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SAI - THE *PARABRAHMA*

Saints are not born. They manifest themselves for obliging others. They are the embodiment of *Brahman*. Only the fortunate ones so manifest.

Wearing the cloak of the body, from *Maya*, the saints manifest in the world. Soon after their work of upliftment is completed they merge with the formless.

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 ?

He Who manifested for the benefit of the people ended the *Avatar* as soon as His mission was complete. Could He be bound by life and death, Who takes a form by His own divine sport ?

How can there be a possibility of death for Him Whose glory is the Supreme Spirit ? He Who is the embodiment of detachment, how can existence or non-existence have any effect on Him ?

Beginning from *Brahman* (the permanent and immovable) and ending with all immovable objects, Sai Himself is manifest everywhere. Sai, being kind, imprinted (on all minds) that God exists in all creatures.

Although Sai seemingly resided in Shirdi and had a body three and a half cubits (over six feet), He lived in every person's heart - Maharaj Who was the store of '*Punya*' (good or meritorious deeds).

By kindling their own lustre, saints extinguish their own bodies. Baba did the same with His own hands.

The saints are free from the six vices and passions. They are always present, invisible to the eye. They take form only for the salvation of the devotees. How could they have death ?

The great souls who transcend time and space, can their life span be exactly calculated ? It is a formidable task.

The great souls are existing in their own orbit. They are neither born nor do they die. How can the sun rise or set when in reality it is steady and immovable.

The *Atman* is not born nor does it die. There is no root cause for it. It is unborn, permanent, everlasting, ancient and not easy to comprehend.

If one is to call that body Sai, then there is no name for the one Who is free from all bodily and earthly enjoyments and pursuits. There is no form for it. Shri Sai is beyond a form.

Are you confident that our Sai is this gross skeletal body of three and a half arms length and the senses ? Remove this doubt forever.

The body is perishable. *Brahman* on its own is indestructible. The body is included in the five elements; but *Brahman* is without beginning or end.

Those who are incarnate are never born and they never die. As soon as their mission is completed they merge with *Brahman* and become one with the unseen.

The *Atman* is unique. It is separate from the body, the sense organs, the mind and *Prana*. It is self-illuminated, pure consciousness, not subject to change and without form.

Atman is without any attributes, beyond old age, birth or death. It is ancient and eternal, indestructible and beyond decay.

It is perpetual, unborn, ancient, all-pervading like the sky, unending, and indivisible, ungrowing and unchangeable.

Then who can describe that which is beyond words, without form, without beginning or end, unfathomable, imperishable, without smell, without taste and untainted.

Thus, this *Atman* which is attributeless and invisible and is not known because of ignorance. Then remove this ignorance by knowledge. But, do not ever call that *Atman* non-existent.

Nobody knew Samartha's mind or heart's secret. He left the body in no time and became one with the Supreme Spirit.

He Who manifested for the benefit of the people ended the *Avatar* as soon as His mission was complete. Could He be bound by life and death, Who takes a form by His own divine sport ?

How can there be a possibility of death for Him Whose glory is the Supreme Spirit ? He Who is the embodiment of detachment, how can existence or non-existence have any effect on Him ?

What should never have happened, had happened ! Maharaj became one with the Supreme Spirit. The people were dispirited, sobbed and whimpered.

A body is of a three-and-a-half hands' length. Could Baba be said to be contained in that ? It is improper to say that He was of a particular size, shape or colour.

Even otherwise, for Him Who is store of knowledge and is always one with the Supreme Spirit, to take care of the body or to leave it is the same.

'Now what is there in Shirdi, as the Samartha has mingled with *Brahman* ?' Have no such doubts, as Shri Sai is beyond death.

Therefore, this Sai Who is without a beginning or an end will ever be there until the '*Pralay*' (deluge) of the world.

He Who throbs with the Supreme Spirit and is permanently engraved in the hearts of the devotees then how could His body be said to have ceased to be. Such words are unacceptable.

How can He die, the remembrance of Whose name breaks the cycle of life and death for others ? He attained His earlier Invisible Self.

He Who takes different *Avatars* with the only desire of the welfare of the devotees how can He be touched by birth and death ? These are both illusions.

Those Who remain after overcoming death, and even control death, how could they be concerned about their life span when they have manifested by their own wish ?

The conjunction of the body with the senses, is being born. Their separation is death. This joining and separation is called birth and death.

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.

Observe the Pure, Excellent Self, the Supreme Being, the Life Spirit, which animates the gross senses. Sai is the name for that.

He transcends the senses. The senses are gross and do not know That. It is That which animates the senses and activates them with '*Prana*'.

The name of that power is Sai. There is no place without it. All the ten directions are desolate without it. It fills the movable and the immovable.

It is this that has taken *Avatar*. Earlier it was unmanifest. Taking a name and form and becoming an individuality, it became manifest. After accomplishing its mission, it merged into the unmanifest.

Actually, it is nothing to be surprised about. This Sai is beyond birth and death, and has only left the body. He remains without form, as earlier.

The body has gone and the form has gone. The Spirit lives as before. The *Leelas*, after He left the body, continue to occur. Everyone knows that.

How can there be life or death for Him Who has forgotten the desires of life and the world ? He achieves bliss by being engrossed in the *Atman*.

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.

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 ?

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 eternally in the hearts of the devotees.

Oh Sai ! Though Your corporal form is invisible to us at present, yet if there is faith and devotion, the devotees get living experiences. The Spirit in the *Samadhi* is awakened and becomes instantaneously visible.

- Shri Sai Sat Charita

Translated into English by Zarine



The *Samadhi* of Sai at Shirdi is a gathering place for all the saints. Every step on the way to it severs one link of the chain of worldly existence.

Once, knowing that it was '*Parva*' (holy time), Dasganu wished to bathe at Prayag *Tirtha* and came to Baba to take His permission. Baba, in return said, "You need not go that far for it. This itself is our Prayag bank. Have strong faith in your heart". Lo ! See the greatness of Baba ! As Dasganu put his head at Baba's feet, water trickled out from both His toes as if it was the water of Ganga and Yamuna, oozing out.

As Chand Patil was passing by, he heard the *Fakir* calling out to him - "Come along here, have a smoke and then proceed further. Sit for a while in the shade." The *Fakir* asked him what was the saddle for and Patil answered that he had lost his mare. Then He told him, "Go and search for it near the stream." The horse was found immediately. Chand Patil was wonderstruck and thought to himself that he had met an *Aulia* (sage). 'There is no limit to His powers. He cannot be called an ordinary being.'

How He would strive to be benevolent to others ! How He looked after and protected His devotees ! How He would wear out Himself ! How He would suffer for the sake of His devotees ! He would take '*Samadhi*' doing '*Khand-yoga*' practices. He would do '*Dhoti-poti*' and other practices. Sometimes He would separate His head, legs and arms from the body and bring them together as before.

"Sometimes I am a dog, sometimes a pig, sometimes I am a cow, sometimes a cat, sometimes an ant, a fly or fish. I move about in different forms. That person who sees me in all the creatures, you must understand is my beloved one. Give up the belief in the two-fold nature, and worship me in this manner."

A wooden plank, in length equal to four fore-arm lengths and a span wide, used to hang like a swing, tied to the ceiling by means of a few rags at both ends. On such a plank Baba slept. Earthen lamps would burn at His head and His feet. When He climbed up or climbed down, was not known to anyone. Inconceivable are His movements. He sat on it with His head bent. Sometimes He slept on it. But, no one knew when He climbed up or climbed down. A plank which was tied by means of rags, how could it hold Baba's weight ? But, when He had the great *Siddhis*, the plank was just a pretext.

Sai gives *Darshan* of Aaradhya Devata

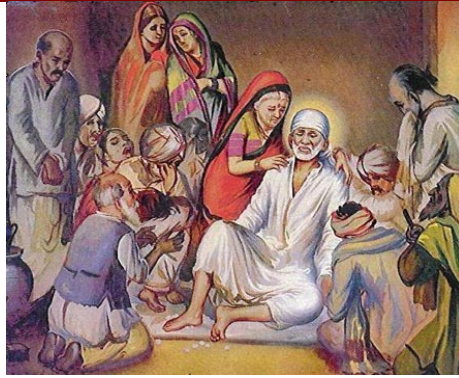
Baba's skill and powers were inconceivable. It had an effect on the rains. The wind also was immediately controlled and the darkness caused by the fog was dissipated. Slowly, slowly the rain decreased. The wind also lessened. The constellations became visible. The darkness was dispelled by that time. Later the rains completely stopped. The galing winds quietened. The moon appeared in the sky. Everyone was cheered. Indra melted at the plight and upheld the words of the Saint. The clouds were dispersed in all directions. The whirlwind calmed down. The rains totally abated. The wind blew gently. The sound of thunder subsided. The birds and beasts regained their courage. Leaving the shelter of the eaves, the cattle and calves came out and roamed again without fear. The birds also flew into the sky. Having earlier experienced the terryfying incident, all the people returned to their homes after expressing their gratitude to Baba. The cattle also peacefully dispersed. Such was Sai, the embodiment of mercy ! He had great love for the devotees. His concern was like that of a mother for the children.

"My man can be in any place - even thousands of miles away. I will draw him to me with a string tied to his feet, like a sparrow fledgling." Baba said these words often. People not only heard them frequently but also experienced that. This was Baba's wish - to fulfil the desires of His devotees, by bringing them for *Darshan* and letting them achieve their worldly or spiritual objectives. As it is, all His devotees were fulfilled. He Himself was desireless, unselfish, without ego, and without any attachment. His *Avatar* was only to fulfil the desires of the devotees.

"Shirdi alone is not my abode. I am beyond the limits of time and space."

Nana Saheb Chandorkar's daughter, who was in labour, was in intense pain; and from Jamner Sai Samarth was being invoked constantly. No one at Shirdi was aware of the state of affairs at Jamner. Baba, however, knows everything and is all-pervading. There is nothing in the universe that He is unaware of. Baba was one with His devotees. Realising the circumstances at Nana's home Sai Samarth's heart overflowed with compassion.

Wherever the devotee goes, in each and every place, he finds Sai has preceded him and gives him '*Darshan*' unexpectedly.



On the occasion of my Sadguru's 90th Punyatithi, I remember

“Oh Deva...”

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! The people all around me are celebrating the festival of *Dussehra* today. This fiesta, also known as *Vijayadashmi*, is one of the fascinating carnivals of India and is celebrated with joy and enthusiasm. *Dussehra* means the Tenth Day, being the 10th day of the bright half of *Ashwin*. This day is also known as *Vijayadashmi*, or Victory Tenth, because of the Victory of Rama over Ravana. This gala falls on the 9th day of October this year.

To me, Thou art Rama, O Sai ! For me, the *Dussehra* day, therefore, has a special significance. For me, O Sai Rama ! Today, it is the 90th *Dussehra*, for I have learnt to count the real import of *Dussehra* only since the 15th of October 1918, because of Your Victory over Death on the *Dussehra* day. O Sai ! O Rama ! O Sai! O Rama! You took *Mahasamadhi* exactly on *Dussehra* day on 15th October, 1918... It was precisely ninety years ago...

O Sai ! While I, on this sublime occasion of Your *Punyatithi*, hold on to Your blessed feet and concentrate on Your *Samadhi*, I hear a ‘soundless sound’ which connects my thoughts to those moments when You were breathing Your last, and one of Your ardent devotees Nanahe Nimonkar was helplessly crying out loudly, “Oh Deva...” Although it had become quite evident that You had left Your mortal body, it still seemed to Nimonkar as though You opened Your eyes to respond to his weeping by saying,

“...Ah !”

O Baba ! Now I am feeling an irresistible desire to reveal the true character of this “soundless sound” and the truth of it through my own experiences to my fellows who are Your devotees. But, before I start, I make an adolescent and stubborn appeal at Your lotus feet...O Sai ! Would You please once again seem to me, too, to open Your eyes and say

“...Ah !”

again and again, if You find me honest in my utterances...

The epiphany of this ‘soundless sound’ helps me to revive the picture of Swami Rama Tirtha to my mind. Swami Rama Tirtha, a direct descendant of Goswami Tulsidas, the immortal author of the widely read ***Ramcharitmanas***, is one of the brightest jewels of India’s genius. Born in 1873, at Muraliwala, in the district of Gujranwala, Punjab (now in Pakistan), he belongs to that prophetic group of inspired seers who rang up the curtain of Indian Renaissance and ushered in the era of a strongly positive, aggressive and all-conquering spirituality. He was a great ascetic and an enlightened mystic. He practised *Yoga* on the banks of the river Ravi. Later he lived in the forests of Brahmapuri, on the banks of the river Ganga, five miles away from Rishikesh (in Uttarakhand) and attained Self-realization.

From him India has inherited the dual gems of *Vedantic* boldness and spiritual patriotism. His spiritual patriotism is something unique and grand. He is ever alive as a dynamic soul-force, ever shedding the spiritual effulgence in the heart of every seeker after Truth. His teachings are inspiring, elevating and illuminating - a fountain of his intuitive experiences.

O Baba ! Two of Swami Rama Tirtha's closest disciples Narayan Swami and Puran Singh were privileged to write biographies of their *Guru*. Puran Singh's '*The Story of Swami Rama : The Poet Monk of the Punjab*' appeared in 1924, wherein he writes :-

One night after dinner when Swami Rama went to sleep, around 12.30 at night, he (Puran Singh) heard a feeble sound as though someone is saying '*Rama Rama Rama.*' Puran Singh got up and opened the door – but no one was there in the corridor. After an interval of about half an hour he again heard the same sound. This time he entered the room of Swami Rama. To his utter surprise he discovered that though Swami Rama Tirtha was fast asleep, the room was reverberating with *Rama Naam* which was coming from his body rather than from his mouth.

O Sai ! Here, it is a perfect example of '*soundless sound*' ! And the picture of my mind revives again; I, too, hear that '*soundless sound*' which emanates from Your Samadhi rather than from Your mouth :-

- 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 steps of my *Samadhi*.
- 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 devotees.

These are the eleven assurances that You disseminated to the world, O Baba !

O Baba ! After 35 years of my birth my parents went on a pilgrimage to Shirdi in 1985; and on return, my father wished me to go there to have Your *Darshan*. His wish was naturally a command for me. O Sai ! I came to Shirdi the same year. O Baba ! Lo ! You are so powerful that the sun and the moon rise and set in Your eyes, all the movement on the ocean means the throbbing of Your heart, and the entire earth becomes an altar to receive Your footprints...

Immediately after I put my feet on Shirdi soil, my sufferings started coming to an end, O Sai !

“...Ah !”

And after my first experience in Shirdi, there was a great pull towards You and Your Abode. Then, there were frequent visits to this Heaven on earth. Just being on its holy soil and sacred places like *Samadhi Mandir*, *Dwarkamai Masjid*, *Gurusthan*, and *Chavadi* was in itself a great experience with the divine vibrations felt.

O Sai ! In my pursuit to meditate on You my mind and intellect, I make many a reading of **Shri Sai Satcharita**, and am consequently surprised to find that the stories narrated therein have an astonishing verisimilitude with the frequent happenings in my own life.

“...Ah !”

O my *Sadguru Sai* ! On this *Dussehra* day, I recapitulate the hair-raising event that happened at the *Dwarkamai Masjid* on the *Diwali* day in the year 1910 A.D. You were sitting near the wall of the *Masjid* facing south and warming Yourself against the brightly burning *Dhuni*. Suddenly You pushed Your arm into the *Dhuni*; the arm was scorched and burnt badly. None of Your devotees, including Shama, present there could understand the reason of Your doing so; and nobody had the cheek to ask You to unfold this mystery. Ultimately, Shama who was quite free with You because of his '72 generations' old association, mustered courage and asked, "*Deva*, for what have You done this ?" Then, You revealed the vital truth : "The wife of a blacksmith at some distant place was working the bellows of a furnace; her husband called her. Forgetting that her child was on her waist, she ran hastily and the child slipped into the furnace. I immediately thrust my hand into the furnace and saved the child. I do not mind my arm being burnt; but I am glad that the life of the child is saved." (**Shri Sai Satcharita, Chapter VII**)

O Sai ! The blacksmith and his wife had cast their burden on You, and You surely bore the brunt.

“...Ah !”

O Omniscient Baba ! Like the good blacksmith and his better half, I, too, have my own best story to tell. I live in Dehra Dun in the state of Uttarakhand. The residents of this city are blessed with a magnificent temple, located at about 10 kilometers away from my house, called the **Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Devasthanam**. It attracts thousands of devotees of all religions, castes and creed everyday, and creates the Sai awareness among people in Uttarakhand, which is often called as the Land of the Gods. O King of Kings ! Before I resume my narration, I experience a flashback of the days, as narrated in **Shri Sai Satcharita**, when You used to beg food from door to door in Shirdi, albeit You can turn a beggar into a king just by putting single glance upon him. And truly, to a beggar like me, You enabled, against all hopes, to buy a brand new **Esteem** Maruti car.

There shall, undoubtedly, be no want in the house of Your devotees, O Sai !

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! Now resuming my tale, I remember the day when You saved me and my family from the clutches of death. It happened on Thursday, 19th February 1998. The afternoon sky was cloudy, and there was also a drizzle. I, accompanied by my family, drove to the **Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Devasthanam** to have Your *Darshan*; and after paying obeisance at Your lotus feet, turned toward Mussoorie bypass road. From there it is a ten minutes drive to the famous temple of Lord Shiva, the **Shiva Ratna Kendra**. Since You are the incarnation of Lord Dattatreya, we desired to visit that temple, and seek Your blessings. O Baba ! Now I, after the *Darshan*, was driving downhill; and wasn't going that fast at the time when the brakes failed to work properly. I immediately broke into a cold sweat, and frantically tried to control driving by pumping the brakes. But, all in vain, and the car took a turn toward a 40-metre-deep *Khud*. Anticipating our imminent death, we started crying & calling, “O Sai ! Save us... O Sai ! Save us... O Sai ! Save us.” And soon the car started rolling down the deep *Khud*. The new car was totaled in the accident; but, lo ! we were resting on the large and invisible hands even without any scratch and bruise.. And when I raised my tiny hands to thank those Hands, a sound greeted my ears :- **“I always think of him who remembers me. I require no conveyance, carriage, tonga, nor train nor aeroplane. I run and manifest myself to him who lovingly calls me.”**

O Baba ! You are, true to Your words, active and vigorous even from Your tomb.

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious, the Glorified, the Mighty, the Omnipotent. O God, my God ! Stay not from me the gentle gales of Thy pardon and grace, and deprive me not of the wellsprings of Thine aid and favour. Neath the shade of Thy protecting Hands let me nestle, and cast upon me the glance of Thine all-protecting eye !

O Baba ! Your tomb blesses and speaks to the needs of Your devotees.

O Baba ! Now I, prostrating myself at Your lotus feet, narrate the story of that gentleman who had come all the way from Goa to Shirdi to have Your *Darshan*. (**Shri Sai Satcharitra, Chapter XXXVI**) This devotee had employed a chef who unerringly kept managing his master's kitchen for nearly 30 years; but afterwards he was held in the grip of bad habits, which made him rob his master of a sum of Rs. 30,000. O Sai ! The master was greatly distressed and sat for a fortnight on the verandah of his house, bemoaning his loss. He lost his appetite too as the cook himself deprived his employer of bread.

O Sai ! You are ever active and vigorous even after leaving Your earthly body.

O Baba ! After a fortnight, You visited his house in the guise of a *Fakir*, and prescribed : “If you act according to my bidding, you'll recover your money; I furnish you with the whereabouts of a *Fakir*. You please go there, and surrender yourself to him, after you get your money back. Till the culprit returns the cash, you must give up your preferred food.” He followed Your advice and got his wealth back.

O Sai ! If one seeks help and listens to Your advice, it is given at once.

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! Once again, I return to my story... I hear people saying that both man and God are helpless to make any change in the design of destiny. But, O Baba ! A few days after the awful accident, I went to the **Shri Shirdi Sai Baba Devasthanam** to thank You for changing the coding system of my destiny. There I sat quietly in front of Your statue; and though gratitude was rendering me mute in Your presence, that sobbing voice of thankfulness still wept in my heart. However, I didn't mourn the loss of my car with You, which was given to a *kabari* at almost no price, as it was purchased without insurance backup due to lack of required money.

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! You are ever living to help and guide all who come to You, who surrender to You and who seek refuge in You.

O Baba ! Cause me, then, to turn wholly unto Thee, to put my whole trust in Thee, to seek Thee as my Refuge, and to flee unto Thy face. Thou art, verily, He who, through the power of His might, doeth whatsoever He desireth, and commandeth, through the potency of His will, whatsoever He chooseth. None can withstand the operation of Thy decree; none can divert the course of Thine appointment. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the All-glorious, the Most bountiful.

O Sai ! Once again, the range of my memory takes me back to that startling event of my life. I think of that terrible car-accident now, and realize You spared me a terrible fate ! I really do not know, how I should write my innermost feelings, my state of mind. You know everything, O Baba; nothing is hidden from You. I have to say though, something inside of me was very sad, O Sai !; and something inside of me magically changed; and I, sitting on the verandah step of my cottage, started mindfulness meditation on Sai *Naam* with faithful faith. The strength of Sai *Naam* made me forget my surroundings, and the exigencies of my worldly life. One day, while I was thus sitting unaware of my setting and unable even to hear anyone speaking to me, I heard a ‘soundless sound’. I turned my attention towards the direction the sound was coming from. I found a *Fakir* standing at my cottage door with the words - “May I come in...” O Baba ! Since I knew that You used to wander from door to door in Shirdi with a *Jhola* (bag) hung on Your shoulder, the ‘exterior semblance’ of this *Fakir* mesmerized me. At that moment, I thought he was You... I bowed to him my welcome. I offered my guest a cup of tea. Now the beggar seemed to be in a great hurry to leave, and begged my leave. I walked with him to my cottage door...; and, on return, found that he forgot to take his *Jhola* with him. I, in my frantic haste and eagerness to chase after him, overstepped a step near the top of the verandah’s staircase. His *Jhola* plucked from my hands, and unfolded itself. And lo ! Large-denomination currency notes scattered all around in the courtyard of my cottage.

The next day a brand new Esteem Maruti car adorned our cottage, O Baba !

O Sai ! No doubt, if Your devotee looks to You, You too look to him [remaining unmindful of the fact whether he be from Goa or Dehra Dun].

“...Ah !”

O Sai ! The wretched and miserable would naturally rise into plenty of joy and happiness, as soon as he climbs steps of Your *Samadhi*, before or after rolling down into a deep *Khud* or tumbling down from the top of one’s own verandah !

O Sai ! You once came down from Your throne and stood at my cottage door...

“...Ah !”

You came down from Your throne and stood at my cottage door.

I was singing *Sai Naam* all alone, and the melody caught Your ear.

You came down from Your throne and stood at my cottage door.

O Baba ! I lay my head, with my entire mind, body, soul and each breath in me, at Those lotus feet that purified my cottage door.

To perpetuate and commemorate the memory of Your visit, the cottage was christened the **SHIRDI SAI DHAM**; and soon after, a beautiful hanging temple was installed on the trunk of the tree that stood in the courtyard.

“...Ah !”

O Baba ! Once I walked with You to my cottage door...

“...Ah !”

O Sai !

It will be glory when I walk with You on Shirdi’s golden soil,

Never from You side again to stray !

It is glory when the shadows fall,

To know that You are near.

O what joy to simply trust and pray !

It is glory to abide in You when skies above are clear.

Yes, with You, it's glory all the way !

O my Sai ! O my Lord ! Let Your everlasting presence be felt at 'SHIRDI SAI DHAM' from beyond Your tomb in Shirdi !

“...Ah !”

O Baba ! Once again, I lay my head, with my entire mind, body, soul and each breath in me, at Those lotus feet that purified my cottage door.

Anant Koti Brahmand Nayak Raja Dhi Raj Yogi Raj Para Brahma Shri Sachchidanand Sadguru Sai Nath Maharaj Ki Jai !!!

– Dr. Subodh Agarwal

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Thus Sai Spakes...

- Whoever comes to my abode, their suffering will come to an end once and for all.
- The helpless will experience plenty of joy, happiness and fulfilment as soon as they climb the steps of the Dwarkamai.
- I am ever vigilant to help and guide all those who come to me, who surrender to me and seek refuge in me.
- There shall be no dearth of any kind in the houses of my devotees. I shall fulfil all their wishes.
- If you look to me, I shall look to you and take care of all your needs.
- If you seek my advice and help, it shall be given to you at once.
- If you cast your burdens onto me, I shall surely take them on and relieve you of them.
- I shall be ever active and vigorous even after casting away my body.
- I shall respond and act in human form and continue to work for my devotees from my tomb.
- My mortal remains will speak, execute and discharge all the needs of my devotees. My tomb shall bless, speak and fulfil the innumerable needs of my devotees.

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IS BABA LIVING AND HELPING NOW ?

– Compiled by **Jyoti Ranjan Raut**

8/A Kakad Estate, 106 Sea Face Road,

Worli, Mumbai - 400 018.

Manoj Shivshankar Geeta Joshi (A 5/103, Shivchhaya C. H. S. Ltd., Dholkia Nagar, Gilbert Hill Road, Andheri West, Mumbai) :-

SAI'S GRACE...

On 12th May, 2007, I was praying to Shirdi Sai Baba in the evening with a *Diya* and an *Agarbatti*. A photograph of my parents is also next to Baba's photo. Suddenly there was darkness in front of my eyes and I could see neither Baba nor my parents' photo. I thought I would not survive, as my blood pressure shot up. But, with Baba's grace, I could stand and had enough presence of mind to take Baba's *Udi* with some water. In no time I could once again see the pictures of Baba and my parents, and felt quite normal.

I will always remember this day in my life when the Merciful, Lovable and Ever Helpful Baba gave me a new lease of life !



C. Muralimohan (Andhra Bank, No. 588, II Block, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka.) :-

SAI SAVED MY CASH BAG...

Whenever I leave my house I ask Sai to take care of me.

In the year 2000, our family had been to Thiruchendoor – Abode of Lord Muruga Sea Shore Temple in Tamilnadu. The sun was setting. My two children were playing deep in the water and enjoying the waves. Since it was a full moon day and the waves were rather high I went to see to their safety.

I had my cash bag with me, which I handed over to my mother-in-law who was sitting on the shore. I was near the children when I heard my wife cry out in panic. I returned with the children only to find that my mother-in-law had been swept into the sea along with the cash bag.

My position was pathetic. All my money had gone with that bag. There was no money to settle hotel bills, food or travel. It was a testing time and it was then that Baba came to help. Somebody in the vast crowd on the sea shore called out to me and said that the sea had returned my bag and a rustic wearing a turban was holding it. He even pointed out that particular man. I went to the person and claimed my bag, which he returned without any hesitation. I thanked him profusely and went back to the lodge to dry out the wet currency.

Baba had come in the guise of a rustic and gave back my bag. As usual, I did not recognise him in the first instance. With firm faith and patience, every Sai devotee is sure to get experiences of Sai and witness miracles.



Saidas N. S. Rajagopalan (C/11, Chetan Apartments, Aundh Road, Khadki, Pune, Maharashtra.) :-

TESTING DEVOTEE'S SHRADDHA AND SABURI...

It was Thursday and the Sai temple was fully crowded for *Darshan* and Noon *Aarati*. I was also at the temple and sat at my usual place for meditation after *Darshan*, *Pradakshina* and *Namaskar* of Lord Sai.

While meditating, a brown dog came and sat in front of me, wagging its tail and smelling my right hand ‘*Pavitra*’ finger on which I wear a silver ring inscribed with the image of Sai. I resumed my meditation and the dog continued to smell the ‘*Pavitra*’ finger. Suddenly the priest came and shooed him away, saying, “Go away ! You have already bitten people earlier !”

The dog moved out to the *Verandah*; but soon came back and kept on smelling the same finger. Soon he fell asleep; but his nose and mouth continued to touch my ring. After meditation, I got up thinking of feeding the dog, who was yet asleep. I soon returned with a *Vada* pack from a hotel opposite the temple; but the dog had vanished without a trace. I searched in vain; but could not find him anywhere.

I took the *Vada* pack home and ate it as Sai’s *Prasad*, before commencing my cooking for lunch.

I believe it was Sai Himself Who was testing my devotion and patience -‘*Shraddha* and *Saburi*’. The *Vada* was His ‘*Prasad*’ as He knew I would be late for cooking lunch.



C. Nagaraja Rao (80-10-1, Koka Bhaskaramma Nagar, Anala Venkata Apparao Road, Rajamundry, A. P.) :-

HOW BABA CONTINUES TO HELP HIS DEVOTEES EVEN TODAY...

I had gone to Simla for training when I received a call from my home in Andhra Pradesh that both my parents were seriously ill and were too weak to walk or talk. I was mentally upset, as I was very attached to them. I prayed to Baba for their speedy recovery. Presently my prayers were answered and I received a call three days later saying that Dattavdhuta Shri Guruvayya Swamy of Golgamudi (Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh) himself came to our house and massaged my father’s body saying, “You are alright now.” To everyone’s surprise, my father started recovering and my mother too showed progress from the same time.

After a few months my father again suffered from severe pain and was unable to walk. Soon after, his condition worsened and he had to be hospitalised. Considering his age (81 years), surgery was ruled out. Throughout we continued praying to Baba. Presently he started showing improvement after 12 hours of treatment and could walk again. He was discharged after 48 hours. But, for Baba’s mercy, it would not have been possible for him to recover.



Rajesh Nadge (328, Durga Nagar, Near Priya Vidyavihar, Hingna Road, Nagpur, Maharashtra.) :-

HOW I WAS SAVED IN AN ACCIDENT WITH SAI’S GRACE...

In Sep. 2006, I had gone to Pune on official work. I had planned to go to Shirdi on my return journey; but changed my mind and took an evening bus back to Nagpur. I was just waking up from my sleep at 5.30 a.m., when I saw the bus hitting a tree. Soon thereafter the terrible accident occurred. The passenger in front of me and the one behind me died instantly. All the passengers were injured; but the seat in which I was seated was thrown out of the bus and I was hurt slightly. Baba had saved me.

I have immense faith in Baba. I always keep Baba’s photo and *Udi* with me. I regretted the decision of not going to Shirdi, as the very next day was *Dassera* and Sai’s *Samadhi* Day. Since then I decided to visit Shirdi every *Dassera*. After all, I am alive today only with the Grace of Baba !



Smt. Yojana Maruti Bhosle (At & Post Sadashiv Nagar, Tal. Malshiras, Solapur, Maharashtra.) :-

DOCTOR SAID, “NO NEED FOR AN OPERATION !”

Our entire family are Sai devotees, who remember him every moment. In June 2008, a calamity struck me; but I was not afraid as I had full faith in Baba and his *Udi*. There was a lemon sized lump in my breast. All due tests were done. I prayed to Baba that if it were cancer, please give me an accidental death; but spare me from the costly life threatening disease.

An emergency operation was recommended and I was admitted to the hospital. I was wheeled into the operation theatre and was about to be given anaesthesia. But, before that the doctor wanted to check the exact location of the tumour. However to his surprise there was none. “When there is no tumour, why should we operate ?” he said.

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief and were really very surprised. Sai’s *Leelas* are beyond imagination !



Ramesh Baburao Dnyanmothe (502, Swati Tower, 'A' Wing, N. C. Kelkar Road, Dadar West, Mumbai.) :-

HOW AN OPERATION WAS AVERTED BY SAI..

I am a 66 year old Sai devotee. With Baba's Grace, I am leading a happy and contented life. The following experience is something I will never forget in my entire life.

Once, I was so sick that I could not get up unless the doctor came in the morning and gave me an injection. But, after a week, the doctor asked me to be admitted to the hospital and get operated. But, there was no guarantee of a cure.

I steeled myself for the hospitalisation and was dressing up while my daughter fetched a cab. Suddenly intense pain in my lower back made me collapse on the bed and I shut my eyes. I was awake. Suddenly I noticed Baba Himself walking out of the photo in our house. He was very tall and wearing white, just as in the picture. As I lay wondering where Baba would sit since I was lying awkwardly on the bed, Baba came closer and blessed me three times (I counted) from head to toe.

Just then my daughter shook me up, saying that the taxi had come. I was very angry with my daughter as Baba vanished as soon as I opened my eyes.

Eventually, I regained my health with the help of traction and no operation was needed.

Baba's miracle indeed !



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In Sai's Proximity

Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

MUKTARAM

Some of the Sai devotees have stayed loyal to their devotion for the span of their entire life. Prominent amongst them is Muktaram.

He originally belonged to Khandesh. His house was about one and a half mile from Raver. He first came to Shirdi around 1910-11. After passage of some time, he gave up the land he owned, his house, mother, wife and children (*Sarva-Sang-Parityag*) and moved permanently to Shirdi to be near Baba. Baba gave him the name 'Muktaram'.

At that time, there was another Sai devotee in Shirdi who was walking on the path to *Virakti*. His name was Balaram alias Balakram Mankar. Muktaram started spending his time in the company of Balaram. Baba was guiding these two on their *Adhyatmik* (spiritual) progress and was not willing to make these two sit in Shirdi only. He made them undertake travel to various areas. But, Shirdi was the central point for all their journeys and from time to time they returned to Shirdi.

In planning their return to Shirdi, Baba had the intention of giving them *Adhyatmik* guidance as well as achieving their *Aatmavikas* (self-development).

From 1914-15, Muktaram moved his residence permanently to Shirdi. He spent his maximum time around Baba. He sat near the *Dhooni* in the *Masjid*. His practice was to arrive in Dwarkamai in the early morning and continue there upto the *Aarati* at the noon. He took his breakfast and lunch along with Baba. He managed with whatever food that Baba gave him.

After lunch, as directed by Baba, he used to move to a small tin-shed adjacent to Dixit *Wada*. He had kept a *Dhooni* incessantly burning there. As per instructions of Baba, he stayed near this *Dhooni* till Baba asked him to come out. Even in scorching heat of summer, he continued to sit for hours together near the burning *Dhooni* in the small tin-shed. people around him wondered, how he is able to bear the heat. The reason was the power (*Shakti*) he had gained from his staunch devotion (*Bhakti*). Muktaram was thus incessantly trying to turn his *Antarang* and *Bahya-rang* towards the path of Almighty. His only aim in life was to live in the way shown by *Sadguru*.

Baba had given him a *Kafni* and a cloth to tie around his head and that was his daily attire. There was a resemblance in his way of living, style of speech and gestures and those of Baba. However, some people thought that he was imitating Baba and therefore, the respect that they felt for Muktaram gradually gave place to misunderstanding and hatred. This got expression in some of the articles published as well as stories circulated about Muktaram.

There are two distinct versions of the event immediately before Muktaram's death. One version shows his in a rather bad light while other one clears the air.

A few examples of former type appear in Shri Sai Satcharit as well as in a magazine called 'Shri Sainath Prabha'. This magazine began publication in 1916 from Pune and Shri Sunderrao Narayan was its editor. The magazine was managed by Daxina Bhiksha Sanstha of Raobahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe.

Some of the stories which show Shri Muktaram in a bad light are :-

(1) Muktaram felt that he is able to copy the ways of behaviour of Baba. Therefore, after Baba took *Samadhi*, he started feeling that he could take the place of Baba. Slowly, there came a change in him. One day, he sat on the mattress (near the railing), on which Baba used to sit. Many senior devotees protested against this; but he replied, "It is Baba Himself Who has asked me to sit on this mattress. I am His heir." However, in a short while, he felt as if pins were pricking him from below and blood started oozing out. He vacated the seat and moved to another place. But, the pricking and blood continued. In about 7-8 days, he laid down his life in great pain, but after seeking forgiveness of Shri.

(2) A similar story appears in the *Don Shabda* (two words - or foreword) to Shri Sai Satcharit. It says that two days after Baba took *Samadhi*, Muktaram went and sat on Baba's seat in Dwarkamai. Thereafter, he died a painful death as narrated above.

(3) The moment Muktaram's feet touched the seat of Samartha (Sai Baba), he had an unbearable pain in his stomach. Later on no medicine or remedy was unable to help him. He prayed before the seat of Samartha for forgiveness; but to no avail. After two days, he died a painful death.

It was but natural that anyone who heard or read stories of these versions would see Shri Muktaram in a bad light. To dispel the misunderstandings and bad publicity, one of the Sai devotees wrote a detailed letter to the editors of 'Shri Sainath Prabha' under the pen-name of *Mitra* (friend) which was published in the April, 1919 issue of the magazine. It is reproduced below :-

"After reading an article titled 'Shri Sainath Maharajanchya Akhyayika' (legends of Shri Sainath Maharaj), I had certain thoughts which I feel it necessary to communicate to you and hence, this letter.

The story published therein relating to the death of a devotee named Muktaram is not factual. ...About three months prior to Shri Samartha took *Samadhi*, Muktaram was not keeping well. He was suffering from fever and cough. Since he took ill, he laid down in his room. About 8-9 days after Shri Samartha took *Samadhi*, he went to the *Masjid*; but returned to his room in less than 24 hours. He did not sit on the mattress near the railing and also did not place his hand on the railing like Baba used to do. He sat still on a gunny sack near a pillar somewhere near the middle.

Several people thought that it was Muktaram's plan to sit in the *Masjid* like Baba used to do and this writer is one of such people. However, as Muktaram soon returned to his room, all doubts were cleared.

After he returned to his room, this author posed him a direct question, 'Why did you go to the *Masjid* and then, why did you return ?' He replied, 'As I am not feeling well, I am very much harassed person. I thought that if I sit in the *Masjid* and pray to Shri Samartha, I may get some relief. However, it was not possible for me to sit there for long. Further, there was the problem of spitting out cough from time to time. Therefore, I returned back to this room to lay down.' Later on, from the month of October, his health started deteriorating rapidly and after about two to two and half months he died of TB in January, 1919.

Secondly, the article published in your magazine is likely to create an impression that Shri Samartha was very cold hearted. However, this writer and many other devotees have experienced that to the contrary that Shri Samartha was personification of *Daya* (kindness) and *Kshama* (forgiveness). He looked after His devotees like His own children. Punishment meted out to a wrongdoer was mild in nature."

The above letter was published by Shri Sainath Prabha and its editor even added that :-

"We had published in our previous issue an account of Shri Muktaram's death. It was penned by a senior devotee of Samartha Sai Baba from Shirdi itself. We were only a medium for publishing it. We were not aware of Muktaram's earlier details. Our friend has furnished the missing information. We are grateful to this friend for the same."

The letter was also published by Shri Sai Leela and its editor stated that :-

"The new devotees visiting Shirdi after Baba took *Samadhi* hear stories about earlier days and about earlier persons – which have traveled by word of mouth. It is necessary for the devotees in using their own judgement regarding credibility and reliability of such stories. Hence, we have published the above letter."

If a person gives some more thought to the three stories appearing above, he is likely to come across some absurdities. There is some confusion about exact day on which Shri Muktaram is said to have visited the *Masjid*. The first story mentions it as 'one day' while the second and third stories mention 'two days' after Baba took *Samadhi*. Thus, the exact day on which Muktaram went there is not clear.

In the first and second stories, the cause of Muktaram's death is given as "because he sat on the seat of Shri Samartha, he felt as if pins were pricking him from below, blood started oozing out and he died a painful death." However, in the third story, it is mentioned that "his stomach started having unbearable pains and he died of a swelling in his stomach." Thus the stories give conflicting reasons for his death.

The most important anomaly is about the time of his death. First two stories state that "he dies after two days". Third story says that "he died after two days". Thus the month of his death would be October 1918.

In reality he had gone to the *Masjid* 8-9 days after Baba took *Samadhi*, he died in January 1919 and the cause of was TB.

The letter writer was a witness to these events and had written the account in his own handwriting. This is sufficient to set at rest all guess-work about Muktaram's behaviour and death.

There are some incidents concerning Shri Muktaram which are worth mentioning here.

Whenever Annasaheb Dabholkar (author of Shri Sai Satcharit) visited Shirdi, he stayed on the upper floor of Dixit *Wada*. His bedding would be kept below a window. Once, a snake came in from a hole in the window and entered Dabholkar's bedding. Everyone gathered sticks etc. to kill the snake. A person succeeded in hitting him; but he managed to escape by the same route by which he had come. Muktaram, who was present there, said, "The poor animal would have lost its life. Good that he could escape from the hole."

Hearing this Dabholkar was furious. There was a verbal duel which lasted for a long time. Ultimately it was time to go to bed and the debate was given a rest for the time being. Next day Baba deliberately raised the topic – "What happened yesterday?" Dabholkar narrated the entire story and posed a question, "Should a person slay a snake at such times?" Baba replied, "There is a part of God in every human-being as well as animal – may he be a snake or a scorpion. Every one behaves as the Almighty asks him to behave."

Thus, Muktaram had propagated what Baba had taught and Baba fully supported his stand. This incident narrates how Muktaram's nature was different from others.

Another incident concerning Muktaram is how Baba made him a medium for constructing a temple at a town called Harda.

Shri Sadashiv Dhundiraj alias Sadu-bhaiyya Naik of Harda once received a letter from Shri Kakasaheb Dixit. It was stated that "Shri Balaramji and Muktaramji will leave from here on Monday the 8th February 1915 and will reach Harda by same day evening by about 5 p.m. Muktaram's home is about one-and-half mile from Raver. There is a large photo of Shri Samarth there. He has an urge to give this photo to you. Please send a person to meet these two on Harda station."

Muktaram as a medium

Around the same time Honorary Magistrate Chhotubhaiya Parulkar (also a resident of Harda) had a dream and in it Baba said, "I have come to Sadubhaiya's place. Come for a *Darshan*!"

After receiving Kakasaheb's letter, Sadu-bhaiya did not send any one to the station, but went himself. He saw Balaram and Muktaram sitting in a compartment with the photo placed in between the two. He prostrated before Baba's photo, greeted Balaram and Muktaram and took them to his home.

It was the day of Dasnavami. A lot of people had gathered to welcome them. With great fanfare, evening *Arati* was performed.

Next day was Thursday. As guided by Balaram and Muktaram, a *Pooja* of the photo was performed with *Rudrabhishek*. Thereafter the photo was placed on a throne and *Arati* and *Mantrapushpanjali* were performed.

While the *Abhishek* was being performed, Muktaram climbed first on the balcony and from there on the roof of the house and hoisted a flag. Actually, the place - from where the flag post was tied – was very precarious and if his foot had slipped, it was a sure call for death. Everyone was watching with bated breathes. However, within a batting of an eyelid, Muktaram accomplished the task and safely came down.

While Muktaram was hoisting the flag, here in Shirdi Baba's hands started severely aching. While Fakir Baba was pressing His hands, He uttered, "**Garibonka Allah Malik Wali HAI. Allahase Bada Koi Nahi**". (*Allah* is everything of the poor people. No one is bigger than *Allah*.)

Here Baba's photo was installed at Sadu-bhaiya's place and same night in Jalgaon, Sadubhaiya's wife as well as cousin brother had following dreams.

His wife saw that Madhavrao Deshpande had come with a coconut, *Khan* (blouse piece) and packets of *Haldi-Kumkum* and said to her, "Baba has sent this *Oti* for you."

Sadubhaiya's cousin brother Shri Narayan Dadaji dreamt that he is standing in front of Baba and Baba is saying to him, "We are going to Harda. You also come with us!" Next he saw that both of them were standing on the banks of river Godavari. It appeared that the river had swelled with more water than was usual and where they were standing, nearby there were two gunny bags of wheat.

Baba asked Narayanrao, "How are we going to cross the river now?" But, suddenly, there appeared 10 *Nandi Bail* (holy bullocks) carrying loads on their backs and a well-constructed road also appeared. Baba and the *Nandi Bail* accompanied Narayanrao from his house in Harda till the house of Sadubhaiya (where the flag had been hoisted) and suddenly disappeared.

Thus Baba had established His *Sansthan* at Harda and for the purpose, He had used Muktaram as a medium.

In short, Muktaram was a man who had embraced *Vairagya*. He had given up family life and bowed at the feet of Baba. He laid down his life in Shirdi and his *Samadhi* was built in Lendi-baug in Shirdi. The people - who initially had criticized Muktaram – later on started paying respects to his *Samadhi*. It was Baba's desire to be so. Without it, nothing would have been possible.

BADE BABA

Shri Sai Baba gave refuge to many devotees in Dwarkamai. Bade Baba was one very important personality amongst such devotees in Shri Sai Baba's *Darbar*.

Baba has said, "If you give me one I will give you in hundreds !" However, the gifts of God are unique. To consume the blessings, the devotee must be equally deserving and virtuous. It would be seen from the life sketch of Bade Baba that Baba showered a lot on him; but Bade Baba did not have the spiritual strength to deserve them.

Bade Baba was '*Fakir Peer Mohammed*' from Malegaon. By profession he was a Fakir. Therefore, he was also known by the name Fakir Baba.

Bade Baba first arrived in Shirdi around 1909 and thereafter, took permanent residence there. In the beginning, he used to reside in the new *Chavdi*. Sai Baba had not granted him permission to come to Dwarkamai. Devotees like Mhalsapati, who were close to Baba, requested Him to permit Bade Baba to enter Dwarkamai. However, Baba continued to deny the permission saying "Let him sit in the *Chavdi* and read the Book (*Quran*)". Baba adopted such queer-looking ways for the spiritual progress of some of His devotees.

After some months passed, Baba gave the permission to Bade Baba became a prominent personality in Shirdi. The reason for this was also unique.

"*Atithi Devo Bhava*"

Sai Baba pampered Bade Baba a lot. He affectionately called him 'Bademiyan' and honoured him as a guest. In the Masjid, he sat on the right hand side of Baba. In Baba's *Darbar*, a guest was given a lot of prestige. Bade Baba was in the Masjid from morning breakfast to afternoon dinner. Sai Baba made him sit near Himself and served food with His own hands. He cajoled Bade Baba to eat more.

Devotees placed offerings of eatables before Baba. He first took some part from the offerings, gave to Bade Baba and then distributed the rest to other devotees.

At the time of meals also, unless Bade Baba partook some of the food first, Baba would not commence His own lunch. However, unfortunately, Bade Baba's ego got bloated because of the importance accorded to him by Baba. Therefore, the other devotees disliked Bade Baba's behaviour.

It was the daily routine that, before the meals were served, Bade Baba would come and sit in the Sabha Mandap down below. Baba would call out his name - 'Bade Miyan' and only then he would climb the steps of the *Masjid* and sit at the dish placed on Baba's right-hand side.

However once, on the festive day of Diwali, Bade Baba's mood was upset due to some reason and he did not follow his usual practice. He did not arrive at the Sabha Mandap. On that day, several devotees had brought an assortment of sweetmeats. After the food was served, Baba called out Bade Baba's name. But, he was nowhere to be seen. In Bade Baba's absence, Baba refused to start His meal. Everyone kept waiting.

Ultimately, someone located Bade Baba and managed to bring him to his place on the right side of Baba. Finally, the meals commenced. It may appear odd that too much importance was being given to a person who insulted food. But, Baba had unique ways of gathering His devotees and He followed such ways Himself.

In the later years, everyday, as many as 100-125 dishes filled with *Naivedya* were brought by devotees from Shirdi and other places. Some days, Baba instructed Bade Baba to make pieces of *Chapattis* and *Bhakaris* and mix them. Accepting these as Baba's *Prasad*, the devotees ate it with relish. On some occasions, Baba chided them by asking, "How do you eat this food which has been touched and viled by Bade Baba - a Muslim ?" Devotees replied, "Baba, this place and this food belongs to the Almighty God." To this, Baba said, "Yes. Not only this place, but the entire world belongs to Him. Therefore, you should never differentiate between various religions and castes."

God is everywhere

In the eyes of the saints, there is no differentiation between various elements which make up this world. They see this earth as one. Their every action imparts some message. Only, we must be able to read, understand and follow it.

Once, Baba was having His meal. An earthen pot contained some buttermilk. Suddenly a dog entered the *Masjid* and tasted it. Bade Baba - who was sitting nearby - asked a boy to throw away the buttermilk. Baba enquired what was wrong. After Bade Baba explained, Baba said, "That buttermilk is good. Take it home and make *Kadhi*. We both will have it." Bade Baba prepared the *Kadhi*, brought it; but did not touch it. Baba drank it whole-heartedly.

Sant - Sadguru try to eradicate the thoughts of *Sankalp - Vikalp* from the minds of their devotees. The above incident was Baba's attempt to stamp out such thoughts from Bade Baba's mind. The man had spent countless days with and around Baba. In spite of this, did he fail to get the message ?

Baba always took with love and affection at least some portion from the *Prasad* brought by His devotees. He even tasted the non-vegetarian dishes. He did not differentiate between various religions and castes. He also did not believe *Sovale - Ovale* (achieving purity by not touching others). At the same time, He believed that His devotees must adhere to their respective religions and its dictates. Once, Bade Baba brought a Hindu who had converted himself into a Muslim. Baba slapped that person and asked, "Were you not ashamed to change your father ?"

Baba could not agree with certain extreme customs of Islam and refused to follow them. Once, He told His staunch and hard-liner Muslim devotees to go outside the border of Shirdi town and then do their *Khutba* prayer. He Himself did not participate in the prayer. On the second occasion. He allowed them to do *Namaz* in the *Masjid*; but did not participate Himself.

The honour of highest *Daxina*

Everyday, devotees offered *Daxina* totaling Rs. 400 to Rs. 500 to Baba. By evening, Baba distributed the amount and His pockets became once again empty. Baba gave a certain sum of money everyday to Dada Kelkar, Bade Baba, Sunderabai, Laxmibai, Tatya Patil etc. But, the honour of getting maximum amount - varying between Rs. 30 to Rs. 55 - went to Bade Baba. During the last 9 years (prior to Baba's leaving His mortal body), Bade Baba and Tatya Patil got more than Rs. 100 everyday.

"What use a *Fakir* like Bade Baba can make of receiving such large sum of money everybody" was the question which cropped in the minds of the residents of Shirdi. They, therefore, requested Bade Baba to finance the construction of the main entrance to the village. However, Bade Baba did not agree to the request. Hence, the villagers forbid him from stepping into the village. He, therefore, went and stayed at Nimgaon. To circumvent the problem, Baba used to meet Bade Baba everyday on the banks of the *Nullah* and handed over the amount to Bade Baba there. The villagers realized that they had put Baba to a lot of inconvenience and hence, called back Bade Baba to Shirdi.

Bade Baba's behaviour

After the above event, the villagers bowing down went to Bade Baba's head. He realized that the folks were now coming to him with folded hands and this made Bade Baba more arrogant. Baba always treated Bade Baba with respect. But, Bade Baba started behaving with a sense of superiority and as per his whims and fancies. He even started acting against the wishes of Baba. The devotees felt that Bade Baba must use his language carefully and politely while at least speaking to or about Baba. But, his choice of words bordered on sheer arrogance.

Once, Baba's devotee Shri Raghuvir Bhaskar Purandare was suffering from sever headache. Whole night, he was restless. In the same condition, he went to Baba. Bade Baba, who was sitting nearby, told harshly to Baba, "Purandare has suffered during the entire night. He has got a sever headache. Look after him. Don't make him so much ill."

(Contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into

English by **Sudhir**



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