeping with his feet on the Deity itself. Namdev was shocked, woke up the man and rebuked him for this sacrilege. The man was no other Visoba Khechar himself. Visoba replied, "O Namdev, why did you wake me up ? Is there any single spot in this world which is not permeated by God ? If you think that such a spot can be found, kindly place my feet there." Namdev took the feet of Visoba in his hands and moved them to another direction; but the Deity was there. He then moved Visoba in still another direction; but the Deity was there too ! Namdev could not find any direction or spot where he could place the feet of Visoba without treading on the Deity. God was everywhere. Having realized this great truth that God has permeated the whole universe, Namdev surrendered himself to Visoba Khechar.

A few days after Namdev had adopted Visoba as his *Guru*, he was sitting at a place doing his *Bhajan*. In the meantime, a dog came to the spot and ran away with the bread he had prepared for his mid-day meal. Namdev ran after the dog - not with a stick in his hand, but with a cup of *Ghee*; and he addressed the dog thus : "O Lord of the world ! why do You want to eat the dry bread ? Take some *Ghee* along with it. It will taste much better." Namdev's realization of *Atma* was now complete and overflowing.

O *Sadguru* Sainath ! thus it is seen that even the exalted state of God-vision does not fructify into true realization without the *Sadguru's* touch of grace. Therefore,

O *Sadguru*, I pray thee to dwell in my heart always and bless me to look upon the whole world as thy form. I pray to thee, Oh the Purifier of the whole world, to inspire me to do noble deeds always. May Lord Sainath, the Omnipotent *Sadguru*, fulfil all our hearts' desires !

Blessed I feel as my *Sadguru* Sainath is always guiding my destiny. Glory be to my *Sadguru* Sainath !

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'GURU' - Baba's Views

This is a story, which Baba has narrated - once, four of us, who had read religious scriptures debated about *Brahman*. One said, "We should, through our own efforts, raise ourselves and not depend on others." The second said, "Our mind should be in absolute control sans doubts, worries, etc. with the complete understanding, that there is nothing in the world except Self." The third said, "One should discriminate between Real (permanent) and Unreal (transient)." I said, "Book-reading was not enough, we should conduct ourselves according to *Shastras* and offer ourselves body, mind and five *Pranas* (vital airs) to the *Guru's* feet. One should have steadfast faith that *Guru* is God Himself and all pervading." The first three wanted to go on God's quest with their own efforts.

They came across a *Vanjari* (a trader in grains), who asked, "In this sweltering sun, where are you going; and what are you searching for?" We gave him an evasive answer that we were going into the forest. The *Vanjari* asked, "You should not move in the forest without a guide. Why do you exert yourself in this noon sun? You may not tell me about your secret quest; but you can sit down, have a piece of *Bhakari* and drink water before you go."

Though he spoke kindly, we rejected his offer and proceeded on our way. We thought, we were self-sufficient and needed no aid. The forest was vast and trackless, with the trees growing so tall, that sunlight didn't touch the ground; hence, we lost our way. But, fate brought us to the same *Vanjari* who said, "Relying on your intellect you have missed your way. A guide is always necessary in matters, small and big. Quest should not be conducted on an empty stomach; even the intellect doesn't work. Unless God wills, we meet no one. One should never reject offer of food. Offer of food is regarded as good omen."

He again offered us food, which only I accepted. I was hungry and thirsty; and I was moved by his concern and love. I felt that though we were learned and scholarly, we had no kindness. But, this uneducated *Vanjari* was truly enlightened, without knowing us, had so compassionately offered us food. Suddenly *Guru* stood before me and said, "What is the argument about?" I narrated to Him everything. Then He said, "Will you come with me? I will show you, what you are questing for; but only to those who believe in me?"

The others didn't accept, only I agreed. The others went away, and *Guruji* took me to a well, tied my feet with a rope and hung me, head down. The other end of the rope was tied to a nearby tree in such a way that I was three feet above water, and couldn't touch it with my hands. After suspending me like this, He went away for about four hours. On His return, He took me out and asked me, how I felt. I replied, "Blissful - how can a fool like me describe the happiness I experienced?"

My *Guru* was pleased with my answer; He drew me close and started moving His hand very affectionately over my back. He took me to His school. There I forgot my parents, all my attachments snapped and I was freed from bondage. I felt such immense love for my *Guru* that I felt like embracing Him. I felt, if I didn't have His image fixed in my eyes, then I better be blind. My *Guru* became my mother, father, everything. All my senses were focused on my eyes and my sight only on Him. Thus He became my single focus of meditation. Then Knowledge dawned on me without any effort, this is what is *Guru's* grace!

Through this story Baba, an incarnation Himself, wanted to illustrate that salvation can be achieved, only with the *Guru's* grace.

Arthur Osborne in his book 'The Incredible Sai Baba' has interpreted Baba's symbolical story as - The forest is the wilderness of the mind, which is questing for truth. The four friends are the four paths to the truth. The *Vanjari* is the *Guru* and His offer of food is His grace. On the acceptance of the food, the seeker discovers that the giver is the divine *Guru*. Hence, he

reverentially submits to His authority. Tying, and suspension over water, is the binding of the ego and holding over the water is the coolness of bliss. It is suffering beautified by the end for which it is endured. And finally, Knowledge is to be experienced and can't be taught.

Baba once, narrated that as a youngster He had gone in search of work to Beed, where He did embroidery work very diligently. His employer was so pleased with Him that he gave Baba Rs. 600/-; whereas, to the three boys who had worked prior to Him, he gave Rs. 50/-, Rs. 100/- and Rs. 150/- respectively. The employer praised Baba and honoured Him with a dress, turban and a *Shela* (embroidered shawl). Baba kept the dress aside and pondered, "Whatever someone gives, can that be adequate ? But, whatever God gives, it is limitless. How can the 'limitations' of man compare with the 'boundlessness' of my *Sarkar* (God) ?

My *Sarkar* says, "Take, Take,,"; but everyone comes to me and says, "Give, Give." Everyone wants material things; they don't listen to, what I am saying carefully. My *Sarkar's* treasury of spiritual wealth is overflowing. I say, 'Dig and take cartloads of the treasure.'

"Earth (body) will merge with earth, breath with air. This time will never come again. He who makes efforts for spiritual progress will reap its benefits, and will get happiness. Otherwise, *Maya* will forever tempt him and he will never achieve his weal."

Courtesy :- [sai katha sagar](#)

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In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

DAMUANNA – NANASAHEB RASANE

Damodar alias Damuanna Savlaram Rasane was one of the devotees of Shri Sai Baba from the very beginning.

His family was very pious. Mahipatibuva Tahrabadkar – a writer of biographies of saints – was the *Guru* of his grandfather while Bhanudas Maharaj was *Guru* of his father.

By nature, he was extremely polite. He began his business of selling bangles at Ahmednagar, when he was financially very poor and soon prospered with the business. He was broken hearted because - though he was blessed with various contentments of life – he did not have a son. As his first wife did not bear him a son, he married a second time. However, it was of no avail.

He started feeling, that to beget a son, he must serve saintly persons and get their blessings. To secure favour from various astral planets, he even turned to astrologers. He was advised that, in your *Putra-sthan* the evil planet Ketu has entered and therefore, the planet *Guru* is helpless. The result is, it is not in his fate to have a son. In the course of consulting a countless astrologers, Rasane himself earned excellent knowledge of astrology.

During this period, an acquaintance of Rasane Family Shri Govindrao Sapkar (father-in-law of Madhavrao Deshpande of Shirdi – an ardent devotee of Baba) suggested Rasane that he should seek advice and blessings of Shri Sai Baba.

Sometime soon, in 1892, Damuanna went to Nimgaon in connection with some work. There he heard more information about Sai Baba. As Nimgaon is only one-and-half miles from Shirdi, Rasane went to avail Baba's *Darshan*.

Damuanna was a devotee of Shri *Guru* Dattatray and Shankar. He had made religious trips to various places of pilgrimage. Therefore, on having *Darshan* of Baba, Rasane became an ardent devotee of Him. He had gone with only one desire – that of having a son. And in the first meeting, Baba said to him, "Your desire shall be fulfilled."

As Ahmednagar is near to Shirdi, Damusheth started frequently going there. Initially, Baba did not allow him to stay at Shirdi. However, Damuanna was incessantly thinking of Baba and seeing Him before his eyes. He was sad that Baba is not permitting him to stay longer at Shirdi.

In these circumstances, he lost his sister. He became more depressed. During the mourning period itself, Baba called him to the upper portion of the *Masjid* and lent him advice and consoled him. He instructed Rasane to go to Appa Kulkarni, apply *Tilak* of sandal and have *Puran Poli*. Though this is forbidden during the mourning period, Rasane – because of his steadfast devotion to Baba – followed Baba's words.

As many as 6-7 years passed, but there were no signs that Rasane's desire for a son will be fulfilled. It was year 1898-99. Rasane's relatives began cajoling him to either marry a third time or adopt his brother's son. He decided to place the dilemma directly before Baba and began his journey towards Shirdi.

At that time, a *Mamledar*, named Ralehad sent a parcel of excellent mangoes from Goa. The parcel was sent in the name of Madhavrao

Deshpande with a request to place the fruits as a gift to Baba. On opening the parcel, it revealed beautiful, sweet and fragrant mangoes. They were about 300 in numbers. Baba inspected all of them and selected eight. Placing them in Madhavrao's hands and instructing him to keep them in *Kolamba*, He said, "Let these be for Damya".

Baba was very much fond of children. Collecting them around Him, He distributed sweets and *Prasad* amongst them. Taking advantage of the playful relations between Baba and the kids, they used to sometimes steal articles of food. Baba also ignored such pranks.

When the parcel of mangoes arrived, as usual, several children were playing in the *Masjid*. The mangoes were distributed amongst them. However, seeing the mangoes kept in the *Kolamba*, the kids began asking for the fruits. Baba said, "Now there are no more mangoes left." The kids pointed out the mangoes kept in the *Kolamba*. Baba said, "These are for my Damya." Kids replied, "But, where is Damusheth ? He is not here." Baba said, "Yes. That is true. But, he is on his way to Shirdi. He is coming here."

In spite of this, seeing that Baba had gone to Lendi Baug, some of the kids stole four mangoes from the *Kolamba*.

Baba returned from Lendi Baug and Damuanna had arrived in *Masjid* to perform his *Pooja* !

On seeing that only four mangoes out of eight are left in the *Kolamba*, Baba remarked, "People have their eyes on these mangoes. But, these are not theirs. They belong to Damuanna. One should eat these mangoes and die."

Damuanna heard these words and was amazed to hear "die". Though he was familiar with Baba's way of speaking, he felt hurt and his eyes welled with tears at the inauspicious word.

Mhalsapati consoled him and said, "Look at these words as a blessing. He is not talking of death of mortal body, but of evils such as *Avidya*, *Maya*, *Ahankar*. Damusheth, your wellbeing is in following His instructions."

As per Baba's directions, Damuanna ate one mango. In a clam tone, Baba told him, "Take rest of the mangoes for your wife. With *Allah's* blessings, you will bear eight children."

After performing *Pooja*, Damusheth started on his return journey, but turned back and enquired, "To whom shall I give these - to the elder wife or younger wife ?" Baba replied "Younger one."

Damusheth was totally devastated thinking that his fate has no children for him. However, a new hope rekindled in his heart hearing Baba's words.

After Damuanna's wife partook the *Prasad*, she gave birth to eight children - for sons and four daughters. However, during the course of time, four kids soon passed away. Baba had foretold the order in which the kids will be born and in reality, it turned out to be true. Not only this, Baba had also said that, "You will have two sons first."

Accordingly, the first son was born in year 1900 - on 6th December, on the auspicious day of *Datta Jayanti*. Due to Baba's blessings all the four sons were able bodied, intelligent, good businessmen, as well as good family men. The sons were born in a rich family and their wealth increased many-folds in later years. Baba's words thus came out to be true.

Damuanna believed that the flag of his family fluttered (through the births of his sons) due to Baba's blessings. Therefore, on the suggestion of Gopalrao Gund, Damuanna began the practice of hoisting a flag on the top of the *Masjid*. He also contributed sizable finance for the tiling of the *Masjid* flooring.

After hoisting of the flag, Damuanna donated food amongst the poor and needy. This event took place in the second year of the *Urus*.

Damuanna had prepared *Naivedya* and invited Baba for the meal. He knew that it was Baba's practice not to go for meals outside the *Masjid*. Therefore, Damuanna requested, "Baba, please send Balaji Patil Nevaskar to have meal at my place." As Balaji belonged to lower caste, Baba said, "You will make him sit at a far off place and shoo him away." But, ultimately, after lot of persuasion, Baba gave his permission.

Damusheth served various preparations in a *Thali* and first offered it before Baba's picture. Then, he placed a *Thali* for Balaji next to his own *Thali* and greeted Baba saying loudly "Baba, *Yaa* (come)." Suddenly, a huge black colored dog – covered with mud and filth – arrived there. Damusheth was going to drive him away, but he remembered Baba's words about "shooing away". He was now certain that Baba was trying to take his test by sending the dog. Damuanna first served food to the dog and only thereafter, others had their meals.

(contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into

English by **Sudhir**

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Experiences of Sai Maharaj

EXPERIENCES OF MAHARAJ - 3

Some experiences of Sai by eminent lawyer Shri Vaman Chintaman Muke Vakil, Pimpalgaon Baswant, District Nasik, written on

11/7/1921 from Panchavati :

My spiritual Guru Sri Samarth Raghunath Maharaj alias Kaka Puranik Dhopeswar (Rajapur,dist.Ratnagiri) guided me towards the worship of God. I spent some time everyday in worshipping my Guru. With his blessings I was inspired to read the Dnyaneshwari. He introduced me to a devotee of Sant Dnyaneshwar who has mentioned his boundless love towards his Guru Nivrittinath in the Dnyaneshwari. All his devotees know that. In the 13th chapter of the Dnyaneshwari 'Acharyopasana' Sant Dnyaneshwar says there is no knowledge without the blessings of a Guru. Since my Guru had taken *Samadhi* , I felt had not been able to serve at my Guru's feet. My spiritual Guru Kaka Maharaj Puranik encouraged me to visit Shirdi and take Baba's *darshan*. I followed his advice and reached Shirdi. Sai Baba immediately involved me in *Guru Bhakti*. (Devotion to the Guru). Seeing my dedication, he blessed me by touching his book about *Sagunopasana* and a photo of Sai himself.

I stay at Pimpalgaon Baswant, Taluka Niphad and am a lawyer by profession. About six years ago I built a small bungalow on my farm due to plague in the village. I lived there with my family. While staying there I used to regularly pray to Sai Baba, morning and evening.

Once, at mid-night, some robbers broke the northern wall of my bungalow. Sai's photo was just inches away from where they broke in. Out of the four robbers, one came in through the gap, stole a small chest and passed it through the opening to his accomplices. There were notes worth two hundred rupees, a rupee and some small coins in it. There were also some promissory notes worth about Rs.4000/- . Opposite Sai Baba's photo there was a trunk kept on a bench. There was gold jewellery worth Rs.3500/-, silver utensils worth Rs.500/- and valuables worth Rs.10,000/- in it. As soon as the robber touched the trunk, my sister-in-law , who was sleeping next to the trunk was awakened and she screamed '*Chor! Chor!*' with fear. I was fast asleep and did not hear her. Suddenly Baba came in my dream and said, "Your trunk is gone, wake up !"

I jumped up with a start and with Baba's motivation took a stick and said, "Hit this one !" Hearing my words the robber jumped out of the opening and ran away. With all this commotion, the watchman, the dog, the clerk and the servant got up and with the hullabaloo they created the robbers ran away. I remembered the *Shloka* from the Bhagvad Geeta and prostrated myself in front of the benevolent Sai.

"Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janaha paryupasate

Tersha nityabhiyuktanam yagakshem vahamyaham"

Till then we did not know that our chest was stolen. I sent my man to the police station to inform the officer-in-charge about the attempted house-break. When the police asked for a written complaint, I looked for the chest and realised it was stolen. But, I was not bothered with this loss. When the police left it was almost sunrise. Just then, a farmer who worked on our farm informed us that the stolen chest was abandoned in the farm a furlong away. I immediately went and recovered the chest. The robbers had taken all the cash; but the rest was intact. Since the chest had easily opened, it was not damaged.

Early next morning, I dreamt of Baba. In it was offering my services at His feet. His noble disciple, Abdul and another fair and radiant *Fakir* were with Him. After dreaming of Sai, I felt a desire to visit Shirdi for Baba's *Darshan*. I left the very same evening by train and reached Shirdi the following morning. When I saw Sai coming out of the village for His daily ablutions, I prostrated myself in front of Him. He kindly told me and others with me to go into Shirdi. There I stayed at Baba's loving devotee, Shri Hari Sitaram Dikshit's bungalow. After some time, when I went to the *Masjid* for Baba's *Darshan*, I saw the same Fakir I had seen in my dream. When I inquired about him, I came to know that he was Abdul's *Guru*. Isn't it amazing I saw the same *Fakir* in person that I had seen in my dream a day ago at Pimpalgaon ?

A third miracle occurred some days later, when *Brahmachari Buva* of Kopargaon remembered me and came to stay with us at our bungalow in Pimpalgaon. We lovingly worshipped him for three days. Before leaving *Buva* said that the money stolen would be returned.

A few months later the robbers and the money-lender who bought the stolen goods were caught. Some of the currency notes stolen from us were found in the money-lender's house. Since the robbers confessed that the notes were the ones they had stolen from our house, Rs. 65/- of the total Rs. 200/- stolen were recovered and returned to us by the police

Saidas

Vaman Chintaman Muke Vakil,

Pimpalgaon Baswant, District Nasik.

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