

**DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES  
OF  
SRI SAI BABA**



**PARTS I, II &  
BY H.H.NARASIMHASWAMIJI**

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## **OUR WORD**

LORD SAINATH assured "My Tomb shall bless and speak to the needs of My devotees", H.H. Narasimha Swamiji, chosen Apostle of Shirdinath as described by H.H. Saipadanandaji and compared to VYASA by Late Justice M.B. Rege, has given us the pleasure of this enlightenment in his books "Devotees' Experiences of Sri Saibaba", brought out by us in one volume now. The experiences of the Devotees who were associated with Baba and also had His Blessings after Mahasamadhi confirm that "Sai Baba is more Alive now than when He was living" as, also stated by Sri. N.V.Gunaji, author of Sri Sai Satcharita (English edition).

As these books which contain valuable information to understand SAI & His philosophy are out of stock, we have ventured to republish the same. We shall be ever grateful to the devotees who spared their personal copies of Parts I, II and III without which this book would not have come to your hands. We consider the experience of a devotee to be more important than the language and we have not made any corrections though certain words were not understandable.

We humbly submit that the efforts of Akhanda Sainama Sapthaha Samithi (Regd.) in His Seva have the blessings of Videhi Sati Anasuya Matha of Paradsinga (Nagpur), Sri Rama Avadhoot of Kallur (Kufnool) and puja Sivanesan Swamiji of Shirdi. We are neither authors nor doers, but only tools in their Sacred hands.

We thank M/s. Charminar Art Printers and M/s. Aparajit Computers of Secunderabad for their neat and speedy execution of this work and M/s. Jyothi Press, Hyderabad for their fine printing of the title cover.

**OM SAI SRI SAI JAVA JAVA SAI**

HYDERABAD  
7-10-1989.

D. SANKARAI AH  
Secretary  
Akhanda Sainama  
Sapthaha Samithi (Regd.)

## **ELEVEN ASSURANCES OF "SRI SAIBABA"**

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

**FOREWORD**  
BY  
DEWAN BAHADUR K. SUNDARAM CHETTIAR,  
RETD. HIGH COURT JUDGE.

This book of my revered friend, Sri B.V. Narasimhaswami, would surely be an eye-opener to many a sceptic, blinded with a veil of materialism, and obsessed with a prejudice against the reality of anything which has not yet been stamped with the imprimature of Modern Science. Sri Sai Baba's spiritual grandeur is disclosed in the thrilling account of His devotees' experiences, which the learned author has gathered with assiduous care, and made available for the general public. The testimony of so many devotees relating to the wonderful miracles performed by the Great Sage and Maha Siddha Purusha, which are all matters of their personal knowledge, should serve to dispel ignorance and doubt, and infuse faith and devotion in the mind of any reader. A great spiritual Alchemist as he was, Sri Sai Baba was able to transmute the lower self of his devotees mixed with the dross of the baser desires and passions, into the effulgence of the dormant higher self, by a purifying process of refinement in His mysterious crucible. He was doubtless a compassionate healer of the body as well as the soul.

Need I say under what a deep debt of gratitude the author has laid the public, who have the good fortune of reading this book? Sri Sai Baba, as one of the Saviours of humanity, showered His Grace on all those who sought for His blessings, with faith and devotion, and such Grace will also be shed on any one who now seeks for it in the proper way, as the author assures us in this book.

## PREFACE

(By the Author)

This volume has been referred to in the "Introduction to Sai Baba," as furnishing part of the evidence on which the conclusions in that booklet are based. Besides strengthening the faith of the reader in the facts mentioned therein and in the nature of Sri Sai Baba and his methods these pages may furnish hints to the careful reader on other matters also. For instance, the first statement here, which is that of an esteemed friend, a High Court Judge still in active service, would help a reader who first approaches Baba to get into close, nay intimate touch with him and derive the fullest benefit therefrom benefit greater, perhaps, than that the Judge has derived. It is a matter of regret to this writer that he has to present that Judge to the readers under a pseudonym. But as that gentleman felt it delicate to have his experiences published broadcast over his real name, that feeling had to be respected. The only other pseudonym in this volume (Part I) is "Mrs. Manager." Indian readers would naturally expect and respect this feeling of delicacy in a lady at appearing before the public with her statement. The pseudonym given correctly indicates her status and that of her husband. These are regarded by all who know them as eminent devotees worthy of credit. The credentials of the other devotees whose statements are given appear on the surface and need no comment. Prof. Narke is clear, guarded, yet emphatic in all that he says. Rao Bahadur S. B. Dhumal, Mr. R. B. Purandhare and Mr. S. B. Nachne (who along with the Judge appear to be the most ardent among the lovers of Baba included in this part) have revealed the fact that they are constantly receiving Baba's help ever since they came under his care. An enthusiastic reader need not despair of achieving the same result for himself. Several Madrassite devotees who learnt of Baba within the last two years, i.e., after this writer's articles appeared in the *Sunday Times*, Madras, (1936) have got into intimate touch with Sai Baba and are receiving his guidance and help, every day-nay every hour. The holy Swami Naraina Tirtha reveals how he was enabled by Baba to enjoy the mystic bliss of perceiving that all things are but his own self-that difference is really non-existent. The reader may be assured

that such high advaitic flights are by no means confined to the older devotees that were privileged to see Baba in the flesh. The modern devotee can still derive similar and even higher benefits by concentrating his love on Baba. That Baba works greater wonders now than before his mahasamadhi may be illustrated by the following incident reported elsewhere by Sai' s devotees. Dr. Rane in spite of his English medical training and degrees, was helpless when his wife' s skin was seriously discoloured by leprosy after Baba passed away. But he and his wife stayed at Shirdi for six months; and during that period she had her daily bath in the Abhisheka water and used Baba' s Udhi. Some improvement was noticed. Then the couple went to Bombay and continued the use of Baba' s Udhi and Abhisheka Tirtha. In two years the natural colour of the skin was entirely restored and the cure was complete. This was years after Baba' s mahasamadhi.

The other statements in this part speak for themselves-and show how far Baba helped in overcoming the unfortunate differences between the two great communities of India. The case of Abdulla Jan who came from beyond the Himalayas, with the view that Indians-especially Hindus-are natural enemies and prey of stronger northern races, and was so deeply changed by contact with Sai Baba as to regard Hindus as his brethren and internecine quarrels as destructive of the country' s welfare is by no means a solitary exception but typical of whole groups. Communal clashes between these two faiths are unknown to Shirdi, where Hindus build Baba' s mosque and tomb at which both communities pray or worship. A Brahmin devotee has constructed a mosque for his Moslem visitors at Sakori (Smiles from Shirdi) close to the Datta and Maruti temples there; and no disturbance of public tranquillity has occurred or is apprehended. Baba combining in himself all that is best in Hinduism and Islam and being revered by both communities is the ideal link between them-a link forged not from worldly materials but from the highest elements of human nature.

The last statements are typical of the fellow feeling of Baba (and of the devotees following his noble example) towards other faiths, e.g, the Christian. The very few differences during Baba' s long stay at Shirdi that are mentioned in statements I & IX are the exceptions which prove the general rule of harmony.

These and other important points would be further brought out in the subsequent parts of Devotees' Experiences that will be issued hereafter.

In closing this preface, the writer must gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the numerous devotees that have disclosed their experiences to him. One of these devotees requires special mention and that is Mr. P.R. Avesti, B.A., LL.B., formerly a Sessions Judge in Gwalior. But for his indefatigable exertions and great kindness in introducing this writer to scores of devotees, interpreting their statements when made in the vernacular and translating the vernacular books and documents about Sri Sai into English, this and other works on Sai could never have been written by this writer.



## DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

### I

11th June, 1936

Chinna Kistna Rajasaheb Bahadur, B.A., L.L.B., Saraswath aged about 50, interior of India, says:

I look upon Sri Sai Baba as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. I did so before his Mahasamadhi in 1918 and I do so now. To me, he is not gone. He is, even now.

To me, he had no limitations. Of course, when he was with us, there was the fleshy tabernacle. That was prominently brought to our notice at times. But mostly the infinite aspect of His was what remained before me. I thought of him as a mental or spiritual image, in which the finite blended very perfectly - yet allowing the finite to appear before us at times. Now that the body has been cast off, the infinite alone remains, as 'Sai Baba'.

I am not after metaphysics and philosophical conundrums. Sai Baba occasionally talked in mystic language and used parables freely - which however, were constructed in widely different ways by different listeners. Once he talked to me in the mystic way and asked me whether I understood him. I said 'No'. Others were present then. After they left, I told him that I did not grasp mystic utterances and that if he intended that I should grasp anything he should speak to me in plain terms. After that he spoke to me only in plain words and not in parables.

A short account of myself is necessary to show how I came to Sai Baba and how he filled my life and became my all in all.

Our family God is Durga - Santa Durga of Goa- a Bhadra form and not a Rudra form. I used to worship her and pray that she might ever keep me happy. Later when I was about eight years old, I had my sacred thread initiation and learnt my *Gayatri* and *Sandhya*. These I had regard for.

I was thus naturally led on from Durga to another form of God i.e., Narayana or Vishnu. Vishnu as pictured in “Dhruva-Narayana” made a deep impression on me, and I constantly meditated on that picture. When I concentrated or tried to concentrate on Vishnu, Dhruva’s figure frequently obtruded and so I cut off that portion of the picture and continued my meditation. I made a special appeal that in that blank space in the picture. (i.e., in that vacancy) Vishnu should place me. I had even as a boy practised Asana and Pranayama. I could pass one or two hours sitting in Padmasana or Siddhasana and concentrate for at least fifteen minutes, a single picture holding the entire field of my attention. I did all this without a Guru. I succeeded in Pranayama also to some extent. In this way my meditation on Vishnu or Narayana was fairly intense. This continued till my twenty first year. Then (i.e., 1910) one day, I was either sleeping and had dreams or I had trance visions I cannot say what they were. But the following three experiences I had in the course of one night.

As I was in the lying posture on my bed, I felt a change. I was perceiving that the body lay separate and I was disengaged from it - disconnected or unconnected. I was different from the body; and in front of me stood the figure of Vishnu Narayana. This ended; and about an hour later, a second incident followed. Again my body lay there on the bed. I was outside it. Sri Vishnu Narayana was standing before me and by his side stood another figure. Sri Vishnu addressed me and pointing to the other figure said “This Sai Baba of Shirdi, is you man; you must resort to him”.

The third incident or vision followed soon after- after about the same interval perhaps. I felt I was moving in some strange way. It was like levitation in the air. I came or was carried thus to a village. I found some one there and asked him what village that was. He said it was Shirdi, I asked him, “Is there any person named ‘Sai Baba’ here?” “Yes” he answered, “come and see”. I was taken to the mosque. There I saw Sai Baba. He was seated with legs outstretched. I went and reverently placed my head on his feet. He got up and said “Do you take my darshan? I am your debtor, I must take your darshan,” and he placed his head on my feet. Then we parted.

These visions impressed me greatly. Before that time I had seen a picture of Sai Baba in the usual seated posture and I knew nothing more about him. I did not then know that Baba often sat with both legs outstretched. Some time later, I started on my first visit to Baba and Shirdi, and tried to verify my visions and to see if Sai Baba was my destined sole Guru as indicated in them.

When I went to Sai Baba at the mosque, there were many others with him. I went and prostrated, placing my head on his feet. He then said "What! Do you worship a man?" At once I retreated some distance and sat. I felt the rebuff very keenly. I had, it is true, my scholastic notions that men should not be worshipped; and thought Sai Baba was hitting at me for going to him, with such notions lingering in my head. Between two stools I was coming to the ground. My scholastic idea of not worshipping any human being had been undermined and practically sacrificed; but I had not been accepted as a devotee by the Guru as I expected- from my visions. I felt deeply mortified and continued to sit for some hours. Then all had cleared of, leaving Baba alone on the floor of the mosque. That was in the afternoon. It was believed that none should go to Baba at that time, lest any serious harm should be inflicted as a penalty for the intrusion. But in my state of mind, such harm did not deter me. The main or single hope with which I had gone to Shirdi seemed to be blasted. What more was there to fear? He might beat me and crack my skull. Let him. With such ideas, I went nearer and nearer to the place where Baba sat. While I was some yards off, Baba gently beckoned to me to approach him. Thus encouraged I went and placed my head on his feet. He at once hugged me, bade me sit close to him and thus addressed me, "You are my child. When others i.e., strangers are in the company, we keep the children off". My apparent rejection or expulsion earlier in the day having been thus satisfactorily explained, I felt the full force of his deep and intense love for me and my heart responded to it. There was my Saviour, my Guru-the man of my destiny, found at last. Baba told me to go and put up with "Ayi". "Radhakrishnan" as he called her. I went up. Ever since that date, up to the end of her life, whenever I went to Shirdi, Ayi's was my residence. And except to go to Sai Baba, I would never leave

Ayi's residence while I was at Shirdi.

Ayi was a noble and affectionate person- an "Ayi" or mother indeed. She was from the very first treated by me as my mother and she loved me as if I was her son. She used to get a *roti* (bread) from Baba as prasad - on which alone she was living; and Baba used to send her an additional roti for me. Sometimes the extra roti received at Ayi's would indicated to her that I was on the way to Shirdi and would soon arrive. Ayi's devotion to Sai Baba was very intense and passionate. She lived only for Sai Baba, and her delight was to carry out everything that he wanted or was needed for his Sansthan, i.e., institution and devotees. I find that Baba's instruction and help to me came through Ayi, in a peculiar way. Ayi was so open hearted and kind that from the first day I could confide all my views and plans to her; and she revealed her ideas and plans to me. As for religious progress, she said that we should so act that no other persons should guess what we were doing and how we were getting on. Secrecy is essential for the success or perfect fruition of spiritual effort. This was, of course, Baba's practice and precept\*.

As for religious exercise, Ayi was an excellent singer with a divinely charming voice and a good knowledge of music. She could play on the Sitar also. I had a good ear for music and I easily attained *manolaya*+. I was rapt in the music when I listened to it. But as we went on, one day we talked about what form our religious exercise should take. Songs and hymns were good in their way, but they attracted attention of the outside public too much, and were not in any case sufficient for our onward course. Then we agreed that Japa was the proper step for us. What particular name should be used by us for Japa was the important question. She said that many used the name of Vittal, Ram etc., but that so far as she was concerned, "Sai" was her God and that

name was sufficient for her, while I might go on with the name of Vittal, etc., if I choose. I replied that I had not seen Vittal: and what was good for her was good for me, and that I also would go on taking Sai's name. So we sat on, facing each other and repeating to ourselves our chosen (guru God's) name- for about an hour. Later in the day, Sai Baba sent for me and asked me what I had been doing in the morning. "Japa" I said. "Of what name?" He asked. "Of my God" I replied. "What is your God?" was Sai Baba's next query. I simply replied, "you know it," and he smiled and said "That is right". Thus this Japa was really the Japa that he expressly approved and had perhaps silently started through Ayi unperceived by either Ayi or myself. Japa being the Sadhana approved of (in my case), the question may be put what is the *Sadhya* or goal that Sai Baba approved of- as the goal of life? What should a man aim at and reach as the end of his life? Just as the Sadhana was indirectly started by Baba, the Sadhya or goal, also was indirectly revealed; it was patent from all he said and did. It was through love, to reach God, (in any form, especially in the beloved form of the loving Guru) and intensely, nay passionately, to love him. This is what we did and what he made us to do, i.e., what he enabled or drew us to do by his own intense and wonderful love for us.

Some may set a great store by *Sakshatkara* or revelation in physical form of the object of worship, as the be- all and end-all of all religion. But I do not. As I intently meditated on Baba, I had Baba's vision at the meditation, I however, treated that appearance as a matter of secondary or minor importance. I did not want Baba to be outside of me. I said to Baba that I wanted him to come in and be me. What I mean by "me" is this. The self (i.e., "I") is compounded of two substances one the gross body and the other, the finer or subtler. In the finer, we have the baser element or part, and the nobler or higher. Our self, God Vittal and other entities are all the reflections of the Real; and so I should rise up to be Vittal or Sai; Vittal or Sai should come into me and take the place of my higher part. That is what I wanted to arrive at- and so was not satisfied with seeing Sai Baba as external to me in my meditation or contemplation.

I have not regularly studied even Gita up to this time. I did not care for spiritual study in my earlier days either; and so I do not go into much detail on the question of the exact description of the further stages or final stage of meditation.

One *Gurupoornima* day, numerous devotees came to Sai Baba, and as usual, placed a book before him so that he might return it with his *Asirvada* or blessing for them to study it with profit and benefit. Sai Baba, however, took up a book brought by one man and gave it to another, as he often does. On that occasion every one had a book in hand, except myself. Baba then looked at me and said pointing to the books- In these books, they want to find God Brahma. There is however, Brahma, i.e. whirl, confusion or delusion in these books. You are alright. Do not read books but keep me in your heart. If you unify (or harmonise) head and heart, that is enough". So I have not been indulging in any regular study of religious books. I content myself with what has led me so far; and with what has been achieved.) Some of my experiences bear upon the question what I should do. Though I have been intensely loving Sri Sai, I have not been able at time to do as good service to Baba as others do.

It was probably in 1912 that I went up to Shirdi on some festive occasion (Guru Poornima?) I saw the devotees at Manmad having each a grand basket with flower garlands etc. I was much pained to note that I had forgotten to take a flower garland when I was going to my Guru, who was everything to me. We all went to Shirdi and at the mosque, I found Baba was under a great weight of flower garlands and it pained me again that I had not a garland to give him. Baba lifted up a bundle of the garlands with his hand and said "All these are yours". How kind of Baba! What love was his to me! all forgiving, all forgetting love.

About the same year 1912, I had taken Rs.100 with me to Shirdi in my pocket. Sai Baba asked me for dakshina (Rs.40). I readily gave it. A little later he asked for another 40 rupees and that too was given with equal readiness and joy. Finally he asked me for the remaining 20 and that also I gave him. I was happy to give him all that - though I was left without a pie in the result. Then again Baba sent for me and

asked me for dakshina. I said I had nothing to give. Then he suggested that I should go and get money from some others. I agreed but told Baba that if he should indicate whom I was to go to, I would gladly go and ask him. Baba said "Go to Shama". I went to Mr. Madhava Rao Deshpande (Shama) and told him what took place and asked him for money. He replied that I had not understood Baba right. "Does Baba care a rap for your rupees?" He said "No, what he wants is your mind and heart, your time and soul to be devoted to him. That is his meaning". I went back to Baba and reported what Shama had said. Then Baba smiled and said, "Go to Dixit and ask him." I went to Mr. Dixit and told him of what Baba had bidden me to do. He then replied that Baba's direction to me had to be understood in the circumstances as a lesson to me that I should not feel absence of money or the begging for money or for anything else to be a humiliation, and that I should not esteem myself to be above begging. I went back and reported Dixit's reply to Baba. He smiled and then asked me to go to Nana Saheb Chandorkar and ask him for a loan. I went to Khandoba's temple where Nana Saheb Chandorkar was reading some religious books with the learned K. Upasani Sastri. I went and told Nana Saheb all that had occurred and Baba's order that I should approach him for money. Nana Saheb at once showed his worldly wisdom. He said that he knew how delicate the situation was when Baba asked for dakshina and there was nothing to be given to him to satisfy him and that I should learn his plans and was. "Whenever I go to Shirdi", he said, "I start with a certain sum, and leave a half at Kopergaon, i.e. on this occasion I came with Rs.200 out of which I have left Rs.100 at Kopergaon and come down to Shirdi with only Rs.100. It is very painful to say 'No' when Baba asks for money. So I go on giving dakshina out of the stock in hand to Baba and when it is exhausted, I send for the reserve at Kopergaon. You must act like this". I went back to Baba and then told him what Nana said. While I sat there. Baba sent for Nana and asked him for dakshina Rs.40. He paid it and went away. Again he sent for him and asked for Rs.40 more. That was paid and again Nana was sent for and the last amount was paid up and at once he sent some one to Kopergaon for his reserve fund. Then Baba at once wanted more. Nana felt humiliated

at having to say 'No' as there was no time for the Kopergaon reserve to arrive. The lesson that then taught to him, to me, and to all was that it was presumption on the part of any one to think that he himself was the great Providence supplying the needs of Baba, or that any one could supply all that Baba might ask for. Thus Baba showed me how differently the demand for dakshina was interpreted by devotees. The real explanation of Baba's demand in this case was not what Shama, Dixit or Nana said it was. It was evidently to teach lessons to me, Nana etc. Baba really cared nothing for money or for presents. What he really wanted was, love- deep, intense, passionate, wholehearted love. To give him that was my aim. He knew it and read it in my heart and responded to it- as only he could respond.

It was probably in 1915 Ramanavami, when intending to go to Shirdi, I went into the Indore cloth bazar to fix upon a present- worthy of being presented to Baba. I found a fine lace embroidered muslin of the Dacca type, produced at Chander. It was some 5 feet square with embroidered body and 8 or 9 inches of lace border all round. It was very nice and worth the 85 rupees I paid for it. It could be folded into 6"x6"x1" packet. I took it with me to Shirdi and kept it inside my shirt. Devotees usually go and present Baba with cloth in order that the same may be returned to them with Baba's blessings; and the same is returned to them. In my case, I had made up my mind that if Baba cared for my love (which knew no difference between him and me) he should not return the same to me but should retain it and wear it. When each devotee went and presented his cloth, it would be openly bestowed and placed on Baba and then at the end, the attendants would call out, "Whose is this" and return it. In order to avoid the return, I had taken my tiny packet and when I bowed to Baba, I slyly shoved the packet under his mattress (gadi). When all clothes were taken and returned, none noticed what was beneath the gadi. Baba then got up and said "Clear off all that lies on the gadi and dust it". When the mattress was removed, there was the muslin packet. Baba picked it up and said "Hallo, what is this? Muslin!" And spread it out and said "I am not going to return this. This is mine". He then put it round his body and said to me "Don't I look nice in this?" I was immensely happy as his



loving heart had fulfilled my request for the acceptance and retention of the present- as an index of the fact that I was not different from him- that I and he were one. I was not different from him. I and he were really one.

Our unity was expressly granted, in another way and at another time by Baba- about the same year.

I had gone to Shirdi and was staying as usual at Ayi's. In the afternoon, when Baba was alone, he sent some one to fetch me and after dismissing the messenger from his presence, he was very kind to me, made me sit close to him, embraced me, and said "The key of my treasury is now placed in your hands. Ask anything you want, e.g., Rs.5 or Rs.100 a month- or what you like and I will give it to you". I felt at once that this was a temptation- and declined to ask for anything. Sai Baba knew what was necessary, good or useful for me and it was for him to decide and give or withhold. It was not for me to ask. Seeing my disinclination to ask, he held me by the chin and coaxed me into asking him for something. Then I asked, "Is it agreed Baba, that you will grant anything I ask for?" "Yes" was his answer. "Then Baba," I replied, "I want this. In this and in any future birth that may befall on me you should never part from me. You should always be with me." And he patted me joyously and said, "Yes I shall be with you, inside you, and outside you, whatever you may be or do." I was supremely happy. I feel that he is always with me. At times, he visibly shows his form to reassure me or guide me.

Many years later, I lost a child in a building which had numerous occupants. My wife was greatly depressed and started weeping. I assured her that Baba did only what was good for us and had taken away that child and so we should not weep and attract a crowd. I asked her to sleep till morning- when the funeral would take place. She could not bear the sight of the corpse, and so I took it on myself and she went to lie down. Then when I had the corpse on my lap Baba appeared to me, took me and said "Do you want me or the dead child? Choose. You cannot have both. If you want me to revive the child, I will; but then you will have me no more with you. If you do not want revival you will have many children in due course." I had no hesitation in telling him that I wanted him. "Then do not grieve" he said and

vanished. It is thus he encourages me when the occasion needs it, even by his presence. All my needs are met by Baba's grace. I do not trouble him with prayers for my worldly gains or support. I have my income and property and insurance and I am content with the provision for the present and future. If any need arises, I find that somehow the money comes up. I have nothing to complain of. Finally if I am asked what I would suggest to one who wished to find out how he (not having met Sai Baba in the flesh) could make himself a devotee of Sai Baba and get his help- my answer will be that he should sit wholeheartedly and try to pour his heart in love to Sai Baba. It is not essential that he should go to Shirdi for that purpose- though Shirdi associations are undoubtedly helpful. All that he should do is to transcend the senses and concentrate with love on Sai Baba. He would surely reach and obtain the help of Sai Baba- to obtain all that he is fit to achieve or receive.

Baba does not prescribe one uniform spiritual exercise or practice for all. He suits himself to the stage, circumstances and conditions of each- "If you are a Rama Bhakta, keep to Rama. If you want only Allah, keep to Allah" is his advice. He is always impartial. Sometimes he pronounced or got some to pronounce '*fatiah*' over Hindu offerings also. There was a rule no sharp distinction or antagonism between Hindus, devotion to him and Mohammedans' devotion to him. There were, however, some exceptions. One I will mention. There were two "*Rohillas*" about 1916 who came to Shirdi and became devoted to Sai Baba. The elder one was constantly with Baba and used to read the Koran, at night especially, sitting at the feet of Baba. He declared that Baba was *paygambar* (i.e. God) and showed him great reverence. At times he said that Baba (though he was Paygambar) was still teaching heterodox doctrine. Baba's allowing the din of noon day Arati with its music in the mosque, allowing himself to be worshipped as God there, and partaking of food offered to idols were heterodox; and this *Rohilla* mentioned his objections to Baba. But Baba only smiled and said "All that (i.e., other Gods) is Allah." This was one of Baba's moods. In some moods, he would say "We are all the creations of God 'Allah'. In other moods he would say I am God". This, of course, was extreme heterodoxy in this Rohilla's view. So

this Rohilla one day declared that, although Sai Baba was Paygambar, yet his doctrine was wrong and so he (the Rohilla) would make short work of him and his Doctrine. One day as Sai baba was going out walking, the Rohilla came up from behind, with a stout club in his right hand and reached striking distance. Baba turned towards him and touching or seizing his left wrist cast a glance at him beneath which the poor Rohilla cowered and sank like a lump of lead, powerless to lift his club or even to lift himself. Baba left him there and went away. Later the man had to be raised up with some one's help. In few days the man took leave of Baba and left Shirdi for good never to return.

The other Rohilla was not intolerant but was rendering humble service in the Sansthan.

As for intolerance, that was not confined to this Muslim devotee. There were some Hindu devotees who exhibited this feature. But Baba invariably discountenanced it, in every case.

It is neither necessary nor possible nor desirable to narrate all the experiences I had with Baba or in reference to Baba. Baba's kindness and provision for my welfare knew no limits. His methods of help were various and depended on the nature of the devotee concerned and the attendant circumstances. In my case I had experience of all forms of his help. The first method of help is this: (1) When we are in difficulties or when Baba wants us to take a particular course, the inspiration comes to us that, that course should be adopted and we have also the feeling that the inspiration comes from Baba. If I am wanted at a very extraordinary time to go to Baba for private and solitary communion the call within is enough to indicate it. This first method relates to inspirations when we are awake. (2) The second method is to give the suggestion or indication or idea, in dreams, or trances - sometimes through Baba's personal appearance. This, of course, is the most impressive and unmistakable method. (3) A third method is where Baba directs us to go to some third person for a solution or hint. Sometimes it happens that the third person is totally unfit even to understand the difficulty or the solution. Yet the solution is given by that man without knowing what the problem is and what

the solution is and how he is benefiting us. He is a mere peg to hang the solution on. Baba has helped me in all these and other ways and given me valuable training alike when he was in the body and after he left it. I regard Sri Sai Baba as the same spirit as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and one instance of the help he has given me recently-through this perception of identity may be mentioned.

Some eight years back I went to Dakshineswar to see the places and things of interest. I got the service of a local man to act as my cicerone and he showed me the Kali figure that Paramahansa worshipped and other images. I looked at Kali standing outside the worship room and passed on. I was anxious to see the tiny image of Ramlal that sported as a living boy with Paramahansa and told my guide to show me Ramlal. He took me to one of the temples and showed me a huge image and said "This is Ramlal". I said it could not be. The man replied that he as the local man should know and that I, as a stranger, could not possibly be better informed. I had to apologise and I wondered what to think of the 'Ramlal'. I had read about him in Paramhansa's life. Just at this juncture, a pujari of these temples came and inquired if I was from Deccan. I replied I was. Then he said he would show me round Kali and every other image at close quarters and with full details. I said I had just seen them. Then he insisted on my visiting them again. He did not want any money from me. The reason for his persistent request was that he had been instructed in a dream overnight that a devotee from Deccan would be coming on the following day and that he was to take him to all the images and help him to worship them. Thus he assured, I followed him. He took me inside the *Garbhagriha*, the holy of holies of Kali and said I was free to touch the image and worship as I liked. Next he said that he would show me Ramlal. I said I had been shown a huge figure as Ramlal by my guide. The pujari rated my cicerone for deceiving me and then took up the tiny image of Ramlal that Paramahansa had played with and placed it on my lap. Thus all my expectations were fulfilled beyond measure- all through the grace of Sai who is no other than Ramakrishna.

The great favour Sainath had conferred on me by taking me so close to him and loving me and by my loving him,

had its reflections in the way in which some eminent living saints treated me.

Madhava Nath Maharaj often seen at Poona and elsewhere (who passed away a month or two back) was seen by me in 1927. Maharaj without being told of me, spotted out my connection with Sai and said I was Sai Baba's man. He narrated to me the exact words that passed between me and Baba at our first interview; and he added that he was then present- i.e., of course in invisible spirit form, or as Sai Baba.

## II

(10th, 20th, 25th, 28th May 1936)

Professor G.G.Narke, M.A., (Cal.) M.Sc.(Manch). Professor of Geology & Chemistry College of Engineering, Deccan Gymkhana, age 53, Brahmin, Poona says:

Experiences with saints and progress in one's spiritual affairs cannot be revealed. According to the (hackneyed) saying of Kabir Jinnepaya unnechhupaya 'What one has got, he keeps secret'. This has been the strict injunction of my teacher Sri Sai Baba. The mouth instinctively closes when I try to mention my experiences. I can and may give some superficial account of occurrences and things concerning Sai Baba. These are well known and no rule of secrecy is violated thereby. But they are chaff and hardly worth any trouble to write or talk about. Yet as you are keen after any bit of information I shall mention some of such facts. Of course, the deepest experience one has is incapable of utterance, apart from any question or rules of secrecy.

In the first place, you see I have placed Sai Baba amongst the house hold Gods we worship daily at home. Sai Baba is God-not an ordinary *Satpurusha*. The divine gleam in Sai's eyes denotes that He is the Satpurusha. His powers and actions were wonderful. I will give a chronological account of my spiritual leanings and how I came into contact with Sai Baba.

My early surroundings promoted faith in Sai Baba My father-in-law, Mr.Buty, my wife and my mother were all great devotees of Sai Baba and worshipped him as God. I

used to read *Jñaneswari* and other works which deal with greatness of *Satpurushas*.

In 1907-9 I was at Calcutta and was trained in Geological survey and (as a scholar from C.P.) I had got my M.A. In 1905. I was sent in 1909 as State Scholar of Govt. of India to Manchester where I stayed till 1912 and got my M.Sc in Geology and Mining. I came back in August 1912. My wife, mother and my father in-law were often at Shirdi and they wrote to me to go over to Shirdi to pay my respects to Sai Baba. I wrote back to say that I would go, if Baba wanted me. My father-in-law then asked Baba and wrote to me that Baba wanted me. So I went to Shirdi in April 1913. Baba was very kind to my relations. He would jump up (occasionally) and play a jig, as it were, before my mother, showing how happy he was to see my mother. Mr. Madhava Rao Deshpande went with me and introduced me for the first time to Sai Baba. Baba replied "You introduce him to me! I have known him for thirty generations (pedi) . " What wonderful knowledge of the past was this!

The first impression I got of Sai Baba was from his eyes. They pierced me through and through. And his image as seated at the Chavadi has left an indelible impression on my heart. As for the inner experiences they gradually grew upon me. First, I fell in with the current and did my Seva (i.e., service) to Baba and attended the *Aratis*, etc. At an Arati, in my early visit Sai Baba was in a towering passion. He fumed, cursed and threatened for no visible cause. I doubted if he was a mad man. That was a passing thought. The Arati was completed in the usual way. In the afternoon (of that day), I went and massaged his feet and legs. Then he stroked my head and said "I am not mad". Lo! He is seeing my heart. Nothing is concealed from Him. He is my "*Antaryami*- the inner soul of my soul." I thought, Thenceforward, numerous instances occurred in my own experience of his *Antaryamitwa*. When he talked, he spoke as one seated in my heart, knowing all its thoughts, all its wishes, etc. This is God within. I had no hesitation in deciding that he was God. I tested him at times. Each test produced the same conviction that he was all knowing, all seeing and able to mould all things to his will. A few instances out of hundreds may be cited here which showed that nothing was beyond Him or

concealed from Him, in the past, present and future.

In 1913, Baba told me that my father in law would build a Dagdiwada, (i.e. a stone edifice) at Shirdi and that I would be in charge of it. It was only in 1915-16 that my father in-law began to build it (i.e., the building in which Baba's tomb is erected) and it was after 1918-19, I was one of the Trustees in charge of that tomb.

My mother was anxious about my employment. I was ever tossing from place to place and often had periods of unemployment. I was trained in England as a Geologist, Mining Engineer; and here in India I was on the look out for prospecting jobs advertised in the press and took up one job after another finishing each in a short time. My first stay at Shirdi was only for three or four days and I then went back to Balaghat and Burma. After three months my work under B.O.C ceased, and I went back to Nagpur and thence to Shirdi and stayed four months there with my wife and went back to Nagpur. Again as I got a letter from Madhava Rao that Baba wanted me. I went to Shirdi alone and stayed thirteen months. I was without employment and I did not care. Sometimes, I had stray fancies that a fakir's life was good for me.

It was a day in 1914. Baba had got ready a number of *Kupnis* (somewhat like gowns or togas which are worn by fakirs) and presented a number of people with them. I was watching the distribution from a distance and hoped that one might be conferred on me to be kept with me and worn on special occasions, e.g., *Bhajans* in honour of Sai Baba. Baba stopped distribution even many *Kupnis* still remained with him. He beckoned to me a little later and placing his hand kindly on my head stroked it and said "Do not blame me for not giving you a *kupni*. That Fakir (meaning evidently God) has not permitted me to give you one."

My relations were asking Baba what was to become of me, seeing that I had such an unsettled course of life. My mother also saw that I went up to distant places like Calcutta and Burma for prospecting jobs and prayed to baba taht I should be provided by his grace with good employment nearer home or Shirdi. Baba answered and told them "I will settle him at Poona." I got sometimes a number of jobs at the

same time and I had to choose. I went to Baba each time, relying wholly on his foresight and all seeing wisdom to guide me. I had as great a reliance on him as sucking babe on its mother. His choice was often times strange. When there was once a choice between Calcutta and (the more distant) Burma, he chose the latter. He always would say "Go to Burma and Poona" or "go to such and such a place and Poona". Adding Poona every time he made the selection. In 1916 I had to choose between an offer from Banares of a professorship and a prospecting job at Burma. Baba told me "Go to Burma and Poona". I always laughed within myself at the addition of Poona as I was Mining Engineer and Poona held no prospects for me. Even in 1913 Baba was seeing my present permanent appointment as professor of Geology and Chemistry in Poona which I have held since 1918. The entire future of my career was but present to him.

About 1916 I returned to Shirdi after a long spell of absence. I enquired, as soon as I arrive, who were doing what service to Baba. I was told Vaman Rao Patel, B.A., L.L.B. was doing the service of begging food in the village on behalf of Baba and I felt a bit jealous. "If that is so why should I not be given that work", I thought to myself, but said nothing. It was then Darshan time and I had no time to undress. I went in my full suit, boot, trousers, coat and hat to Baba's Masjid. Baba was being asked three times permission to send Vaman Rao with begging bowl. Suddenly he pointed to me and said "Let this man go and beg for food with that bowl today". I went begging at noon for Baba's sake i.e., for food for Baba in my ordinary costume. People could not understand why I was chosen for this office. But since I had that desire, Baba as my innermost soul, my Antaryami noticed it and gave me the opportunity of serving him in that way. This honour of begging for food on his behalf at noon time was reserved by Baba for very few.

It was in 1917 that the announcement was made that a Professor of Geology for the College of Engineering at Poona was wanted. I asked Baba if I should apply for the post. He said 'yes' and I went to Poona to see all people concerned. It was a hard and uphill work, as the applicants for the post were many and were supported by various influential per-



sons. After I left Shirdi, Baba inquired of the men there. "Where is Narke gone?" They told him "He has gone to Poona to try for the appointment". "Allah will bless" was Baba's remark. He then asked whether I had any children and was informed that several were born but none survived (they died after a very short life). "Allah will bless" was again his remark. I secured the appointment in 1918 and was made permanent in 1919; and children born to me since then are not short lived. I have four sons now. All these are evidently secured by Baba's grace.

So much can be easily said of Sai Baba by all- mere observers from outside. But he who judged of Baba by the outside alone would be greatly mistaken in his estimate. Baba was, of course, adapting himself to the capacity of people that resorted to him for help and protection. Most of them were superficial people - seeking mostly some material gain or advantage; and to them he did not reveal his inner nature. But when anyone capable of diving deeper came to him he revealed more of himself and his powers. I was keenly observing him from the first and he noticed it and encouraged my habit of observing and judging- complementing me as a "*Hushiar*" or clever". On occasions he told me "What a '*Dubya*' i.e., sluggard you are" - evidently referring to my failure to penetrate beneath the surface of things on those occasions. Baba was not the man to stifle legitimate inquiry. Everything he did or said was full of significance; mostly I could understand them.

To one deeply observing him; the startling fact came out into greater and greater prominence that Baba was living and operating in other worlds also, besides this world and in an invisible body. Remarks made by him openly would be treated as meaningless ranting by those who did not know him. His language also was highly cryptic full of symbology, parable, allegory and metaphor. Literal interpretations of them would be made by superficial people who would then conclude that Baba was a worldly man amongst worldly men and a very avaricious man at that. For instance, a man came to Baba and watched him for a time; and I asked him what impression he formed of Baba. His answer was "I never saw any saint talking of money all the hours of the day" and he felt disappointed. This man did not know that "*paisa*" -

money was used by Baba to denote *punya*, *Apurva* or merit, very often. But on a careful observation and analysis of his talks, one must conclude that his nature, powers and functions were very great and that the way in which people would benefit by His guidance and help would also be peculiar.

### 4th June, 1936

In 1914 or thereabouts, a rich old gentleman of Harda came with a lady to Shirdi. He was suffering from T.B. i.e., consumption. During the space of one month, there was noticeable improvements in his health. So he made Shirdi his residence. At the end of the second month, he grew worse and his end seemed to be approaching. One day the ladies of his house and their friends told me that his condition was critical and there was no senior male to go and ask Baba for help- and sent me to ask Baba for his Udhi. I went up. Baba told me that the man would be better for quitting this earth. **“What can the Udhi do? Anyhow take the Udhi and give it as it is wanted”** he said. So I took and gave the Udhi but, of course, refrained from intimating Baba’s words to anyone. The condition grew worse. Then Shama, (i.e., Madhavarao Deshpande) arrived and went to Baba and told him of the imminent death. Baba appears to have said “How can he die? In the morning he will come to life”. This was taken to mean that the old man would not quit the earth. So they placed lamps all round the corpse and waited till noon. Life was not restored to the corpse. Funeral ceremonies followed. The Harda gentleman’s relations thought that Baba had given false hopes and went away from Shirdi. For three years they did not return to Shirdi. Then one day, a relative of the deceased saw Baba in a dream, with a deceased’s head over his own (i.e., Baba’s) and Baba disclosed the lungs- in a rotten state, and said “From the torture of all this, I have saved him”. Thereafter, he and his relations renewed their visits to Shirdi. Baba’s words “How can he die? He will come to life” evidently referred to survival of human personality and taking up new forms of life.

Baba was frequently talking of his travels with an invisible body across great distances of space (and time). In the mornings, sitting near his dhuni (fire) with several devotees, he would say to what distant place he went overnight and

what he had done. Those who had slept by his side the whole night at the Masjid or Chavadi knew that his physical body was at Shirdi all the night. But his statements were literally true and were occasionally verified and found to be true. He had travelled to distant places in an invisible. i.e., spirit form and rendered help there. Again he would frequently talk of postmortem experiences.

A Shirdi Marwadi's boy fell ill and died. People returned from the funeral to the Masjid with gloomy faces. Sai Baba then said of that boy "He must be nearing the river now, just crossing it". I felt that the reference could only be to Vaitarini (Styx).

He told several people of the past lives and the events therein. He told me the facts of four previous lives of mine. He spoke this in the presence of others. But others did not and could not understand that it referred to me. He had the peculiar art of giving information to particular individuals in the midst of a group, in a way that they (those concerned) alone could understand, and not the other members of the group. Strangely enough, at one sitting by a few acts words, etc., he could and did benefit numerous persons. This power to travel in invisible body to distant parts of this world, to traverse other realms than the earth life and note or control what takes place there and to see the past and future alike revealed one great fact about His nature. Some of his own observations also brought that out clearly.

Sai Baba occasionally asked (I heard it myself) "**Where are you? Where am I? Where is this world?**" Occasionally he declared, pointing to his body or touching it and referring to it as "**this is my house**", "**I am not here. My Guru Mowrshad has taken me away**". As even in the flesh-in this earth life, he was not confined to his physical body, it may be truly said of him "Sai Baba is alive. He is where he was then. Even then he was where he is now." He also made occasional reference to what his function is and was in the terrestrial sphere and other worlds. He several times referred to his control of destinies of departed souls-indicating thereby his function in the Cosmic order. Sai Baba never spoke untruth, never spoke meaningless jargon. But only those who were familiar with his ways could make out the meaning of what

he said or did- when they were intended for their understanding.

### **UPADESHA, MANTRA, TANTRA, ETC**

Sai Baba never gave me any mantra, tantra or Upadesa - and so far as I know, he gave these to none. Madhavarao Deshpande has told me of the following incident., Radhabai Desmukhin was at Shirdi waiting for a time on Baba and she wanted Upadesa. Finding that he gave her none, she started Satyagraha. She stopped taking food and was determined to be without food until Sai Baba should give her Upadesa. On the fourth day of the fast, Madhavarao taking pity on her condition went and told Sai Baba of it and requested him to pronounce the name of some God, so that she might take it as the mantropadesa for japa. Baba then sent for her and told her that giving Upadesa was not in his line, that he following his Guru had different traditions, that his Guru was so powerful that he trembled to go and stand before him, and that the help given by the Guru was invisible and secret and not by oral instruction.

mekanavala isannara guru navhe:- I do not instruct through the ear.

Amacha gharane niralaa aahe:- Our traditions are different was what he said.

Sai Baba never\* lectured, nor discoursed systematically as others do. He gave hints - very pregnant hints. A word or a sentence or two at a time was all he cared to utter. But from them an observant devotee could build up his own system, lecture or philosophy. It is difficult therefore to be dogmatic if one is asked what are Sai Baba's aims, methods etc. But stray hints were forthcoming.

### **AIM IN LIFE OR PURUSHARTHA**

Did Sai Baba ask people to aim at Moksha? Did he advocate Viveka and Vairagya? Never have I heard that from his lips.

**Reaching God is the aim.** That was the way he put it.

Alla milanaara saptasamudra nihala karanaha

i.e., Reaching God, Crossing or traversing all the Oceans and Worlds.

Veda Parkarana Getting beyond chains (or limits)

He never (so far as I know) spoke of (Maya) (or the theory that all existence in the sublunary sphere is mere illusion) to my knowledge. He took the commonsense view that this world and the worlds beyond are real, and that we have to make the best of them, here and hereafter.

### **KARMA AND REINCARNATION**

These were frequently referred to by him. “We must sow good(results) in this life and the next” was the truth that underlay many of the stories he told. He frequently referred to past lives of others and occasionally referred to the future life of some. No one moving with him could have even a momentary doubt about postmortem existence and the existence of other worlds than this, wherein rewards and punishments for acts done here would be reaped. These are Hindu doctrines and beliefs. Coming to the question of Baba’s Hinduism or other religion - Baba never declared (so far as I know) whether he belongs to any religion, caste, creed, etc. He was above all. But he has mentioned and done several things showing his relation to Hinduism.

I have heard Sai Baba say maja guru brahman aahe i.e., **my Guru is a Brahmin.**

### **BABA’S ATTITUDE TO HINDUISM AND BRAHMINS**

Baba had a great regard for the B.Gita, Bhawartha Ramayana, Eknath Bhagwata, Panchadashi, Yoga Vasishta, the Puranas etc. His talks had reference to the contents of these often. When Jnanadeva’s Arati was begun, he would sit up, fold his hands joining his palms in front of his chest in token of reverence and close his eyes. About Panchadashi, he said to Mr.Khaparde (as I hear) yetu ammara Khajana hai “This is our treasury”, i.e., it contains whatever is valuable for our spiritual welfare. I know personally his reverence for Yoga Vasishta. One day, in my early days (1914) Baba asked me several times to give him Rs.15 as Dakshina. I had no money and he knew that fully well. So when I was alone with him I said

“Baba, you know, I have no money and why do you ask me for Rs.15 Dakshina?” Baba answered that he knew my impecunious condition well enough. “But” he added **“you are reading Yoga Vasishtha now. The part you are now reading is specially important. Get me Rs.15 Dakshina from that”**. I was reading Yoga Vasishtha. Getting money out of it was deriving valuable lessons therefrom: and giving the money to Baba meant of course lodging the lessons in my heart, where he stayed as my Antaryami. I also know that he held Rama and Krishna in great reverence.

### **BABA AND MAHARASHTRA SATPURUSHAS**

Baba had great reverence for Saints like Jnaneshwar, Tukaram. What were the aims, and the virtues needed for achieving them, in Sai Baba's view and what Sadhanas did he favour?

## **OF THE FOUR MARGAS**

### **1. Yoga Marga**

Regarding this as chiefly based on (1)Asana (2)Pranayama (3)Concentration (4)Rousing the Kundalini and (5)Achieving higher powers thereby, enroute, Sai Baba did not care for these. These were not the steps he recommended to any so far as I know. On the other hand, he said (I know personally), “Those who proceed by the method of Pranayama must come to me ultimately for further progress.

### **II. Karma Marga**

Baba set the example of living amidst society and labouring to produce goods. He ground grain into flour. He was not for ascetic desertion of society, nor for begging. Though he himself begged within limits (prescribed by his Rinanubandha perhaps) it was for a little food only and when he demanded Dakshina that was for a number of reasons, chiefly clearing off Rinanubandha. He wanted the general run of visitors to continue their grihasta lives and did not advocate Sanyas, i.e., that they should renounce society or go to beg. He mad me and Vamanarao Beg, not for ourselves but only for the Guru-as humble service to the Guru. Though Baba did not say so, I think he realised the evil of begging, i.e., indiscriminate begging, to be the loss of one's stored up

merit, i.e., “Apurva”. Sai Baba’s demand for Dakshina was explained by him, when some one asked him why he asked for Dakshina: **“Hallo, do I ask Dakshina of every one? I demand only from those whom the Fakir (God) points out to me”**. He demanded only particular sums, and would not accept anything more. None refused Dakshina, when he wanted it. Sometimes the demand had other meaning, e.g., (1) get away, (2) get into contact with X,Y,Z etc.

### III. Jnana Marga

If this is taken as something confined to inquiry into the Self and an effort to understand the Upanishads and Brahmasutras to get light on that inquiry, that was not Baba’s method and aim. His wish was not expressed. But by his example, his devotees should infer that he wanted them to become like himself. His knowledge and experience were, so far as I could see, real and realistic. His awareness exceeded the bounds of our space and time - extended over all the worlds and embraced the distant past and future as well as the present. He knew, therefore, what existed in any of the worlds and at any time had to offer for the soul’s enjoyment and with such knowledge he renounced all attachment. He was perfectly detached amidst numerous attractions. His life was, therefore, real Vairagya and real Nishkamya Karma which would lead one to God.

### IV. Bhakti Marga

This is, of course, the main plank of most saints- as it is, of Sai Baba. Obeying, serving and loving God are its chief features. The peculiar feature stressed by Sai’s example and words is the vast importance of developing this devotion on the basis of devotion to one’s guru or teacher. It is seeing God in, through and as the Guru, identifying the Guru with God.

### BABA’S GURU

Of his guru, hardly anything is known. I have heard him say Maja guru brahman aahe i.e., my Guru is a Brahmin. Baba held real Brahmins in high esteem. He has said **“Brahmins earn much ‘pica’,** (i.e., Punya, Apurva or merit) by their ways.” A disciple is very different from a devotee. The Guru is connected by a close and intimate tie with and has every respon

sibility for the disciple. He has no such close tie with a devotee and is not bound to bear all his sins and sorrows. Sai Baba had no disciple. The disciple must serve his master to carry out all his wishes strictly and to the letter. As Sai said: **“I would tremble to come into the presence of my Guru”**. There was no one prepared to serve him in that way at Shirdi. It seems he asked: **“Who dares to call himself my disciple? Who can serve me adequately and satisfactorily?”** But, of devotees, Sai Baba had a large number. These he looked after, encouraged and protected and gave by example and occasional gestures, directions etc., some instruction. Sai Baba’s method of teaching or rather improving the devotee who came to him was not oral instruction. His moral tales and a few directions, occasionally given were, no doubt, teaching through the ear. But these were exceptional and their effect was very little compared with his main traditional method. According to Sai Baba’s traditions, the disciple or devotee that comes to the feet of the Guru in complete self surrender has to be no doubt pure, chaste and virtuous. But he need not necessarily to go on with any active practice of Japa or meditation. On the other hand, Japa, meditation or any other intellectual process which carries with it the consciousness and assertion, “I am doing this” is a handicap. All sense of the devotees’ or disciples’ ahankara, Ego or little self has to be wiped out, swept out of the memory and mind-as it is an obstruction to the Guru’s task. The Guru does not teach. He radiates influence. That influence is poured in and absorbed with full benefit by the soul which has completely surrendered itself, blotting out the self, but is obstructed by the exercise of intelligence by reliance on self exertion and by every species of self-consciousness and self assertion.

This great truth, all observant persons visiting Sai Baba would have noticed or learnt. Sai Baba’s words to some devotees were: **“Be by me and keep quiet. I will do the rest”**, i.e., secretly or invisibly. Of course, faith in him is a pre-requisite. But one had merely to see him and stay by him a while and at once was endowed with faith. Baba gave experience to each devotee- experience of Baba’s vast powers of his looking into the heart, into the distant regions of space and time, past or future and then and there infused faith.



One had not merely to swallow everything on trust. The solid benefit, temporal or spiritual reaped by the devotee and his feeling that he is under the eye and power of Baba always wherever he may go and whatever he may do, give him an ineradicable basis for his further spiritual and temporal guidance. Baba's is the power that controls this world's goods and our fate here and now-as well as our experience and fate in the future in this world and many unseen worlds-unseen at present.

So the duty of a devotee or an aspirant is only (1) to keep himself fit for this Guru's grace i.e., chaste, pure, simple and virtuous, and (2) to look trustfully and sincerely and to raise him to various experiences, higher and higher in range till at last he is taken to the distant goal whatever that might be "One step enough for me" is the proper attitude now. He need not take trouble to decide complicated, metaphysical and philosophical problems about ultimate destiny. He is yet ill prepared to solve them. The Guru will lift him, endow him with higher powers, vaster knowledge and increasing realisation of truth. And the end is safe in the Guru's hands.

All this was not uttered by Sai Baba, at one breadth to me or within my hearing. But the various hints I got from his example and dealings with many and his occasional words- when put together amount to this. And commonsense points in the same direction. In my opinion, mere talk of Viveka and Vairagya without power of knowing what there is to experience or enjoy and what the things are that one is to renounce is childish and leads to self-delusion and deluding others. It is bookish wisdom and not real, not one that can stand the strain of actual life. People talking merely of these, without power to be really filled with them prove hypocrites. When Baba said: **'I am in each dog, pig and cat.'** He was feeling himself in the inside of the cats etc., in question and could state what they felt and what treatment they got. But others say it because it is found in the Gita, etc. and they believe it to be true. But in point of feeling and realisation, they say what they do not feel. These lead to hypocrisy.

Baba's real nature and greatness are seen from an incident known to me. I realised that Baba was God from the devotees' point of view, and yet, a man seen in the flesh and

with limitations to which an individual embodied soul is subject. The two co-exist and are both true - each in its way. But my friends (i.e., some of the devotees) at Shirdi did not agree with me or relish this view of mine. They once talked of 6 crores of islanders in Dwaraka at Shree Krishnas' time and I then disputed that estimate of the population, as now we are about 33 crores in all in India and India is so overpopulated that we have to tread on each other's heels. Then they asked me if I would agree to abide by Baba's decision on the matter. I agreed. We all went to Baba.

Madhava Rao and other devotees asked Baba- Baba, are the Puranas true?

Sai Baba: Yes, True.

Devotees: What about Rama and Krishna?

Sai Baba: They were great souls. Gods they were. Avatars.

Devotees: This Narke will not accept all that. He says you are not God.

Sai Baba: What he says is true. But I am your father and you should not speak like that. You have to get your benefit and everything from me.

Sai Baba thus admitted his limitation. He was God no doubt, in the experience of the devotee. But because the devotee felt that, Sai Baba did not assert himself to be, in fact, nothing but God; he did not draw logical corollaries from it, nor use that position to help himself to the wealth etc., of the devotees. Sai Baba did not use the fact of his devotees viewing him as God to declare for Antinomianism, i.e., setting himself up as above law. On the other hand, Sai Baba never disobeyed either the moral law or the law as it prevails in the country. He was never indecent in dress or behaviour and was very reserved with women.

### SAI BABA'S MOODS

No doubt, in certain ecstatic moods, he said (and I heard this myself) my Allah Hum I am God. But this was once in a way. His usual -almost invariable-role was that of a devotee of God entrusted with vast powers to carry out what God (the "Fakir") directs. "Allah Malik". God is the master. "Allah

Bhale Karenga”, “God will bless” were constantly on his lips. Also, I am God’s slave. I remember God, etc.

### BABA AND THE SEX QUESTION

Baba’s was Askhalita Brahmacharya and his glittering eyes spoke it out. He kept women at a distance. During the day, a very few women were allowed to massage his legs - and that only up to the knee. He was always clad and never indecently exposed himself.

### BABA’S VIRTUES

He was impartial and just. I have seen rich and highly placed persons going to him, being practically ignored by him - as he saw through the outside, into the real nature, or the heart of the person approaching him. I have also seen him pay great regard to and speak enthusiastically of some poor man that came to him, saying “ He has much money” (“Pica”) i.e., much of punya accumulated.

### STERN JUSTICE

A saint should not be judged by the character of those that gather around him. Prostitutes, women hunters, avaricious people and sinners of various sorts came to him with a view mostly to gain material advantage. But when they failed to take advantage of his presence to improve themselves but fell into sins, he let them suffer. His justice was severe. **“You have to cut your own child, if it falls athwart the womb”** he has said. Baba’s Boldness based on “Foreknowledge” or “Perfect Vision” - Baba was bold in his dealings with persons, with the forces of disease, etc. unknown to us but evidently well known to him. He occasionally infused faith in his devotees by such bold defiance of sanitary precautions. I will mention some instances known to me.

Baba used to get sweetmeat from a Halwai for Naivedya. One day in 1916, he lay a corpse, a plague stricken corpse. Plague was raging at Shirdi. Baba asked me to go and get the sweetmeat from his shop. I went and told the wife (who was weeping) of Baba’s order. She pointed to the corpse and said that I might take the Sweetmeat from the *almairah*. I took it, trembling with the fear that by this I might catch the infection and others too. That was given as

Naivedya. Baba told me **“you think you will live if you are away from Shirdi and that you would die, if you stay at Shirdi. That is not so. Whosoever is (destined) to be struck, will be struck; whosoever is to die will die; whosoever is to be caressed will be caressed”**. He encouraged me similarly when cholera raged in Shirdi. He had lepers around him who massaged his legs. One of them got cured. Baba made a leper take the dhuni and gave it as prasad to the devotees. The Udhi is put into the mouth of sick people. And the leper gave it to all by Baba's order! Yet no harm has resulted so far as I know.

### III

**16th October, 1936, Nasik**

**&**

**28th October, 1936, Shirdi**

Rao Bahadur S.B.DhumaL, B.A., L.L.B, Pleader, Brahmin, aged 63, Nasik says:

I have one great difficulty in answering the question “What are your experiences of Sai Baba?” All hours of the day and night, I am having experiences of Baba. There is no incident or event in my life which I do not connect with him however trivial it may appear to be. I firmly believe that everything in my life is swayed by Baba. What then is to be mentioned as my experience? Of course, the outside world will not be ready to accept my belief as correct or well founded. But that matters nothing to me. In fact, that very disbelief of people seems to be a reason for refusing to disclose one's experience. Every devotee feels that his experiences are his own, and are given to him for his own spiritual and temporal benefit and not for ventilation or publication to the general public which, of course, includes masses of ignorant, irrelevant carping critics and scoffers. Yet ardent biographers are anxious to ferret out one's innermost secret and sacred experiences to embellish their work. But the devotee whom they delve into feels that in the very act of dragging the secret experience into light, its reality and life are destroyed. The anatomist anxious to examine the living organism inch by inch cuts out what he wants and places it under his

microscope, but in that very act, life is destroyed and what he examines with his instrument is dead tissue and not the living organism. The best way of understanding Baba is to experience him oneself. Where is Baba gone? In down-right earnest can get into touch with him, today and at once. But if one will not do that, but wants experiences, second hand, third hand or even fifth hand, he will get but poor stuff. I feel also very strongly the regrettable facts that experiences which get their significance and full force when expressed in our vernacular are to be now expressed to you and by you in English and that the loss in transition will be serious.

Any how as you want some facts about Baba I shall narrate some that I can personally vouch for i.e., about myself chiefly.

I was first (in 1903) devoted to Gajanan Maharaj whom I took to Srimant Gopalrao Buti. About 1907 I went to Sai Baba. From my very first visit, I was greatly impressed with his extraordinary personality. At his unspoken command, I took Buti to him and at once Buti also became his devoted follower. Among the services of the latter to Baba, perhaps the most momentous and memorable is his allowing his huge stone pile (Dagdiwada) to be used as the temple for the reception of the mortal remains and the worship of Baba. It is difficult to sort out my collections of Baba, as I consider that every act of mine and every event in my life is moulded and directed by him, I may quote some sayings and acts of His which threw light on what Sai Baba is, has done, and is doing for devotees (like me).

Once Baba told me "At every step of yours, I am taking care of you. If I did not, what will become of you, God knows". This was no overstatement. At another time, when we two were alone, Baba told me "Bhau, the whole of last night, I had no sleep".

I: Baba, Why so?

Baba: I was thinking and thinking of you, all the night.

At this declaration, I was overpowered by a sudden gush of love, gratitude, surprise etc. feelings which could find no other expression than a free flow of tears. What intense love he had for me! What an amount of trouble he took for my sake! Just as I was always thinking of him, he was kind enough to think of me- with this difference. My thought of him, though loving, was weak, and I could render him no real service. But his love was accompanied by such vast insight and such power that I was helped in every act and event. He could and did foresee things far ahead and took every required step to avert the evil and accelerate or promote the good that was coming to me. There are numerous instances that may be cited to show this. Outsiders may not be convinced that every such benefit derived by me was and is due to his guidance and ordering. But some instances of his help are so glaring that any fair minded inquirer who is open to conviction, will be immediately convinced of the truth of what has been stated by Baba and by me.

Emboldened by his love, I used to write to him and Sri Madhava Rao Deshpande would read my letters to him and communicate his replies to me. In some cases, even during his lifetime and in all cases after his Mahasamadhi (1918 October) I addressed my queries to him mentally or by prayerfully placing chits (or casting lots) before his portrait and I invariably got his answer showing me what was the correct and safe course for me to follow. I invariably followed his advice- however much it might run counter to "common sense", "medical opinion", "rules of prudence" etc., and invariably discovered that the path chosen for me by Baba was the safest and wisest.

### **HYGIENE, ETC.**

I have lived in this ancestral house of mine in the main road of Nasik, all my life. When plague broke out and dead rats were found in the house, I wrote to Shirdi for Baba's direction before moving out and left the house as soon as I got his reply. As I am ever under his protection and

doing nothing without his guidance. I felt perfectly safe in remaining in the house till I got his reply. He has said that at every step he was guiding me. I knew he was guiding me- I had implicit faith in the truth of his words. He knew everything that was happening or was to happen at Nasik or in any other place and would not allow any harm to befall me while I was placing this childlike trust in and reliance on him. During all these twenty nine year of such reliance, there is not a single instance in which such protection failed or such trust found misplaced.

After receiving Baba's reply, I moved to a bungalow at Nasik. But the same night a dead rat was found near the bed of my brother's son at the bungalow. Again I sought Baba's advice by letter whether I should move away. The reply was in the negative. And contrary to the rules of prudence and wisdom of medical experts and laymen, I kept on living with my family at the bungalow. No harm befell us. Later, dead rats were found in the servant's quarters, in the houses, in the neighbourhood, and lastly, in the well from which alone we had drawn all our supply of water for drinking, cooking etc. At this, I wrote at once to Baba for permission and in anticipation of its arrival which I considered as certain, I packed up all our things and carted them off to this our house in the Bazar street. I went to the house and was just trying to unlock the front door, when a postal letter from Shirdi was delivered to me. That conveyed Baba's reply to me. "aapan kasala sodave tethech rahave" i.e., "Why should we give up (i.e. change) our residence?" I adopted this advice without question or demur and went back immediately to the infected bungalow and lived in it. As for, water, I took the precaution of avoiding the well and getting all our water from the river Godavari. This further apparently risky and foolhardy step of reoccupation did not result in any harm to us. There were times during the Plague Season when there were 14 or 15 deaths per day due to plague in the town and despite that fact, Baba bade us stay in the house in town and we were all safe.

Baba's kindness to me was not confined to temporal affairs. I lost my wife in 1909. I was anxious about her soul's welfare and was performing the monthly (masik) ceremonies. At the time when the sixth month's ceremony had to be per-

formed Baba told me to perform it at Shirdi and promised to give my wife *Sadgati*, (i.e., literally a good start for her soul's further spiritual course). I went to Shirdi accordingly and performed that Masik there. Baba then asked me for Rs.15 dakshina and I gave it. I have implicit faith in the truth of Baba's declarations and have had ample verification in matters which admit of verification, which naturally fortifies my faith in his statements as to matters unseen and apparently incapable of verification. I am sure my wife got Sadgati by Baba's grace. Then, as I was in 1909 a vigorous and healthy lawyer, aged 36, without issue, the question of marrying a second time was frequently considered, especially by my friends and well wishers. Among them was my father-in-law, Rao Bahadur Bapu Rao Dada Kinkhede, M.A., a pleader of Nagpur. When I told him that I could never act without a direction from Baba, he took me to Shirdi and then went to Baba without me. He came back in five minutes and intimated to me that he could read Baba's negative reply from his eyes and told me not to marry without Baba's express consent or order. Of course, I never acted without Baba's consent. Up-to-date, Baba has not made me marry and I have continued my life of "single blessedness". Alike from the temporal and spiritual view point Baba has settled this course for me and after a fairly happy and successful temporal life, Baba is developing in me a slow but sure detachment from the temporal comforts and I am surrendering my self to his guidance without the faintest fear for my future here or hereafter in spite of the fact that his ways are mysterious, highly puzzling and really inscrutable in many matters. As for temporal success, it is not vain glory but a desire to set down the actual truth that makes me inform you that almost invariably my professional efforts were crowned with success and from their financial or personal aspect also, I had nothing to complain of, as my income tax would clearly indicate. It was all due to Baba's help and grace. Yet despite all this temporal success, he keeps me free-more and more free, from worldly shackles and ready for retirement when he gives the signal.

I had some public activities also which I took up with Baba's permission and in which his miraculous intervention and help were occasionally seen. Some instances appear so



incredible that I first hesitated to reveal them. But it matters nothing to me whether they command other people's belief or not. As you want the truth, here is the truth as known to or experienced by me.

I will give instances of Baba's help in professional matters first and then proceed to his help in public matters. Some 20 or 25 years ago, there was a Criminal Case from Shirdi. There have always been party feeling and factions at Shirdi as in most villages. One Raghu, a servitor of Baba and five others were arrested on a charge of outraging the modesty of a *Marwadi* woman and on the direct evidence of "number of eye-witnesses", were convicted and sentenced to six months period less of imprisonment. Tatya Patel Khote's sympathies and help were on the side of the accused. He took up a copy of the judgement and papers to eminent lawyers like the Hon. G.S.Khaparde and H.S.Dixit and retired Magistrates like Rao Bahadur H.V.Sathe, who were at Shirdi. These found the judgement was strong and gave little hope of success in case an appeal should be filed. Tatya Patel was keen on an acquittal and went to Baba, who simply told him, "Go to Bhau with the papers". He accordingly came to Nasik and showed me the papers. After going through the judgement and finding hardly any hope of success on appeal, I told Tatya to employ eminent Counsel from Bombay or prominent lawyers at Ahmadnagar where the appeal had to be filed. But he told me that Baba's order was to go to me and so I felt I had neither option nor responsibility on my shoulders. I wrote out an appeal memo, after studying the papers and took it to the District Magistrate at his residence. He asked me without receiving or reading the judgement or appeal memo what the matter was about and I very briefly recited that it was a conviction of six appellants for outraging the modesty of a woman based on the testimony of a number of witnesses, who professed to have seen it and that the case had now come up in appeal to him. Then he said it looked like a strong case and asked me what I thought of it. I said that the case and its number of witnesses were due to faction in the village. "Do you think so?" He asked and I replied "Think! I am more than sure of it". He pronounced judgement at once, orally acquitting all the appellants and immediately took up my appeal memo and wrote on it his judgement mentioning

the facts I relied upon. As soon as this was over he asked me "How is your Sai Baba of Shirdi? Is he a Moslem or a Hindu? What does he teach you?" I answered that Sai Baba was neither a Hindu nor a Moslem but above both and that I could not state what his teachings were- to know which, he must go in person to Baba at Shirdi. The Magistrate promised to go and in fact tried one summer day to visit Shirdi but gave up the idea at Kopergaon, on account of the excessive heat. The prompt oral judgement without reading or receiving any papers (ofcourse without sending for the records of the First Court or giving notice to the police or Public Prosecutor followed up by questions about Sai Baba were clear indications of the power that brought about the acquittal. What followed would confirm this view. I returned from Ahmadnagar to Shirdi. There, on that day, the residents were sadly going to attend the cremation of H.S.Dixit's daughter. But Baba called some of them to him at the Masjid and said, "Do not go away. I will show you some Chamatkar, (i.e., miracle)". They did not see any miracle and went away to attend the funeral. Shortly, thereafter, I returned from Ahmadnagar with news of the acquittal by the District Magistrate in the above fashion. Then they found what the Chamatkar referred to by Baba was.

I shall give only one more instance in matters professional. There was a charge against and conviction of three brothers for grievous hurt in as much as they had attacked their opponents and broken a bone of one of them. The injured man had been attended to by a medical man, who was not a qualified or certified Doctor and treated for over twenty days in his private hospital. I was engaged for the appellants and I went up with the appeal memo and a bail application. The Sessions Judge, who was a senior European Officer remarked on hearing my application that the case was strong (against the appellants) and he was not going to allow bail. I at once thought of Baba and then turned to the Judge. I told him that the evidence of a bone being broken was that of a "quack" or unqualified person and that the prosecution evidence was interested and unreliable and that as all three appellants, who were agriculturists, were in jail, the agricultural work of their family could not be carried on, that in case their sentence should be confirmed, they could be sent to jail

finally etc. At once the Judge allowed bail. When the case came up for argument, the Public Prosecutor asked me if I was going to argue on the merits for an acquittal against such a strong judgement, or whether I would briefly ask for clemency, in which later case he would not oppose. Though I felt the strength of the judgement, I put on a brave face and said that I would go the whole hog and fight for an acquittal. I did argue for a reversal before the Judge but wound up with a prayer for reduction of sentence. The Judge retorted that if I was merely asking for mercy of the court I need not have taken so much time to contest the conviction. When the public Prosecutor was arguing, the Judge wanted to know how he made out a case of grievous hurt as the opinion of an unqualified man, a quack could not be accepted as to the breakage of a bone. The reply was that the injured man had been in the Hospital for over 20 days. The Judge sharply answered, "That is an argument which you can advance before a 3rd Class Magistrate. Remember you are arguing before a Sessions Judge and not before a 3rd class Magistrate". On receiving this snub, the Public Prosecutor collapsed; there was no further argument and the appellants were acquitted.

Regarding public work, I may first mention that I was the first Non-Official President of the Nasik District Local Board (nominated by Government) and that I served in that capacity from 1-11-1917 to 13-5-25. I had personally to sign thousands of papers myself without the use of a facsimile seal- a proceeding which took many hours of my day; and one consequence of this heavy public work was to ruin my legal practice and reduce my income-tax from 260 odd rupees to zero in recognition of which sacrifice, this Sanad of Rao Bahadur was granted to me in 1927- a very poor and unsubstantial recognition you may say- but it is still some form of recognition. Any how I faced the work and went on trusting in Baba for the proper execution of my office. A peon had to carry these papers to me and blot each signature and after some hours the work would be over and the papers sent back to the office. One day, when the papers were before me, a visitor for whom I had much regard came in and stayed talking with me till midnight and so the signatures had to be postponed till the next day. The next morning, I found no time and as I was leaving the town, I sent back the papers to

the office. When I returned to the town that night, I found only that day's papers brought for my signature and when I wanted the previous day's papers, I found that they all bore my signature. The peon had been sent away for his meal, the previous midnight and how the thousands of signatures had been affixed to the papers I could not guess. I have no other explanation for it, except Baba and his superhuman powers.

Another public act of mine in which Baba's helping hand is traceable is this. As President, District Local Board, Primary Schools were under me. Deepawali holidays had fallen immediately after the close of the month. The educational Inspector a Mohammedan gentleman, one day came to me and asked me to make disbursements to help the teachers in such a big festival. At first I did not consider his request seriously. Two or three days after, he again reminded me of his proposal. I asked the Chief Officer whether this could be done. He answered in the negative as sanction of Government grant was not received and that Account Office informed my office not to issue cheque in the absence of sanction. I was helpless. Again the Educational Inspector opened the subject to me. I was inclined to agree but wanted Baba's permission. I cast lots and Baba approved disbursement. I at once issued cheque and sent the same to the Account Office, with the result that it was cashed, payments made and all the teachers were pleased. But what was to happen to me for brushing aside the Accountant's objection and issuing the cheque? By Baba's grace, it was nothing more than an audit objection raised long after the event and communicated to me and my reply to it or endorsement thereon was "noted for future guidance". There the matter ended.

Amidst the innumerable instances of Baba's help to me at every turn or crisis of my life I may select a few. In 1910, my intimate friend, Srimant Gopal Rao Buti, was anxious to help me. He agreed to lend me the necessary sums to maintain me in England for my study at the Bar and my family in India during my absence. We had settled in full detail all parts of this scheme and went to Baba for his approval. When Madhav Rao Deshpande put him the question "Should not Bhav (i.e. myself) be sent to Vilayat (i.e., England)?" Baba asked "What for?"

M.Deshpande : To study for the Bar.

Baba: No. His Illayat (natural aptitude) and Vilayat (will of heaven) are not in *Bilayat*, but in this country. Why should he go to England? I realised then that,  
 “The best laid schemes of mice and men  
 Do often go astray”.

In 1912, I underwent an operation in J.J.Hospital under chloroform. It was a serious venture. But I saw Baba seated on a chair at my head, close to the operation table before the chloroform began to operate. He was there to look after me and I felt reassured. The operation was, in fact, safely performed and was a success. In 1915, I was offered the Public Prosecutorship at Nasik but I took two days’ time to consider and wrote at once to Baba. Quickly came the reply “Your former work is good. Do not accept the new” and I declined the offer.

In 1918, a few days before Baba passed away, influenza was raging at Shirdi, at Poona and many other places. At Poona my brother’s wife had a very serious attack and he wired to me about it to Nasik. So I started at once with Rs.80 in my pocket to cover expenses of the journey and to meet all contingencies. I halted enroute at Shirdi to get Baba’s blessings and Udhi for the patient. When I went to him, Baba took from me dakshina repeatedly and the Rs.80 or the balance thereof was cleared off my hand in no time. This was no good augury of my trip to Poona being achieved or made useful to the patient. When I craved leave to go, Baba said in his characteristic fashion (reminding one of the form of the Regal Veto “The King will consider”) Udhya pah i.e. we shall see (what to do) tomorrow. He stopped me for three days. Meanwhile, a wire from Poona announced that the patient had expired. After that Baba gave me leave to go away. It was clear that Baba saw what was happening and to happen to my sister-in-law and judged it best for her to depart from the world and me to reach Poona some days after her departure. His reasons for such judgement, I could not discover. But surely he was in a position to judge and I was not. So I meekly accepted his decision as final, as usual. This was shortly before he himself passed away and he gave me on the above occa-

sion the last opportunity of spending a few days with him while he was in the flesh. By Baba's grace, I soon recovered some part of my former financial position after it was wrecked by District Local Board President ship or by acceptance of other office.

I was holding the office of Revenue Member of the Dewar State from 1-9-1930 to 9-4-1932 and I was the Karbhari of the Surgana State from end of 1932 to August 1933. Each time I returned to Nasik, I resumed my practice and got on as well as I did before, without having to wait idly even for a day. Baba's kind help on the financial side was manifested in a peculiar incident while I was in the latter State. One day I was seated at my meal and the Chief of the that state walked into my room. I apologized for my inability to leave the table and accord him a proper reception or even to offer him a fitting chair or seat. But he quickly walked into the next room, gazed a while at the portrait of Sai Baba that was hanging on the wall and returned to my dining room. He at once announced to me that from that time. I should have an increase of Rs.50 in my salary. I had never asked for this increase. This grant of an increase in salary within a fortnight of my appointment and without any motion on my part can only be explained by having been with Baba in my Pooja room. I had not asked for the increase. Baba evidently had mavuliche chitt lekurache hit i.e. the child's welfare is the mother's care.

As for my pooja, I may mention that I had first the photos of Baba and later the coloured or painted portraits of Baba for worship. I carried these pictures whenever I went. When I was tossing between Dewar and Nasik several times, first my cook at Dewar and later my nephew at Nasik wanted them or some of them to be left behind. Each time I cast lots before Baba, to ascertain his wish and each time came the answer that I should carry them with me. The middle portrait which I constrained Radhakrishna Ayi to part with I specially like. In it, Baba is standing in a pensive or meditative mood. It reminds me of that important occasion when he made the disclosure "Bhav, I had no sleep all night due to thinking and thinking of you". I was passing by the side of the Masjid with that picture in my hands from Ayi's residence. Baba called

me and I went into the Masjid. Pointing to the portrait, he asked.

Baba: What is this?

I : You are here.

Baba: Give it to me.

I gave it to him. He kept it a while, gazed at its front side and back side and returned it to me, saying “keep it”. This is the very thing my heart was desiring, to get Baba’s portrait, touched by him and given to me for purposes of worship. This now a personal gift by Baba to me and I regard it with great veneration.

Baba gave me other articles to be kept safe and sacred. On the first occasion he took Rs.2 from me as a dakshina and returned it saying “japunna tteva konola devu” i.e. “Preserve this carefully. Do not part with it to any one nor spend it.” With the same direction, he gave me again Rs.2 on another occasion, Rs.20, Rs.15 and Rs.30 on other occasions- making a sum of Rs.69 which I preserve very carefully, not merely as mementos of Baba’s loving care for me but as charmed coins that carry luck with them. Each of these gifts was characteristic of Baba. When I and G.Buty were present, Baba asked the latter for Rs. 20 dakshina and when he gave it, Baba transferred it to me. On other occasions he gave me sums totalling Rs.30. On another occasion he asked for and got Rs.30 from Buty and sharing it between his palms suddenly divided it into two parts and held each in one hand. He gave the contents of one hand to Buti and one to me. We went to our quarters and counted our sums. To our surprise, we found each got exactly Rs.15. The true lover gives and receives. dadati prati grihyathi And Baba’s love took moneys from me. I gave them gladly. These dakshinas are often found to convey an allegorical esoteric meaning which the circumstances or accompanying remarks throw light upon.

Baba has at times reduced his devotees on their visit to an absolutely penniless condition, by taking away all the cash with them, on the possession of which they had been relying. Yatyanugrahamichhami tasya sarva haramahyam He has frequently reduced me also to this condition. I have, however, entertained neither regret at parting with he last pie nor fear. For, it is He who gives and He who takes back what he has given.

It is up to him to provide us with ways and means when he denudes us of every bit of cash. And he has never failed to provide. As instances, besides the eighty rupees incident of 1918 that I mentioned above, I can cite others. It will, however, suffice to give two more instances. Some time prior to the above incident when I went to him, he by repeated requests for dakshina took away all I had. Then again he asked me "Bhav, give me Rs.7". I explained that I had nothing left with me. He then told me to get it from some one. This was valuable lesson to me in humility. I must not consider myself too high to beg or borrow. In fact, this lesson was so forcibly brought home to me when I visited Shirdi, after he attained Mahasamadhi, that I went round to beg for bread in the places where Baba used to beg for his bread. By such means, his grace has kept down my pride and egoism which otherwise would soar so high as to avoid contact with the so-called "lower strata" of society.

On another occasion after depleting my resources, Baba asked me for Rs.50 and When I told him I had no cash left, he made me go round and ask some person, who gave me a negative reply. Then he made me go to Rao Bahadur Sathe., who rejoiced at the request being made to him. The significance of my going to the latter for Rs.50 was not explained to me then. But much later I was told that at that time, Rao Bahadur's claim for pension was being considered; the matter in doubt was whether it should be a lower amount as first calculated on the last permanent appointment or an amount higher by Rs.50 being based on a calculation his *sub protem* appointment. He succeeded in gaining his higher pension and Baba's direction that I should go to him for Rs.50 was indicative of his success and the date of the order was the date of Baba's demand for Rs.50.

On the occasion of the "Chamatkar" criminal appeal, the appellants without any demand from me paid me a fee of Rs.300. Baba, during my stay of three days on my return from Ahmadnagar, took away exactly that sum from me, by repeated requests for dakshina. It was most fitting and proper that there should be no receipt of consideration by me for defending my own Guru's servitor and at his behest especially, when I had really done no work and when the entire success was due to his miraculous control over the



District Magistrate's mind. In closing this brief account of my personal experience, I may quote a few of Baba's spiritual teachings or declarations.

He once made a remark which would intensify and strengthen our faith in Him and give us some clue to his real nature. To some one who was talking of God, he said "Why do you say 'God', 'God?' God is in my pocket?" As to God's dual or multiple function, (Suggested for instance by the *Trimurthis* welded into one as Datta or Brahman) he once made a pregnant remark. With his usual lavish generosity coupled with personal humility he was one day preparing his handi i.e., himself cooking food for hundreds and freely feeding the poor and all that wanted the food, with his own personal labour. While the *Handi* was being boiled, a Fakir came, who was particularly keen on getting animal food and he put some flesh in to the Handi. As Baba was going on with his cooking. Balasaheb Mirikar evidently disgusted with the transformation of an innocent vegetarian Bhandar to all into a special dinner for those who loved to feast by killing animals for filling their stomachs, asked Baba "Why all this Himsa, i.e. cruelty to other creatures for feeding ourselves. Baba then answered cryptically Jo marila toche taril jo taril to chamaril i.e. literally, "He that slays saves; He that saves slays". This apart from its implied or express reference to the tripartite functions of the God that creates, maintains and withdraws or destroys might be deemed more particularly to refer to the special function of *SatPurushas* like Sai Baba, who bless one with Sadgati when that one (human or sub-human creatures) dies or is killed at their feet or in their proximity.

I may close this account with two incidents from the life of the Late Mr.H.S.Dixit personally communicated by him to me. Mr.Dixit was literally getting embarrassed in his financial arrangements. On one occasion he found that a sum of Rs.30,000 was due for four days later and he was troubled about the question wherefrom and how he was to get the money. That night he dreamt of the creditor as tormenting him with his claim for the amount and he replied in the dream to the creditor in order to reassure him "Do not fear that your amount will not be duly repaid. I have my resources. I know Sri Chimanlal, Sir X and Sir Y. So do not

fear. Shortly thereafter he woke up and remembered the dream. He was aghast at his own ungrateful folly and stupidity in relying on the poor human support of Sir X, Sir Y and Sir Z who would probably disappoint one at the critical moment and leave him in the lurch and his failing to recognise that his only and true sheet-anchor or Providence was Sri Sai. He wept at his folly and went before the portrait of Sai Baba and entreated him to pardon the folly. Thereafter he felt assured that Baba and Baba alone would help him. It was up to Baba to save him and Baba would never fail a devotee at the hour of need. Yet as the day and hour for payment were nearing, he could not discover any money forthcoming. Just the day previous to the due date, while he was ruminating upon his affairs in his office, the son of his late intimate friend and banker called upon him and wanted his advice whether a sum of Rs.30,000 he had, should be invested in one way or in another. Mr.Dixit explained to him difficulties in the proposed investments and added that if the investor was thinking of investing with Mr.Dixit himself, he would be the last person to take advantage of this intimacy with his father and accept the deposit. Mr. Dixit frankly stated that in his embarrassed condition, he would not be able perhaps to return the deposit on the date fixed. The visitor far from being deterred by such revelation insisted that the revealed facts were just his reason for insisting that Mr.Dixit should accept the deposit. The son would not be true to his father, if he failed to help him with an accommodation at the time of need. In this view, he pressed the deposit on Mr.Dixit, who thereupon paid his creditor at the due date. Sai had shown himself capable of wielding tens of thousands of rupees and moulding people's wills and intentions to suit his scheme of helping his devotees.

Mr.Dixit's younger brother, Sadashiv, B.A., L.L.B., tried his hand at practice at Nagpur, Bombay and Khandwa successively with disheartening results. Then H.S.Dixit cast lots before Baba, and with Baba's consent again took him to Bombay to work in his office. After a short time, the result seemed to be unsatisfactory. Mr. Sadashiv told his brother that he would go away. H.S.D wondered how inspite of Baba's approval of Sadashiv's being taken to Bombay, the step should prove to be utterly futile. In any case, he

thought he would postpone his brother's return to Khandwa till after the approaching Deepavali holidays. During those days, things took a strange turn. A friend of Mr.H.S.Dixit came to him and said that the Kutch State required a highly reliable Officer for their Bank with a knowledge of Gujarathi. At once Mr.H.S.Dixit asked him if Mr.Sadashiv would suit. The friend was very glad to have Sadashiv (whom he believed not to be available) and recommended him to the state. Thenceforward, Sadashiv, who was found a failure at Law in so many places, got appointed on a salary of Rs.1,000 a month and held it for a long time. This upshot showed that Baba in allowing or directing his devotee to go to Bombay was seeing not merely the immediate and near future but more distant prospects and enduring benefits.

#### IV

##### 13th September, 1936, THANA

SANTARAM BALWANT NACHNE, DAHANUKAR, says:

I have given parts of my experience already to Sai Lila Masic (vide Vol.I (xii)94). But as there was the feeling that it was a publication to all and sundry, I had expressed myself with considerable reserve and did not mention many features especially those that ordinary people would not credit. Now, I will try to recall, inspite of the long time that has lapsed, as much as I can and give you a fuller account and include in it my later experiences, i.e., those which I have had after the above mentioned publication (in 1923).

In 1909, some events took place which at that time seemed to be little connected with Sai Baba. In that year, one day my elder brother was undergoing an operation very near his throat in Bajekar's Hospital at Bombay; and we were all anxious about it. I was at Dahanu then and a *sādhu* approached. We invited him inside and gave him a regular course of dishes, i.e., a full meal. My sister-in-law was serving him all dishes; but she intentionally omitted at first to give him "*Bendi Baji*" i.e., a dish made of lady's fingers thinking that it was too poor a stuff to be given to a revered and saintly

guest. But the *sādhū* himself called for Bendi Baji; and it was then served. That *sādhū* blessed us all and told us that the operation at the hospital that day had been safely performed. The same day my friend, Haribhav Moreswar Panse told me that he hoped that the operation by the grace of Sri Sai Baba, would be a success. That was the first mention of Sai Baba to me. I had not then known of him. Evidently Panse had. Later in the evening, we learnt from my father who returned from the hospital that the operation had been performed and that there was no trouble or danger. After the operation a *sādhū* had appeared there and approaching the patient passed his hands over the operated part of the body, and said all would go on well. The operation proved quite safe and my brother recovered.

The same year, my father attended Das Ganu's Kirtan. Wherein Sai Baba was described as a veritable Avatar of Datta, as a remarkable person with wonderful powers and wonderful kindness. We got a picture of Sai Baba and worshipped it with *Udbatti* (lighting scented sticks) at home. In 1912 was my first visit to Shirdi. I had appeared for my Revenue Subordinates Examination and before the results were announced, I went to Shirdi along with two friends, Sankar Balakrishna Vaidya and Achyta Date. On the way, we alighted at Kopergaon station. There the Station Master rather freely and said that undue honour was being lavished upon and people were being gulled by one who was a mere hypnotist, like so many of these wandering jugglers and thaumaturgists all over the country. This rude fusillade at Sai Baba unsettled my mind about him and I was beginning to trouble to visit. We reached Shirdi anyhow and saw Sai Baba returning from the Lendi. He must have evidently noticed my condition. He looked at me, and at once, without having any information given to him as to who I was, etc. said "What? Have you come away without taking leave from the Mamlatdar?" I said "Yes". Baba advised me and said "Do not behave like this." This removed all the doubts that the station Master's thoughtless remarks had raised in my mind. I felt I was before a saint who knew everything that happened in places far away from him. We stayed three days at Shirdi

on this occasion. Each day Baba's kindness and powers were manifested with greater frequency and force and the result was perfect assurance and confidence. I became a firm believer in and worshipper of Baba thenceforward.

Baba took Udhi from my hand and applied it to my forehead- a mark of favour and love that is not bestowed on all. Again when people were assembling for Arati at the Masjid, and I was among them, Baba asked me to go and take my meal. I said it was Ekadasi. Usually I did not fast on Ekadasi days; but my two friends did and I had to confirm to their ways and not be singular and claiming advantages which they did not share. But Baba did not want me to fail. He said (referring to my companions) "These people are mad. You had better go to the Wada and eat." The person who had to serve the food at the wada was grumbling that I should be clamouring for food on an Ekadasi day and would not give me food till Arati was over. So he came to the Mosque and I also returned to the Mosque. Baba again questioned me if I had messed but I said that it was time for Arati and so the meal might be deferred till the completion of the Arati. But Baba insisted and said "The Arati will wait and will begin after you finish your meal and come." The hotel man had to yield and gave me food. Then I went to the Mosque for the Arati. At that time a lady generally known as "Mavusi" brought beda (i.e., rolled up betel and nut) to Baba. Baba gave me some and asked me to eat. As it is usual to avoid chewing betel and nut (which are considered as luxuries and for that and other reasons avoided on Ekadasi days) I hesitated. Baba said again, "Eat it". I obeyed and chewed the beda. At the close of the Arati Baba took dakshina of Rs.4 from me and Rs.16 from Vaidya. He did not ask Date for dakshina, as he was evidently not disposed to give it. There was a young Marwadi girl that was hankering after fruit and asked Baba for orange". Baba by his own powers knew that Date had kept back some oranges at the wada and brought only the remainder to be offered at the Mosque and so asked Date to go and get the oranges. But Date was assertive and said that the fruit was retained by him for "*Faral*", i.e., his own light meal on the Ekadasi day. He declined to part with it, despite Baba's request. Baba did not press his request further.

During our stay, Baba revealed his interest in me and my

family. When H.S.Dixit, Job and Dabholkar were present, He hold them, I had been to this man's house" and here he pointed to me for a meal. He did not give me Bendi Baji." My mind darted back at once to the Sadhu who in 1909 at the time of my brother's operation was dining with us. And I felt assured that in the form of one Sadhu or another, Baba was interested in our welfare and helping us even in 1909 unknown to ourselves. Later, I told those gentlemen of the "Bendi Baji" which my sister-in-law ha first failed to serve the Sadhu on that occasion. That Sadhu appeared to be an entirely different man from Sai Baba. I saw him also on the two or three days following the operation at Dahanu and had excellent opportunities of observing him at close quarters. He went away from Dahanu and was not seen again thereafter.

Baba was declaring in 1912 to me that he was the same Sadhu or was in that Sadhu despite external differences in appearance, caste, etc. That Sadhu was a Hindu; rather dark or brownish, and had a fairly long beard such as was never on Baba's chin. He looked more like you (B.V.N. Swami) than like Sai Baba. I asked Baba about the result I would have in my examination. He said "Allah Malik Hai" and placed his palm varada hasth on my head. I passed that examination. The impressions I received at this first visit were in danger of being blotted out on the last day. That morning we found Baba was in tearing rage, at the Mosque for no reason that any one could make out. He was jumping about the floor of the Mosque. His eyes were red and for fifteen minutes he kept every one in terror of him and none dared to approach him. That made us doubt again if the Station Master's view that Baba was a mad man was not right after all. At Baba cooled down and we approached him for leave to go away from Shirdi. He gave us Udhi and leave.

In 1915 Baba gave me another blessings (unasked). I was then employed at Dahanu (Thana District). It is not easy to get a transfer from Mofussil service to Metropolis service. But Baba said in 1912 "Come to Bombay for service." In 1918 this prophecy or blessing had its fulfilment or effect by my being transferred to Bandra, i.e., Bombay Suburban District. The breach of duty that Baba pointed out, viz., being absent from office without leave of my superior, the Mamlatdar, was

noticed by the latter, Mr.B.V.Dev. But, providentially his order was merely that if I were to do so again I would be punished.

After this first visit I was going often times to Shirdi. On one occasion. (i.e., in 1913) as I was starting, Haribhav M Panse met me. He had been convicted fro misappropriation and sentenced to imprisonment but had been just then let out on bail pending his appeal. He was going up for the appeal which was to be heard that day or the next and he told me to entreat Sai Baba's aid on his behalf. "Tell him that I am in trouble and that I am innocent." He said. I went to Shirdi and before I could communicate the message, Baba himself spoke about it. It was at the early morning Arati (Kakada) at the Chavadi. Baba was in a very angry mood. He then told me "Tell him that he need not have any anxiety and that he will be acquitted in the appeal." When I returned from Shirdi, I met Panse and told him of Baba's reply. At that time he informed me that he had indeed been acquitted. When I was at Shirdi, about this time, (i.e., in 1913 or so) Baba made an observation that we should not trust men. This common place or truism appear to have no reference to or significance for me. But what happened in 1914 showed that it was not a truism, but a warning to me.

I was Treasury Master in 1914 at Dahanu. I was engaged in my daily Pooja at home worshipping Sai Baba's photo, God, etc. One Ramakrishna Balawant Panse who was deranged in his intellect standing at the door of the cuisine, a little distance from my worship room. He was thought to be rather harmless; and none minded him. Suddenly the man flew at me and grasped my neck with both his arms and tried to bite my throat saying, "I will drink your blood." Instantaneously, with one hand I held the uddharini strong metallic spoon (used for pooja) and thrust that and my finger into his mouth. The spoon struck in his throat and the man was biting away my finger with his teeth. With the other hand I tried to extricate my neck from his hands. My mother also rushed into help. Meanwhile I lost consciousness. After sometime and by some remedial applications I recovered consciousness; his nails had dug into the flesh of my neck and he had very nearly strangled me to death. The injury on my fingers also was healed. When next I went to Shirdi,

Baba addressed Anna Chinchinikar and said (pointing to me):-

Anna, if I had delayed an instant, then this man would have indeed perished. The mad man had seized with his hands his very throat. But I extricated him. What is to be done? If I do not save my own children, who else will?

On 31-3-1915 we had a very thrilling encounter. Myself, Santaram Moreswar Panse and some others were travelling in a bullock cart at night in a dense jungle. We were at the Rashet Pass. It was known to be infected with tigers. It was a dark night. Suddenly our bulls took fright and were stepping backwards. Luckily they were not driving the cart sideways. In that narrow pass, if our cart had swerved a little to the side, cart, bulls and ourselves would have fallen down a steep ravine and perished. Santaram showed me by pointing his hand in front what the trouble was. In front of our carriage we saw the gleaming eyes of a tiger on the road. It was couchant and faced us. Panse to save the cart from being pushed into the ravine wished to get down to place a big stone or stick as a brake to block the wheel going back and asked me to hold the reins of the bulls. I held them and roared aloud "Hail Sai Baba: Run, Sri Sai Baba (to our aid)". Others also began to shout and the tiger got frightened and ran away passing by the side of our cart. My faith in Baba and the courage he infused into me by making me call out his name thus saved the situation.

In 1915, after this, I started to go to Shirdi. At the station one V.S.Samant gave me a coconut with two annas to buy candy, etc., to be presented to Baba. I went and bowed to Baba and gave the coconut but forgot all about the two annas. When I asked Baba for leave to go, he said "Yes, Go via Chitali but why keep back a poor Brahmin's (i.e., my) two annas?" maje garib brahmanache don ane ka tevathose I was at once reminded by this hit and I gave him the two annas entrusted to me by Samant. Again I prayed for leave and he said laughing. "You may go now. Whatever you undertake to do, do thoroughly, else do not undertake it."

Once when I was at Shirdi, Sankar Rao (Balakrishna Vaidya) came there. Baba asked him for Rs.16 dakshina. He pleaded want of money. A little later, Baba asked him for



Rs.32. Again he put forward the same plea. A little later Baba asked him for Rs.64. Then we told Baba we were not rich enough to pay such large sums. Then Baba said collect the amount and pay. This proved to be a prophecy. Sometime later, Baba fell ill. A saptha was celebrated and it had to be followed by a grand feast to be given to all comers on a large scale. Moneys had to be collected. At the bidding of Dabholkar, Sankar Rao and I started with the hat in my hand. The collection then made by us totalled exactly Rs.64 and it was sent up.

I gave Baba's Udhi to Ravji Sakharam Vaidya to apply to his daughter "Moru" who was having "Plague" fever. It subsided. My father was something of a doctor. Parasuram Apaji Nachne, a Talati, had long-standing illness. My father and other medical men despaired of his recovery. But by vows and prayers to Baba and burning Udbatti before his picture with a perpetual ghee lamp he recovered his health. When I and S.B.Vaidya went to Baba in 1915, the latter presented Silver padukas to Baba with a view to get them back again for his worship. But Baba presented them to me. I thought it but right that they should go to Vaidya and gave them to him. But on Madhava Rao Deshpande's intervention they were again transferred to me. Vaidya had another pair of silver padukas. Baba himself asked Vaidya for that pair and presented that also to me, saying "Keep this and do Pooja". I said that was Vaidya's property and must go to him. Baba said "Keep it for the present, you can give it to him later." I kept it then and later presented one pair to Vaidya.

Adhering to chronological order, I may mention one instance of Baba's justice and fair play; in which he plucked the feathers off Orthodox Intolerance. In May 1915, I went to Shirdi accompanied by my mother-in-law and others. We put up at the "Sathe Wada" (as it was then called, since then it has changed hands and become Navalkar Wada) and Dada Kelkar was living in part of the premises. When my mother-in-law was cutting onions for our meal, Dada Kelkar, an orthodox Brahmin, who abhorred onion got irritated and fell foul of her. She took his abuse very much to heart. A few hours later, Dada's grand daughter was crying on account of severe pain in her eyes and he went to Baba for relief. Baba then told him to foment the eyes with onion. Dada asked

“Where am I to get onion?” Baba always kept some onion with him and perhaps Dada hoped to get his supply from Baba. But that just arbiter was keeping some designs up his sleeve and told Dada “Get it from this ayi, i.e., mother,” pointing to my mother in law. Baba was giving her the chance of relieving her pent up feelings and taking noble revenge by returning good for evil. She told Baba that Dada had been abusing her that very morning for using onions for preparing her meal, and that she would not care to give him anything but if it was Baba’s order that she should give him onions, she would. Baba ordered the gift and she had her grand revenge of doing good to one who had so recently lacerated her feelings.

It was in the same year that my mother in-law was anxious to get Baba’s blessing to obtain progeny for me. A few children were born before that but they died when quite young. So at her request, Madhav Rao Deshpande took my wife to baba and wanted Baba to give her a coconut as a gift and throw it into her Padar (Mundani or end of her cloth). Then Baba’s eyes brimmed with tears as he gave the coconut to my wife: and he bade me sit at his feet and massage his legs. As I was doing so, he made passes with his hand over my back. I felt very grateful for his kindness and I referred to the madman’s attempt to murder me and to Baba’s photo being with me at the time as the explanation for my narrow escape. Baba merely remarked, “Allah Malik Hai. God is the Lord, i.e., He orders all things.” Then Baba and I embraced each other.

Baba showed me once again how considerate he was towards all his devotees and how strongly he was against one devotee teasing or interfering with another. One day Baba devotee teasing or interfering with another. One day Baba said “My stomach is aching,” “Mavusi”, the strong lady that I have already mentioned, brought a red hot brick and placed it on Baba’s abdomen, i.e., above his Kupni, and retained it in that position for about ten minutes. I felt very much for Baba, as I was shampooing his feet at that time, and thought here service an instance of cruel kindness”. Then she removed the brick and began pressing Baba’s sides with her hands with great violence. I could not endure the sight, and I told her to be more gentle as Baba would suffer. Baba at once ordered me to get away. I did.

That night, about 8 P.M. I went to the Masjid and asked Baba to give me some Anugraha. "What Japa shall I make?" I asked. Baba replied, "Go to Devpur (a village 20 miles off Kopergaon) and begin worshipping the stones there which your ancestors worshipped." Later on, I returned to Dahanu and asked my father what Baba's words might import. Then my father gave me an account of our ancestral worship of images at Devpur.

Baba Prayag, my ancestor, had no issue till he was 60 years old. He learnt that issue was often obtained by others by the grace of a saint then living, named Baba Bhagavat (who was a disciple of Eknath Maharaj) and that B.Bhagavat could be seen at Trimbak on those rare occasions when he would go to see the Nivritti Nath Shrine there. B.P. went there and obtained his grace and blessings for issue with a coconut. Thereafter, i.e., at the age of 61, B.P. got a son, whom he named Krishna Rao. Baba Bhagawat took that child, when it was but one year old to Devpur and gave it a handwritten copy of Jnaneswari. (This identical copy is now produced. Note, just as it is produced, some music is heard passing in the street). Whenever this copy is taken out some auspicious signs are always found attending. From that time forward, every member of our family in his generation takes Upadesh from a member of that Guru's line. This fact, it is, that made Sai Baba give me the above answer. (At that time I did not know all these facts. But my father to whom I communicated the answer of Baba narrated these facts to me).

In 1916, by Baba's grace, I was saved from a watery grave. There was Plague at Dahanu and I had, daily to cross a creek between my house and my office. One day I returned from the office very late and there was no ferry boat. I then took a Toni (Tamil "Thoni" or Canoe) with a boy to paddle, and it got upset in the middle of the creek, I had swerved just a bit but that was enough to make the little canoe capsized. From the time it capsized I had my Dhyana of Sai Baba. The boy who was rowing or paddling the canoe was a good swimmer and a resourceful lad. He asked me to hold on to a rope that was above water connecting a buoy with a ship which was at a little distance from us. I caught it and with its help kept my head above water. The body hallowed tot eh ship and the shipment sent us a boat and saved us.

In 1919 I had a son born to me: and this was the first son born after Baba gave my wife the coconut, with blessings from this mouth and with tears in his eyes. We named him Kaluram. To explain Baba's tears a few facts about Kaluram's short life or eight years may be mentioned. He was born under the constellation; Moola. When the boy was only three years old he was always repeating the mantra 'Ram Hari Ram.' It was in 1921, i.e. when he was entering on his third year, the effect of Moola was seen. His mother i.e. my first wife died. No doubt the deeply sympathetic heart of Baba saw her coming end when he gave her the blessing" (?) for a child to be born under Moola. Any how, one might suppose that there was the mitigation of the sorrow in having brought a saintly infant prodigy into existence. But see what followed even in that matter. The boy was stunning imagination of all that became acquainted with him. A pious and learned neighbour, named Hegde, watched him and declared that he was an incarnation of that playmate of Sri Krishna on whose back the latter got up to invade curd pots. The boy himself stated occasionally "Krishna used to tease me. I caught hold of Hari's leg and pinched them. I looked up. Hari (who was standing above me) upset the curd pot over my face. Then the lady of the house turned up, etc.". The boy sometimes anticipated Hegde's daily study of "Hari Vijaya" and declared what stories or incidents formed the subject matter of the portion to be read on the particular day by Hegde. I saw him one day seated in a corner, with his head covered by a cloth. He was motionless and steady like one immersed in Yoga. His eyeballs were upturned, but the cloth over his head that cloth and asked him why he was covering his head. He said he was always doing so. Asked why he went on with this course of Sadhana, he laughed. His precocity surprised me greatly. Once he asked me to get for him the latest special issue of a journal (*Sandesh*). When that was brought, the first "Aum". Kalu cut out that picture and stuck it on the wall. Then there was the advertisement of "His master's Voice" records with the picture of the dog before the gramophone. Kalu's interrogation there on was typical of him.

Kalu: What is this?

I: It is the advertisement of a phonograph.

He: It is a special message of Krishna.

I: What is the special message?

He: What is the dog hearing?

I: The music played by the plate.

He: The dog hears his master's voice.

See the dog so steady from head to tail, intently listening.

We must be equally firm and steady.

See how I sit. You also should sit like that and listen, and then you will hear Baba's voice.

I: How do you know Baba's voice?

He: I know. I will not tell you. Experience it yourself.

In addition to his oral japa of "Ram Hari Ram." Kaluram was going on writing that mantra in chits and a quantity of them were with us. When Upasani Baba came to Andheri, he said he wanted such chits and they were handed over to him. In 1924 Gadgi Baba came over to my house to see this boy. In 1926, Kalu had dropsy and low fever. We gave him only Baba's Udhi. The disease continued for a while. On Kartik Suddha Ekadasi (so piously celebrated by thousands of pilgrims at Pandharpur and other Vishnu Sthalas), Kaluram approached his end. He called me to his bedside and asked for Jñaneswari. It was at once produced. He himself opened it and picked up the XIII chapter. At that time I was feeling heavily the sadness of the approaching end, the bitterness that we had to part with such a son. But Kalu cheered me up and said, "What is there to cry for? Read this (Ch.XIII). Read it aloud for me. I am going to day." My heart was sinking under a load of grief and I could not read it. Then he kept the book in front of him and breathed his last. A fitting termination, this departure on Kartik Ekadasi, was for such a life. But yet how sad was such an early death? No wonder that Baba wept in 1918 when he gave the coconut and clearly perceived that such an early death was to crown such a life.

As for the continuance of my line, by Baba's blessings, that was made secure. In 1922, i.e., one year after Kaluram's mother died, my parents were arranging for my second marriage. A choice had to be made between a girl that would

bring some wealth or pecuniary contribution with her and a poor girl. The proposal of the first girl that would bring in Rs.600 was being considered by my father. I did not favour it. Baba came in my mother's dream and said to her "Do not accept this girl in marriage for your son." In the same dream my mother saw another girl. A little later the uncle and guardian of a poor girl offered her hand in marriage to me. I referred him to my mother. She saw the girl and found it was the very girl she had seen in the above-mentioned dream. This settled the question and the latter girl was married to me in 1922, and several children were born of this marriage and with Baba's blessings are getting on well. "Baba's blessings" is no empty formal phrase. I will cite several instances to show how he has guarded them and saved their lives as he has saved mine (at least twice, as already mentioned by me).

In 1926, my son, Sainath alias Hareswar, was eight or nine months old. Kaluram had crackers and Bengal matches. One of my children threw away a lighted match. It fell on Sainath and his clothes caught fire. He wore a cloth beneath his waist and a frock next to the skin. Both these caught fire. The children did not realise the seriousness of the situation and raised no alarm. My wife was outside the house engaged with something. Suddenly a Fakir appeared before her and pointing his arm and finger towards the terrace on which the children were playing, said "See what is going on there", My wife at once went inside and noticed the fire on the child's clothes. With great presence of mind and resourcefulness, she ran to the child, seized the clothes and rolled them between her palms and thus boldly extinguished the fire, The front half of the frock from bottom to the neck was burnt out and part of the nether cloth also. But the child (Sainath) came off entirely scatheless. Though the frock worn next to the skin was burnt out, his skin had not been burnt, nor was his nether nor was his nether portion burnt. This complete safety was evidently due to the same cause as the sudden appearance of the Fakir. The Fakir has also suddenly disappeared. When she came out after extinguishing the fire, there was no trace of the Fakir. Who could the Fakir be, how had he known the fire accident the very moment it happened and why should he be at the trouble to watch over the children and fetch their mother to save them at the nick of time? In

1928, Sainath, then two years old, had an accident. As usual he was running about; and one day he fell down the stairs. There was a heap of the debris at the bottom. I ran up and was surprised to see him standing without any injury at all. He told me "Do not fear. Baba bore me up."

In 1932, Sainath gave his younger brother, Vasudev, a ring and the latter stuffed it into his mouth instinctively.

The ring went into the throat and stuck there. There was a alarm and for nearly one hour every one in the house was excited and medicaments were tried to induce the throat or stomach to throw out the ring. Finally, I took Sai Baba's Udhi and put it in the child's mouth. Then inserting my finger deep within his mouth, I felt the ring and pulled it out. In 1934, the same child Vasudev had measles, pneumonia and an abscess on the chest. He was getting weaker and weaker. The doctor was afraid to operate on the abscess on account of the weakness. I applied antiphlogistine over the abscess. The abscess was opened. It was a wide open wound. The Baba, and trusting in him put a bit of his Udhi into the wound. The Deputy Collector, asant Rao Madhav Jadhav, (now D.C. at Poona) asked me whether I was confident of a cure and within what time the gaping wound would be cured? I answered "in 24 hours". That night, Baba appeared in my dream and said, "Why did you say "24 hours? You should have said "immediately". I apologised for my mistake in the dream itself. Next morning, the wound was healed up. Jadhav wondered and wanted Baba's Udhi and blessing for his own son aged 4 1/2 years who was down with pneumonia. I gave him the Udhi on the sixth day of that child's fever. The very next day the fever stopped, though the attendant doctor stated that the fever would run its course for 9 days (i.e. that it would last 3 days after I gave the Udhi). Jadhav sent up his thanks offering of Rs.7 to be sent to Sri Sai Baba's Sansthan.

In 1935, i.e. last year, milk was being boiled on my stove. Anand, my two year old child, came running up, stumbled over a stick and fell upon the milk and stove. Just fancy what should happen in such a case. One would expect his skin to be scalded by the boiling milk and clothes to catch fire. But here the milk was dashed down on one side and the

stove on the other side; and the child lay between the two neither scalded, nor catching fire on his clothes. This year, i.e. 1936, Vasudev and his younger brother rummaged among the contents of an *almyrah* and found a box full of what they thought to be peppermint lozenges. Vasudev at some and gave some to his younger brother. The taste was unpleasant and they did not eat much. But what little was eaten made Vasu smart. His tongue was protruding. My wife inserted her finger into his mouth and extracted what he believed to be *chunam*, i.e. lime. We were then shown by Vasu the packed or box of "Sweetmeats" that he had been consuming. It was "Pharoah's snakes" the piece of fire works that burn out forming ashes that lengthen and wind about in the form of snakes. We then took him to the doctor who administered an emetic, which did not act. Then I gave Baba's Udhi and Tirtha -which acted at once and resulted in his vomiting out all the poisonous stuff he has swallowed. After all this was over, Vasudev mentioned that he had given the Peppermint to his two year old younger brother. Evidently the latter ate but little, as there was no trouble. But to expel what little he might have swallowed, we administered our emetic, viz., Udhi and water with Baba's name to him and he had a good vomit.

A cashier in an office was in trouble last year about Rs.3,500 which was not accounted for. A friend advised him to go to me and he came. That cashier disliked Baba, as Baba was a 'Mahomedan' But when he came to me, I told him that his sole sanctuary was the Sai Mandir at Shirdi, and that he should go there and make a heartfelt apology and appeal for help. He went there, got a photo of Baba and with the help of Sagun Naik placed it at the samādhi, prayed there and came back with the photo. Things then began to brighten up. He was allowed eight days time to pay up the Rs.3,500. He went up, got money and paid it. The matter was closed. There was neither dismissal nor prosecution. Similar help was rendered by Baba in another case, Mr.V.C.Chitnis after his dismissal from service came to me. I told him to cast his burden on Sai Baba and make an appeal at the Shirdi Mandir for help. He went to Shirdi and later he was reinstated in service.

I shall mention what help Baba gave to members of my



family, for *sadgati*, i.e. at or after death.

My parents were devotee of Sai Baba. My mother was aged seventy in 1926 when she died. She kept Sai Baba's photo to the last in front of her. As the end was nearing, she asked me to read *Vishnu Sahasranama* aloud by her side, and I did. Then with "Ram Ram" on her lips, she passed away.

My second wife passed away in 1929 and I was anxious to do everything necessary to secure *sadgati* for her soul. So I wished to take her bones and ashes to Nasik and dispose of them there with proper ceremonies. But I was beset with difficulties. My father was ill. I had, amidst my feeling of bitter loss at her departure, to make sure of the funds needed and the steps necessary, of which I had no idea. I took a sum of Rs.80 and leaving a child of 3 years at home, started by train for Nasik. At Victoria Terminus, I found I had a fellow passenger who took enormous trouble for me and extended his sympathy and help even before the train started.

He: Where are you going?

I: Nasik

He: Why do you carry no bed? The nights are chill.

I: I find no necessity. I am in no mood to mind these things. It is eight days since my wife died leaving a three-year old son to be taken care of by me.

He asked me to wait. He called out to a friend and got a blanket and a bedsheet for me.

I: How can you get these things so quickly?

He: Our quarters are very near. It is the Bombay Arts School. Have this cigar please.

I (accepting the cigar): What is your name? May I know who you are?

He: I and a peon in that school. My name is Ganapathy Shankar - you may go to sleep now. Have no anxiety. I am also going to Nasik. I shall wake you up when we reach I: What takes you to Nasik?

G.S: Simply to see Nasik. My Saheb is gone to Simla and I get this chance of seeing Nasik.

Then I lay down.

G.S: “Do take good care of your money; or if you like, I will keep it for you, if you give it to me, in this steel trunk of mine.

Then I handed over my 80 rupees to him and went to sleep. At Ghoti Station, near Nasik, he woke me up. We washed ourselves and took tea. He paid for me also. At Nasik Road Station, we got into the bus. Then,

G.S: Do not go to Bhatji, i.e. a priest yourself. I will settle everything for you. Do not trouble yourself.

Then he attended on me and attended to everything as a peon would do, till the end of the twelfth day ceremony. Throughout the proceedings he showed his special knowledge of the ceremonies, i.e. he told the priest to take pinda first to Ramkund. He told me to retain in my grip the bones I brought, immersed in the waters of the Godavari at Ramkund till the close of the ceremony. The bones should be left in a particular hollow there and kept in position by pressure of the hand to prevent their being washed away by force of the current. My surprise was that even as I kept them they were quickly dissolving as thought they were sugarcandy. On the twelfth day, he got a wire requiring his presence back at Bombay. He accounted to me for every pie he had received from me. He took me to the chief temples at Nasik. A Sanyasi teacher at one of the temples recognized him and to him he showed the wire. My priest said the G.S was a man of extraordinary cleverness, e.g. when the priest started ceremonies without the worship of Ganesha (considering in unnecessary for inauspicious ceremonies), G.S. interposed and bade him start it and when the priest still entertained doubts, made him refer the matter to a learned authority who agreed with G.S. He parted from me at Nasik that day and promised to call at my place i.e. andheri. He gave me his name and address. After my return home, seeing that my beneficent friend did not turn up I went to the address give viz., “G.S., peon, Bombay Art School” and made inquiries and asked his fellow peon about him. They all said there was no such person at all known to them. The principal (the “Saheb”) also said the same. Who was this ‘man’ that took such enormous pains (without any remuneration or prospect of it) and gave me such splendid help in securing Sadgati for my wife at

Nasik by proper performance of all the ceremonies? Who can it be but Sai Baba?

In 1927 I went to Shirdi for *chowla*, i.e., tuft ceremony of Kaluram. Then Baba's direction to me to go to Deopur which I had neglected till then was again stressed on me, through another saint who had come up to Shirdi. That was Nanu Maharaj or Sripad Narsoba Pnchlegankar, aged only fifteen. He asked me without any intimation to him of what or who I was or what Baba had told me about *anugraha* (intimation).

"Have you been to Daopur?"

I was taken aback. I answered the negative

N: Why?

I: There is no one at Deopur older than myself (in my Guru's line) for me to accept my Guru and get *anugraha*.

N: What of that? My Guru is younger than I. His name is 'Doi Poda' and your Guru's name is Bhagavat.

Sri narsoba promised to show me his Guru later. Accepting this reminder, I carried out Sai Baba's order and went to Deopur and accepted *anugraha*. I had never met Sri Narsoba before. Next year, I learnt that Narsoba was arriving at Bombay. V.T. As his train steamed in and came to a stop, from his compartment to beckoned to me as I stood amidst a crowd and showed me his Guru, an eight-year-old youth, Sripad Ramakrishna Doi Poda. Sri Narsoba is doing "*Sudhi*" work; I have not met him after 1928. His Guru is still a student (for Matriculation Exam). At Guntur (Madras Presidency).

I will close this long account with one instance of Baba's response to my prayer for help to strangers. On 3-12-1923 I was seated in y house at Andheri, facing the road. One Mr.Noel was driving his car along that road. A little girl, prayed, "Baba, save her". The car stopped, I went down and picked up the child and took her to the hospital. The stopping of the car before the child was crushed was a miracle. The break in the car was not working. Then on examination

it was found, though the break was not put on, a stone had somehow got into the gear and that was how the car suddenly stopped in time. Looking at the injuries to the girl, the Sub-Assistant Surgeon feared they would prove fatal. But I told him, "Sai Baba would save her". She continued as an inpatient in the hospital for fifteen days and she recovered her health; but her power of speech was not restored. That continued to be her condition for nine months. Then Das Ganu came to Andheri and I told him the facts. He told me to give her Baba's Udhi again for restoring her speech. I again gave her Udhi. The next day she began to speak. The was most marvellous. She is alive now and speaks very well.

Baba kindly give me opportunities of doing service to others. In 1926, he appeared to me in a dream and bade me go and tell Mr. K. G. Kothare (Bar-at-law) "not to do what he was proposing to do." Despite the vagueness of the message, I went to him and delivered the message. He thanked me for it and informed me that it referred to the step he had been intending to take. He wanted to give up his *Grihastasram* and become a Sanyasi. He gave up the idea, at that time.

(Read over and admitted to be correct).

## V

### 23RD SEPT. 1936, DADY AGIAR ST., BOMBAY

Sri Narayan Asram, Sanyasi and disciple of Vedasrama Swami (Taraka Mutt, Durgaghat, Kashi), residing at Vaman Muth, Gangapur wai, (Satara District), aged 58, says:

I knew Sai Baba, i.e. heard the name and the greatness of Sai Baba in 1910 from Das Ganu Maharaj's Kirtana. I asked him "Is Sai Baba living?" He said "Yes, at Shirdi". In five days of that, I went to Shirdi and saw Sai Baba. In six months thereafter, I paid Baba nine visits. I often went to him in later years also. I was then in service, in the Customs Department and continued in it till 1926 when I retired on pension after 31 years service. 1927-1930 I spent in Narmada Pradakshina". In 1933, I took Sanyas changing my former name 'Toser' to the present one. I came first under a Guru's influence in 1895 whom I saw in a dream. When I

went to Shirdi in 1910 and had my contact with Sai Baba, I found that he was the same as the Guru who gave me first inspiration (without any words) in my dream in 1895. Then I passed after 1918 into the charge of Vasudevanand Saraswati of Garudeshwar on the banks of Narmada near Nanded (in Gujarati) Though Vasudevanand Saraswati left the flesh in 1915 he had connection with Baba. I believe that Baba has left me in; his charge. So, Vedaśrama Swami of Kashi, Taraka Muth, Durgaghat, gave me *deeksha* in 1931.

I mostly stay at Wai. As for my internal progress and Sai Baba's influence on me, it is hardly a thing to be described.

Sai Baba had different ways of dealing with different people. He was the centre and to each man he darted a separate radius. Most cared for external things only and hardly any came to him for the highest spiritual benefit of *Atma Nishta*. Hari Sitaram Dixit, Chandorkar and Dabholkar were probably those who came close enough to him to receive high teaching. Yet it is a question, if any of them got into *Atma Nishta* or anywhere near that. Baba had made Dixit read Eknath's two works, as he was but a beginner in the religious field and had to develop his bhakti (devotion) chiefly. Of course, immediate proximity was not needed for chiefly. Of course, immediate proximity was not needed for development under Baba. When I was at Shirdi, I would mostly go and sit away by myself in the (Sathe) Wada and not be at the Mosque. Even at the Wada, one is under Baba's direct influence.

As for Baba's own state, that is a thing one can get a glimpse of from some facts. Baba had a way of touching (with his palm) the head of the devotee who went to him. There was no *adhi-kari* evidently to receive everything Baba could give and thus there was none to succeed to his position. But his touch did convey certain impulses, forces, ideas, etc. Sometimes he pressed his hand heavily on the head as though he was crushing out some of the lower impulses of the devotee. Sometimes he tapped, sometimes he made a pass with his palm over the head etc. Each had its own effect-making remarkable difference in the sensations or feelings of the devotee. Baba's touch was one means. Apart from that, he would invisibly operate on the nature of the devotee and ef-

fect a great change in him. He graciously conveyed to me without any words, the feeling that differences (between various souls etc.) i.e. all differences were unreal, that the one real thing is that which underlines all. This was after my first visit- in 1913 or 1914 perhaps. But Baba never spoke out this truth so far as I know. Obviously there was not competent adhikari who had to be spoken to in that way.

I have not given out my experience though Mr.Dixit and Mr.Dabholkar asked me for it. I have never heard Baba utter *Mahavakyas* or say things of Sankaracharya's *Atmabodha* or Viveka *Chudamani* or anything on those lines.

When I went first in 1910 no crowds had come. Baba was mostly silent then. Very soon Bombay crowds began to pour upon Shirdi. The baba was being pressed into new habits and ways. Devotees to suit their own tastes forced numerous forms and observances on Baba and made him a mere man shining with the aid of the shows they arranged for him. His real greatness shone by itself without forms and rigid observances and pomp, and was shut out by these. These reduced Baba to earthly grandeur.

Baba spoke to me only a few words- but they were direct and plain words. He did not talk to me in parables. He began to amply parable in teaching the numerous people that flocked to him. There is a great deal of parallelism between Sri Sai of Shirdi and Akkalkote Maharaj and that can be found by reading he life of Akkalkote Maharaj. The latter also hardly ever spoke of *Advaitic* realization. He was a greater *Karmata*, (i.e., follower of rigid *Karmamarga*, the path of works) and insister on forms than Sai Baba. Baba was trying to push people just a few steps above their level.

Das Ganu told me that Baba referred to one Daji Maharaj, a saintly *grihastha* Brahmin, who lived at the village Dangar Takidi near Nanded (in Nizam's State) as "my brother." That Maharaj passed away in 1934. He was practising Gayatri *Purnascharan*. He said one day in 1914 at Dangar Takidi "Yesterday, Sai Baba came here in the form of *Maruti* and there was a great rumbling noise at his arrival."

My father and I are Maruti worshippers. I installed a new Maruti image and got a temple built land consecrated in 1918 at Ville Parle, Hanuman Street, I had to name the God,

and I called it Sai Hanuman, remembering that Sai was Hanuman. I gifted that temple by deed to my brother. The very day this temple was consecrated at Ville Parle, Baba gave, it seems, Rs.25 to a Brahmin named Vaze and made him perform Satya Narayan Puja at Shirdi. People connect these two events. When I was first visiting Shirdi, I was heterodox and could hardly be taken for a brāhmin. Regard for Samskaras grew on me. I never cared for *siddhis*. I seldom attended Baba's Chavadi procession even when I was at Shirdi.

I was desirous of getting Sanyas even before I got married. I actually got it only in 1931. But the way was being paved. My mother and wife are living; but I have no issue. Two children were born and they passed away after a few days of existence on this earth, one in 1900, the other in 1915. Brahmacharya is essential to *Sanyasa*. The fact that a wife is living in the house is no impediment to my Brahmacharya. If I look upon my mother like any other human being without special attachment, that is no hindrance to Sanyasa. The *Samskara* of going through sanyasa gave me a great impetus. Sai Baba never spoke to me (or so far as I remember, to anyone else) about the desirability, necessity or disadvantages of a life of Sanyasa. About changes of caste, *Ashrama*, Guru, methods of Sadhana, caste observances, etc., he had one and the same advice or prescription "Each must stick to his lot and get on."

Read over and found correct.)

The Guru after all is a medium, a means to realize your own self. He gives you a push and then you have to exert yourself and go higher and hold to your height. Sai Baba thus was a medium though one responsible for a considerable and momentous advance in my spiritual history. Before I went to Shirdi, one Vinayak Bhat Shadale (supported by the Kolhapur State) whom I met in 1900 and who had made me read bits of Yoga-Vashishta with zest was also a "medium" for me.

With one help at one time and a second at another, one has to go on steadily and realize the self.

## VI

21ST MAY, 1936.

Mrs. Manager, Holy city, says:

It is very difficult to describe Sai Baba and our experience of him, but one may talk about some things relating to him.

My daughter took ill when she was fifteen months old and I was sore distressed. Just then my brother-in-law came back from Shirdi and was sounding the high praise of Sai baba. I then said that if the child recovered, we should go with our child to Shirdi and pay our respects to Sai Baba. The child recovered and we went up to fulfil our vow.

One's first impression of Sai Baba was derived from his eyes. There was such power and penetration in his glance that none could continue to look at his eyes. One felt that Sai Baba was reading him, or her, through and through. Soon one lowered one's eyes and bowed down. One felt that He was not only in one's heart, but in every atom of one's body. A few words, a gesture would reveal to one that Sai Baba knew all about the past, present and even future and about everything else. There was nothing else to do for one, except to submit trustfully and to surrender oneself to Him. And there He was to look after every minute detail, and guide one safe through every turn and every vicissitude of life,. He was the Antaryami, call Him God or Satpurusha in Sahaja *Sthithi* or what you like. But the overpowering personality was there, and in his presence no doubts, no fears, no questioning had any place and one resigned oneself and found that was only course, the safest and best course. From one's first entry into his presence, one went on getting experience of His power, His all knowing and all pervasive personality. His protecting care that shielded one, wherever one went and at any time whatsoever.

I shall give some instances of his *Antryamitva* that I personally got or learnt of in the early days of my stay at Shirdi. Shirdi in those days was a neglected hamlet without any lighting, sweeping and other conveniences of civilization.



It had had some improvement since. But when I was there, the streets and passages were all dark and unlit at night. One night I was walking about. But suddenly and abruptly I stopped. There was no sound or sight to account for my stopping. For some unknown reason I felt I must stop and I did. A little time passed and a light was brought by some one and there Lo, and behold! At the very place where I was to have placed my foot at the next step, there was a serpent lying quiet. Of course, if I had put my foot, the consequences might have been very serious, if not fatal. The light showed what the danger was that I escaped. But I could not have guessed of its existence so near me by the use of my own powers, in the absence of the light. Why and how had I stopped so abruptly and how did the light come in so opportune a moment to show me the danger? The only answer is the all seeing and ever watchful power and protective grace of Sai Baba. He has saved this body of mine from death on many occasions. But these or some of these will be mentioned later on.

To take another instance. We used to go and sit near Sai Baba at his Mosque. Any one could go up at the usual time, without permission asked of or introduction taken to Sai Baba and bow before him and all there. On one occasion, as I was seated at a short distance from Sai Baba, there came a leper to the Mosque. His disease was far advanced. He was stinking and he had little strength left in him, so that it was with much difficulty and very slowly, he clambered up the three steps of the Mosque, moved on to the Dhuni (fire) and then to Sai Baba and placed his head on Baba's feet. It took so much time for him to take his *Darsana*, and I feeling the scrunch from him intensely, hoped he would clear off. At last when he got down slowly carrying a small parcel wrapped up in a dirty cloth. I felt relief and said within myself, "Thank God. He is off." Sai Baba at once darted a piercing glance at me, and I knew that he read my thought. Before the leper had gone far, Sai Baba called out and sent some one to fetch him back. The man came. It was again the slow process of his clambering up, emitting foul scrunch all the time; and as the man bowed to Baba, Baba picked up that parcel saying "What is this?" And opened it. It contained some "*pedas*", (i.e., milk sweets) and Sai Baba took up a piece and gave it to me alone

of all present and asked me to eat it. What horror! To eat up a thing brought by the stinking leper! But it was Sai Baba's order, and there was no option but to obey. So I ate it up. Sai Baba took another piece and himself swallowed it and then sent the man away with that remainder. Why he was recalled and I alone was the chosen recipient of his *peda*, none then understood. But I knew full well that Sai Baba had read my heart and was teaching me valuable lessons, (e.g., in humility, fraternity, sympathy, endurance and trust in His Supreme wisdom rather than in my own notions of hygiene and sanitation for saving me from disease).

When we had difficulties to get over, we never had to speak. We had merely to go and sit or stand in his presence. He at once knew what the matter was and gave a direction exactly meeting our requirements. We had our servant with us at Shirdi. He had acute pain in his lumbar region. My husband went to Sai Baba and was standing. Some others were also present before Sai Baba. Baba suddenly said "Hallo, my leg is paining. Great is the pain." Some one suggested that something should be done to relieve the pain. "Yes" said Baba If green leaves are heated and applied over it, it will go away". "What leaves, Baba?" was the query by some one. Baba said, "These green leaves near the Lendi" (i.e. steamlet.) One suggested one leaf and another a different leaf. One finally asked if it was Korphad. "Yes" Baba said, That is it. The leaf has to be brought, split into two, slightly heated over the fire and applied. That is all." At once, my husband knew that this was Baba's kind prescription for our servant. We fetched the leaf and applied it as directed; and the servant was relieved of his pain. Not only was he present at all places when his physical body was in one place, say the mosque, but he was also able to do various things with his invisible body.

My eyes have been giving me trouble constantly. On one occasion while I was at Shirdi, they were greatly paining me and water was freely flowing from them. In such a condition I went and sat up before Baba. He looked at me. My eyes ceased to pain and water. But his eyes were dropping tears. The accurate diagnosis of the disease at a glance was wondrous enough. Still more wondrous was his curing deep-seated organic disease abruptly and suddenly without any

visible application of remedy or treatment. Scientists or medical men may disbelieve this, But having actually experienced it in my own case and in that of others who came before Sai Baba, I cannot disbeliever such cases and what is most peculiar the drawing of diseases on to himself by pure will power.

This wonderful powers and especially this wonderful nature of Sri Sai Baba with his *Antaryamitva*, i.e., his being inside every creature and every object animate or inanimate so as to control all voluntary and involuntary movements of creatures and objects, throw light on what He occasionally said of him self “ I am not at Shirdi,” he would say, while he was at Shirdi, As was frequently said, he was not confined within the three cubits length of flesh, bone and blood that people called S Sai Baba. He was in every dog, cat, pig, man and woman. While we cannot shake off the idea that we are this physical sheath or the attachment we feel to things connected with it, he was ever free from such narrow ideas or attachments. He seemed to be in or to be the Oversoul, the Super-consciousness, *Sahaj samādhī* or *Jnanamaya Sharir* by whatever name we choose to refer to that higher state of his.

One noticeable difference between Sri Sai Baba and other saints struck me. I have moved with other notable saints also. I have seen them in high *samādhī* or trance condition entirely forgetting their body and course) effacing the narrow notion of the self confined to the body; and I have seen them later getting conscious for their surroundings, knowing what is in our hearts and replying to us. But with Sri Sai Baba, there was this peculiar feature, He had not to go into trance to achieve anything, or to reach any higher position or knowledge. He was every moment exercising a double consciousness, one actively utilizing the Ego called Sri Sai Baba and dealing with other Egos in temporal or spiritual affairs, and the other entirely superseding all Egos and resting in the position of the Universal Soul or Ego; he was exercising and manifesting all the powers and features incidental to both the states of consciousness. Other saints would forget their body and surroundings and then return to it. But Sri Sai Baba always was in and outside the material world. Others seemed to take pains and by effort to trace the contents of others minds and read their past history. But

with Sri Sai Baba this was not a matter of effort. He was in the all knowing state always. Sai Baba was one whom some people could not understand at all. He would talk, e.g., to a howker about some cloth brought for making *Cupnis*, higgie and haggie like the most inveterate shopper at a bazaar and beat down the price of the cloth, say from As .8 a yard to as.5 a yard and take, say, 40 yds. This mad the hasty onlooker conclude that Sai Baba was parsimonious, and avaricious or at any rate attached to wealth. A little later, he (i.e., Sai Baba) would pay the hawker, and the he would sometimes pay four times the price settled. Again the hasty onlooker would conclude that Baba was crazy, touched in the brain, or needlessly ostentatious in his misplaced charity. In both cases, the hasty judgements would be wide of the mark and the real reasons for Sai Baba's conduct would remain mysterious to all except those whom he meant to enlighten.

It is not merely his power that endeared him to his devotees. His loving care combined with those powers made Shirdi, a veritable paradise to the devotees who went there. Directly we went there, we felt safe, that nothing could hard us. When I went and sat in his presence. I always forget my pain nay the body itself with all mundane concerns and anxieties. Hours would pass and I would be in blissful unconsciousness of their passing. That was a unique experience shared. I believe, by, all his real devotees. He was all in all and the All of us. We never could think of his having limitations. Now that he has passed away, I feel what a terrible loss it is, as I can no longer pass hours together in blissful unconsciousness of time and affairs at his feet. We feel we have lost our soul; our bodies alone are let to us now. Yet it would not be true to say that he has altogether vanished. He is still living now and we have ample proof of his powers and protecting care in many matters of and on; thought the assurance we derive from these about his continuance can never compare with the bliss we felt in his presence when he was in the physical body. I shall proceed to give some instances of his active care for us and of the help he has rendered to us after dropping his physical sheath.

I was suffering for over a month during summer of 1915(?) with a splitting neuralgic headache; we were at *Panchgani*, a sanatorium and we tried a number of remedies. It

was all to no purpose. I felt I must die, With that feeling, I resolved to go to Shirdi, so that I may have the privilege of dying at Baba's feet.; and inspite of some objections raised by my husband at first, we moved on to Kopergaon and came to the river Godavari which we had to cross. It struck me at once that I should bathe in the holy river as anyhow I was going to die soon. A cold bath might increase my pain and accelerate death. Well, so much the better, I had my bath, Well? Judge of our surprise! He bath over, I came out and the headache instead of getting aggravated, left me at once and for ever. That long standing scourge left me for good by that bath, even though a cold bath when the headache was on was previously totally impracticable and a terror to me. This cure was surely due to Sri Sai.

In 1927, when I was six months with child, we (i.e., our whole family started for Shirdi; shortly thereafter my child died in the womb, and no delivery followed for days. My features were getting blue. I was clearly having blood poisoned. There was no medical help or midwife at Shirdi; we, however, got some medicines from Ahmednagar. They were of no avail. My husband went to Sakori and prayed to Sri upasani Baba to help me. The latter merely said "You have the best doctor and best nurse there, (meaning of course, Sri Sai Baba). Why do you come to me." The Child remained for days dead in my womb and I was unconscious. What happened thereafter and how I delivered, I do not remember. But my husband told me (Mrs. Manager confirms this) that in my unconscious state, I was speaking and giving directions as to what steps were to be taken besides applying Udhi and *Tirth* of Sri Sai Baba. These directions were followed and every thing inside was expelled (especially later on through glandular swellings). Yet, for one more month I continued unconscious and at last recovered full consciousness and health. This was a clear case of Sri Sai Baba's help (to save my life) nine years after he entered into *Maha samādhi*.

Sri Sai Baba's qualities shine out of his own conduct and his virtues are worthy of mention. His kindness would be amply borne out by the incidents already mentioned. Many

other incidents known to and experienced by all who came to him can be mentioned which show that it extended far beyond Shirdi thousands of miles away even to Europe, when his devotees were facing danger in the Great War in 1914-19. But he was also just and Impartial, while he was kind. If the occasion called for it, he said, one should sacrifice one's own child. His serene impartiality knew no difference between the king and a beggar. All were equal in his eyes. He was never obsequious to the rich and high placed, nor supercilious and contemptuous to the lowly. Revenue Commissioners and Collectors have called to see him and lower officials in numbers, e.g., D. Os, D.C.s, Mamlatdars, etc. But wealth and position were no special grounds of preference or differential treatment with them. His accessibility to all and at all hours practically was a remarkable feature of his. "My Durbar is always open." He used to say "at all hours." He had nothing to fear from scrutiny, and nothing shameful to conceal. All his actions were open and above board.

Another distinguishing feature of his life was Freedom from care and anxiety. He had no interests to save or protect, no institution to seek support for or maintain; no acquisitions to safeguard; no private property to feel anxious about. Every thing got was quickly disposed of. He lived on the begged and freely offered food. He daily collected Dakshina of that a further detail may be given later on. But he spent it freely and liberally. During the last nine years or so of his life, he was daily giving Rs. 110 away to Tatyā and Bādē Bābā. Each day's earning were depleted in no time. And when he died, he left in his pocket just the amount needed to cover his funeral expenses. His self control and equanimity may be mentioned in this connection. He was far too lofty to care for trivial things. His palate, like his other senses, was so strictly under his control that none ever found him show any trace of desire for any thing, so far as I know.

His generosity may next be mentioned. Besides Rs.110 daily paid to some, he would scatter money and gifts. Some would say it was Rs. 300 daily fancying that untruth or exaggeration is needed to set out Bābā's glory. But his greatness needed no such untruth or exaggeration to set it off. A few actual facts would suffice to establish his greatness beyond question. Coming to the question of his generosity, we

may state what we have seen Bhajan parties (Hindus) and Fakirs would come and would be liberally supplied.

His methods of imparting spiritual benefit and his religious ideas were hardly brought to other's notice. He would speak of God as any other religious and pious man might i.e., rarely, and with feeling. His religious practice was hardly noticeable. He would sit in the mornings near his Dhuni i.e., God.

Purity, Strength, Regularity and self denial one noticed about him always. He would always beg his food. Even during his illness, he never lay bedridden, but would get up and go round to beg his food. He would beg for food, only in the accustomed quarters and to a limited extent. And out of his begged food, he ate only a little and the rest he would give away.

There may be some who complain that even the ordinary talk of Sai Baba was meaningless jargon. So it was not doubt to them and was intended to be that. "*Jaya Mani Jaisa Bhav, Taya Taisa Anubhav.*" But those who were intended to be benefited by that talk would find their full and vast significance. He did not want comforts to be provided for him. When the Mosque was sought to be repaired. It was first a rumbling old dirty dilapidated building badly needing repairs, he objected and put it off. It was by the devotees insistence and by their conducting the repairs at night when he was sleeping in the Chavadi, that the reconstruction was pushed through.

Besides Upasani Maharaj, we met many noteworthy persons at Shirdi, Radhakrishna Ayi, a Brahmin widow, was looking after the requirements of Sri Sai Baba's Arati, etc. She ordered people to get things and was held in great respect; when we wen there in 1915 or so, Sri Sai Baba told us to go to Ayi, and we went to her for accommodation. But Ayi gave it one the strict condition that I should do all the manual labour she might ask of me, I agreed and did the work as required. Ayi related the history of my past life and had wonderful powers of thought reading and clairvoyance. When some unusual order came from Baba that such and

such a dish was wanted, she would keep it ready and supply it at once. When some message came for me, she read off my mind the reply I wanted to give and gave the reply herself. She was deeply devoted to Sri Sai Baba, and rendered great service to his Sansthan. Yet it must be admitted that Sai had a very sharp tongue and many found her uncompanionable. But Sri Sai Baba put us there to develop our power of endurance, perhaps.

Sri Sai Baba's methods of giving spiritual help to visitors were not usual once. There was no Upadesh Mantra given. He never talked of Yoga, *Pranayam* and *Kundalini*. But when anything went wrong to one pursuing some *Marga*., he would come to Sri Sai Baba and would be helped. There was a man who had practised *Asan* and *Pranayam* and the poor man's system broke down. He was passing blood in his motions. So he came to Sri Sai Baba and stayed. After a while his health was restored during his stay at Shirdi.

## VII

### 4MAY, 1936, POONA

Raguvir B.Purandhare, S/oh Bhaskar Purandhare, aged 60, Brahmin, Deshasth Shukla Yajur Vedi (Kelva Mahim, Thana Dist-originally) now at Bandra, Retired clerk of G.I.P. Rly Sainath Ashram, 59-B, Perry Road, Bandra, states:

I heard first of Sai Baba in 1909 and went to see him. I was always desirous of association with Sadhus - saintly people. I heard he was a Saint, so I felt attracted to him. He appeared in my dream and called me to Shirdi. At that time my elder daughter (then aged six months) was very ill and so my mother objected to my going. I still persisted in going to Shirdi and I took my wife, that child and my mother with me to Shirdi. I remained there (first visit) for thirteen days. On the third day of my visit, the child got alright. Baba did not permit me to go back till the thirteenth day. I did not ask him about any matter. He told my mother that for seven centuries, he (Sai Baba) was connected with me. **"I will not forget him - I will always remember him even if he is away more than 2000 miles. I will not eat even a bit without him,"** said Baba.



Then I started away to Nasik with his permission. We went back to Dadar where I was living. My wife got an attack of cholera and the doctor gave her up as hopeless. I gave Baba's *Udhi* and *Tirtha* to her. I saw Baba at the side of the Datta Mandir in front of my Dadar house and he ordered me to give the *Udhi* and *Tirtha* and so I gave her the *udhi* and *Tirtha*. Half an hour later, she had recovered sufficient warmth and the doctor felt hopeful of her recovery and she recovered. Since then I visited Baba very often and stayed long periods at Shirdi in obedience to Baba's order. Baba would occasionally ask Mr.H.S.Dixit to write to me to go over. I have visited Baba often with Dixit.

I went with no worldly motives, though I was very poor; I was an orphan. He told me to continue my previous *Upasana*. I was and am fond of worshipping Vishnu and of prayers. I continued the same. He asked me several times for Rs.2 only. Once I asked him what for he asked always for Rs.2. He then said **"It is not these Rupees I want. I want *Nishta*, i.e., concentrated faith and Saburi (patience)."** I replied I had given these - faith in him and was patiently awaiting progress. He told me to keep up *Nishta* and to be strict truth always with you. Then I will be always with you wherever you are and at all times." I promised to try my best and wanted his help for controlling my mind. "Please get that done by me" I told him. He agreed. All this was at my very first visit. He then told me to buy my own house. I had only Rs. 35 salary. By his grace, in three years time I got the house. At once as soon as he said "Buy". I purchased a plot and began to build and in three years, the building was finished at Bandra wherein I am still living. "Do not ask for a single pie from anyone. I will help you myself." I was slow at first in building. He threw stones at me for my delay. Nana Saheb Chandorkar and H. S. Dixit offered to build it for me. But Baba would not permit it. I then took a loan from my office of Rs. 500 and the built it. It was a lonely building in a field. Baba said that he was sitting himself there and guarding me and my young wife. So I stayed on. I lost my wife in 1920.

He often insisted on my adherence to truth. I am now joint treasurer of Baba's Sansthan. After Baba's demise, he would appear to me and order me to go and stay at Shirdi

and attend to duties, relating to Sansthan. I see and recognize his control over me in all details of what I have to do and am doing.

He directed me to cooperate with Kaka Saheb Dixit (i.e., H.S.Dixit) and told Kaka Saheb to cooperate with me. We two acted together as intimates.

He never talked to me of *Dhyana*. He never asked anybody to pray to him only. "Continue your usual prayers, be it to *Shanker* or to Vishnu," he said. He used to give Darshan to the devotee in that form. e.g., S or V. or Goddess, whichever the devotee adored.

About 1913- My mother was long pressing me to go to Pandharpur. I did not mention the matter to Baba to get the necessary permission. Baba himself broached the subject of going to Pandharpur and asked her when she was hoping to start. Then Baba gave my wife and mother *Darshan* of himself as Vithoba and Rukmai, at Shirdi Masjid. They were highly pleased and did not want to go to Pandharpur. He often asked her afterwards when she would go to Pandharpur. She always replied thereafter that her God was there at Shirdi which was her Pandharpur\*. When my wife was ill once before her delivery, Baba appeared in a dream and applied udhi and she got up and cried, "Baba is come and applying *Udhi* fresh and hot from the *Dhuni*. My body is burning. So get up." She got alright. Like this, Baba has appeared several times.

When in great difficulty, I always cried before his picture at home and he would then appear before me at once and comfort me. Nana SC told me of Baba's sending a man with Udhi to help his daughter in her delivery in ill health at jamner; that a tongawalla and horses not sent by him fetched the messenger and disappeared. That messenger is a Ramgir Gosavi still alive at Shirdi. Baba used to call him Babugir. Nana's two sons, Babu and Bapu, are at Kalyan in Chandorkar wada, Kalyan." A daughter of his is living at Poona. Nana was proud of his Sanskrit knowledge. Sai Baba asked

him to explain tadviddha pranipatena etc., and he did. Baba corrected him and explained it better. This is mentioned in (Satcharitra) 2ch. on that matter: Ch.31,32, &33. of “Bhakta Lilamrit” by D.G. and I Ch. in “Santa Katamrit” by D.G: deal with Sai Baba and “Bhavartha Deepika” by Dabholkar.

Sri Sai never talked in my presence about *Adwaita*, etc. He said always **“Allah will protect,” “God protects us all the poor,** etc.” Garibko Alla balid hai, Alla accha karega. He never said in my presence that He (Sai) is in all. But he often identified himself with God.

He said Jo koye yemasajidme aave, jiska masajidahe payi laga. uska bedha par hai. whoever steps into the Masjid, reached his goal. Jaisi jiski niyath, vaiyasi uska barkat If you act in a good way good really will follow.”

I do not remember his talking of Pranayama, Kundalini, etc., and I never cared for these. N.S.Chandorkar said Baba knew Sanskrit. Baba took up Bhagavata etc., and pointed out passages to people as specially suitable for them. This supports N.S.C.

Babā's foreknowledge of his own death:

Two years before 1918 Dusserah, i.e., Dusserah of 1916, Baba burnt all his kupny, *langote* and kerchief which he took off saying **“This is my *Simollangan*”** simollanghan People make *Shami* worship and present *Shami* leaves to each other and cross their frontier, as though they were having a successful raid on that day. When people asked him why he burnt out his clothes on this special holiday, he said “This is my *Simolanghan*” i.e., crossing the border. Two

hours later, he wore new cloths, Kupni, *langotee* and headkerchief just as all people wear new clothes on that day. He remained two hours naked after burning the clothes he wore and was fierce. People forced him to wear these new clothes then, which were always ready by the dozen.

Baba told Ramachandra Dada Patel (who was ill then) that Tatya Patel the head of his family 'would go away on this day, after two years'. Two years after that, Tatya was seriously ill. Baba also was ill for a week before Dusserah; Baba gave up the body and Tatya recovered. So people say that Baba gave up his own life to save Tatya's i.e., in exchange of Tatya's. Such examples we find in the lives of other saints. Even now Baba is saving life. Here is an instance.

In 1932 - I was hopelessly ill of Sciatica and Rheumatism. I then saw *Yama's dutas* near me. But Sai Baba came up, sat on my bed, took my hand on his knee and prevented *Yamadutas* touching me or my bed. I was saved.

I was very passionate, i.e., hot tempered. He told me often **"If anybody comes and abuses you or punishes you, do not quarrel with him. If you cannot endure it, speak a simple word or two or else go away from the place. But do not battle with him and behave like that. Isaka vada bahi (barobari) karana nai. I feel sick and disgusted when you quarrel with others."** He said this to me and to others also several times.

Twelve or fifteen days before SaiBaba's death, he drove away myself and Dixit to Bombay. He told us, **"I will go further and you follow me."** He gave us permission to go, at the Masjid saying, **"My Turbat (Tomb) will speak; My name also will speak, My mutti, i.e., clay will give you replies"** and told us to clear away. We went away in a bullock cart. He had no disease at the time and we did not expect his death then. He had spoken these words previously and we did not understand their import or importance. Baba never talked in my presence of the goal of life or about Mukti, or *Swarga* or Paradise. He said once **"I will take my kaka in vimana."**

In 1926 on an Ekadasi in perfect peace and talking of Baba, Kaka Dixit suddenly expired. Baba has often said to me and to others. **"He who is mine, even if he dies 1000 miles off, I will drag him to myself just as we draw a sparrow with a thread"** and to many people he said **"I will not allow my man**

**to get away from me**". I saw some devotees dying at Shirdi on Ekadasi. They must have got *Swarg* thus. Baba did not, to my knowledge describe *kylash*, *Vykuntha*, *Swarga* or *Moksha*.

In 1914-16 or so, Baba was asked by a lady "When will I get a good birth?" changal divas kevaha ye illu.

Baba: Dusara janm changal ye iil - **"In your next birth"** Next day, she jumped into a well to end her life but was saved. He occasionally foretold the future. I never asked about my own future. "Taking in *Vimana*" means *Sadgati*.

Baba advised one Sagun Meru Naik to put some ghee on the rice and place the rice with ghee in the *Dhuni*(fire) as an offering and then bring the rest to him. This was in his (Sai Babá's) lifetime. Ever since then, S.M.N is doing this. Baba ate that food. That food was brought from his own house. Previous to that, his Naivedya had no ghee. The Naivedya is still continued by that man. (I have not seen Baba eating animal food). He told Fakirs to utter *Fatya* when Moslems made offerings.

Once he asked me to give him all the old copper coins I had. I gave him all I had. I don't know what he did with them. He had old coins tied neatly in a cloth (so as not to make any jingling noise) and kept them in his side pockets. He asked me for *Dakshina*. I gave up everything. Once I thought I had nothing left of all my coins. Then Baba said, **"you have still a two anna piece in you pocket. See"** I saw and found it and gave him that also. He used to completely exhaust the finances of many in this way. I do not know with what object he did that. Some people asked him why he wanted so much money. Baba replied **"I am not asking of every one. I ask only from the man whom the Fakir (God) points out. But in exchange, I have to give that man ten times the money for my own use. I have no family etc."** He used to give the money freely to all people, singers, *tamashi*, Fakirs etc. He used to bring lots of fuel for his *Dhunimayi* mother fire at the *Dwarkamayi*.

The tulasi grove (Brindavan) at the mosque was put up after 1909-1911 or 1912. We all helped in that. The *Mantap* (or tin shed) in front of the Masjid was put up in 1912. G.S.Khaparde explained *Panchadashi*, etc., in Sathe's

wada. Upasani Baba also attended there. I never attended, as I was busy with works always. Balvant Ramachandra Noolkar was a retired Sub Judge. He came, lived and died at Shirdi.

Sai Baba was seriously ill in 1915. He had Asthma. He would not eat anything then. He was breathing hard; I cried. Baba asked me **“Why cry?”** I said “I cannot see this state of yours. Baba said, **“Don’t fear. In two or four days I will be alright, Allah has given me this sickness and he will make me alright, within that period. You need not cry. I remembering you the last two or three days and told Kaka to write to you to come.”** Kaka did not write. Sai Baba said **“Do not write, he is coming himself”**. Infact, some how I went up during his illness, not knowing he was ill. He never took medicines for his illness as a rule. Even during his illness, he was supported and carried by the devotees to his begging place. There he would beg and come back and yet not eat the food. He carried on his usual routine of begging, lending, etc., even during all that illness. One day, during his illness, he climbed up the terrace of one house through a staircase, then went over to the next house terrace and over Radhakrishna’s. Then a man lifted him up and brought him down to the ground and that man was paid by Baba, 3 or 4 rupees. Baba then said. **“We must not get the labour of anyone for nothing.”** I saw all this. An ambulance chair was then brought for him, but he never used it. Malegaonkar Fakir Baba (called Bade Baba, Bade Mia by Sai Baba) was getting most moneys.

In 1920 when my wife was seriously ill of influenza, she felt sorry, she could not attend the *Urs* Ramanavami. That night Sai Baba appeared in her dream and said **“Do not cry. I will take you for the *Urs*.”** She got slightly better next morning and narrated this to me. Illness still continued and she expired on Ramanavami Crying “Baba, Baba” to the last. On the Ramanavami flag processions; 10 A.M., 12 Noon; Hindi Kirtan of Ram *Janma* begins after the procession ends and flags are hoisted. Then Moslems begin reading their quaran. They would take Sai Baba’s sandals and go round with it in procession. We, Hindus, would accompany it. They would accompany our flag procession, so in the Arati it is recited that Sai Baba has taken birth to obliterate the difference between

Hindus and Mohammedans Yavanaswarupi etc., I saw he had a hole in his ear and when he bathed naked, he had no been circumcised, so far as I could see. Megha worshipped Sai Baba as “Shanker” standing on one leg. Sai Baba told him in a dream to draw the figure of a *Trisul* on the wall of Sathe’s Wada in which Megha lived. Megha did so. A *lingam* was added soon after and is still there, with Sai Baba’s permission and was worshipped by Megha.

Megha narrated an incident that he wanted to give Sai Baba a *Gangasnan*, i.e., a bath in the water of Ganges (Godavari). But Baba said, **“Wet this head only. Head is the chief. Put a little water on it.”** But Megha went to Godavari at Kopergoan and brought a tubful of water and poured it all over Sai Baba’s body. However only the head was wetted. Even the clothes were not wetted. I did not see this, I have heard Sai Baba sing a song once or twice. He would gladly hear people sing to him.

Occasionally, what Sai Baba talked to us, would be found when we went at once to hear *Pothi*, i.e., the reading of sacred works at Sathe’s wada where Bapu Jog read Eknathi Bhagavat. I had several experiences of the sort. I cannot remember details of even one instance.

### 5TH MAY, 1936.

Baba used to be near the Dhuni, early morning facing south, leaning on a post and doing something. I cannot say what, People were not allowed to go near, i.e, even 50 feet. The *Sevakaries* could carry on their usual service or work of clearing, replenishing fuel for Dhuni, etc. No others could go so near as they. He used to utter words like *Yade Haq*. They were seldom clear or audible to us at some distance. *Allah Malik, Allah Vali Hai*, i.e., God is the Master and Protector, he used to say often and at all times.

I once got leave from the office at Bandra and from my mother to go. The next evening I had to start for Shirdi. But during the night, Sai Baba appeared to me in my dream and said, **“Don’t come,”** I wondered why. The morning after I was to have left, there was a strike in the workshop. If I had left overnight as I first proposed my officers would have suspected me to be at the bottom of the strike and I would be in

trouble. Sai Baba saved me from that.

Yashwantrao, grandson of Raghunath Mukund, Engineer, went with me to Sai Baba in 1911 or 1912 at Ashad Guru Purnima when cholera was raging in Shirdi. He did not wish to return before I did. But Baba told him to go and gave him his *udhi*. But he did not wish to start. He stayed on though I also told him to go since he had leave of Baba. That night he had an attack of cholera to which he succumbed at Shirdi the next morning. Sai Baba went to Megha, when the later was dying, shed tears there and covered the corpse with flowers and went to the funeral ground where Megha's corpse was burnt. Megha lay ill for two or three days before death. Baba used to give him *Udhi* then.

Once Sai Baba prevented me from going away to Bombay even after 4.30 P.M. The last train at Kopergoan for Manmad would leave at 6.30 P.M. It was a Bazaar day (Monday) I got a bullock cart. Baba told Rege to go with me. We reached the river at 6.45 P.M. and reached the Kopergaon station at about 7.45 P.M. The train had gone away. There was a special train, however, running that night which stopped at 8.15 P.M. at Kopergaon and took us to Manmad and thence we reached our homes. There were no trains to Manmad from Kopergoan at night, i.e., after 6.30 P.M. in those days.

On the very first occasion of my seeing Baba, he told me to go to "*Sala*". Mr. Dixit explained to me that "*Sala*" was the residence of Radhakrishna Ayi. I went there. She did not open the door, but inquired from within who I was, etc. I replied. But she would not let me in. After waiting for about ten minutes, I went to the Masjid. Baba asked me if I went to "*Sala*". I said I did but had been kept outside the bolted door by Ayi. Baba told me to go again, I obeyed. This time Ayi opened the door, fell at my feet, held my feet fast and was crying. I was greatly puzzled, as I had not know her nature. But from that day forward, she loved me up to her death, with a deep motherly love. Thenceforward, she was all in all to me. I spent every minute of my time at Shirdi in service to Sai Baba, in accordance with the directions of Ayi. She made me work hard all day long for Baba, mostly at her residence, often at Masjid and elsewhere. Radhakrishna Ayi was a per-



sonality of a strange sort. She would sing charmingly and with deep emotion. Suddenly, she would break into laughter or melt into tears and either continue slowly with choked voice or stop the song altogether by her sobs.

Often Baba detained me at Shirdi, even after my leave expired. In 1912, e.g., he thus detained me. When Syama or anyone mentioned that I had to go back lest my boss should find fault with me, Baba would reply **“I am his boss”** and keep me on. Thus in that year after long overstaying my leave, I returned and went at 1 P.M. on a Thursday to the office. The foreman of the shop called upon me to explain and reported about my absence without leave. I handed him my resignation. My officer, Mr. Wilson, the Deputy Superintendent, sent for me and asked me where I had been. I said I was at Shirdi. He knew everything, tore my resignation paper and put it into the waste paper basket. The foreman was discontented but was powerless to do any harm. The chief told the foreman that I was not his, i.e., the foreman’s servant or subordinate. In six months time I was promoted and that foreman became my subordinate.

## VII

### 17TH OCTOBER, 1936.

Rao Saheb Yeshwant Janardan Galwankar, B.A., Brahmin, Landholder and Superintendent, Home department, Secretariat, Bombay, aged 51, living at Turner Road, Bandra (Bombay 20), says.

I visited Sai Baba in 1911 first. I went because my father in law. Mr. Dabholkar and other relations, went to Baba. I had heard of his saintliness but was not very serious personally to benefit by the visit either temporally or spiritually. I went thus four or five times. But gradually my interest increased. He appeared in my dream and asked for Rs.2 dakshina. When I woke up, I resolved to send it and I sent Rs.2 M.O. to Baba at Shirdi. In that dream, he gave me two valuable directions, first, nekinembe vaga i.e., behave with probity and integrity; secondly, be chaste, be sexually pure. I have followed these directions with great care and zeal. Then on

one occasion, it was perhaps 1917, when I went to Shirdi, he placed his palm over my head and that had a strange effect on me. I forgot myself and all surroundings and passed into an ecstatic condition. Then, it seems, Baba was telling others present (as I was told afterwards) that I was a soul characterized by integrity and purity, that I went through certain forms, states and conditions in my previous births (which he described), that he place me in my present mother's womb in this birth and that I had still retained my integrity and purity.

I went him during my Christmas or other vacations. He never made me overstay my leave. I have full faith in him. He has, however, given me neither Adwaitic self realisation nor any other teaching on ethical or religious matters except what I have stated already. I have however, heard him say at one of my visits to Shirdi i.e., Me satte teen hath dehamadhye naahi sarv tikani aahe sarv ttikani malashahath ja, **"I am not (confined) within this body of 31/2 cubits height, I am everywhere. See me in every place."** I believe that all my studies are directed by him, and I go on studying Gita, Bhagavat, i.e., *Ekadashaskandha* of Ekanath. But I was not directed by him to study them, in the way in which he directed Jog, H.S.Dixit, etc., I am sorry I made so little use of him, to get into contact with him before he attained Mahasamadhi. I was much younger and, therefore, not so serious minded then as I am now. I found also few among those who approached him, fit enough to take to self realisation. Hardly any soared so high. Even up to other spiritual and levels few soared.

As for dakshinas, when I went to him first, I started from my lodgings to go to his Mosque. But on the way I recollected that he would ask for dakshina. So I went back and took Rs.2, in order that I might pay it to him. When I paid him the Rs.2, and he did not ask me for more. I was glad to note his *Antarjnana* of my intention and preparation to pay him Rs.2, and his kindness in accepting that amount. Baba has been kind to me. I am perfectly content to continue in the state in which I am placed. Sayirakhaga vahisa hi rahaina,

(Some years back) in 1921, perhaps, I started with my

family to Prayag and Kashi. At Prayag, I was taken to all holy spots. At Bharadwajashrama, my heart was touched and I prayed to Sai Baba to give me the sight of some Sant. I had told my guide also, that besides seeing holy spots, I was anxious to see holy *Sants*. Within a few minutes after we left Bharadwaja's Ashram, the guide stopped our *Tongas* and pointed to a venerable Saint, Whose beard descending swept his aged breast The guide stated that rarely, once in some years or so, that Saint would visit Prayag, that his Saintliness was widely known, that he would not allow people to approach him and that he would accept no money. Seeing him, so soon after my prayer for the sight of a Saint, my heart was all aglow and I went near enough to him, despite my guide's protests. The Sant far from being angry, welcomed me with arms raised by way of blessing and said "come, Child." My wife, mother and other ladies also approached despite my guide's objections. They too were well received and blessed by him. Then I besought myself what gifts I should give. I had no flower, fruit or eatable with me. I found three *annas* in my pocket and gave it to him. Much to the surprise of my guide and contrary to his custom, he received the *annas*, looked at the coins with a pleased countenance and pocketed them. I felt that it was Sai Baba that gave me this welcome and accepted dakshina.

Since I got ecstasy by Baba's blessing, I began to pay more attention to *Adhyatma*, i.e., spiritual side of my existence. Then came the second stage in 1932. I had a dream then. Baba came to me in that dream and asked me, "What do you want?" I replied. "I want to get *Prem* i.e., love, that and that alone." Baba blessed me with *prem* and disappeared. Ever since then, I have had spells of *Prem* gushing through me sometimes while I meditate, sometimes while I am reading etc.

## IX

### 5TH NOVEMBER, 1936, SHIRDI

Abdhulliah Jan, originally of Tarbella, Hazara District, near Peshawar, Mauhammadan, Pathan, living for years at Korhale near Sakori, aged 40, says.

I had left Tarbella when I was quite a boy. I had none

to support me. I wished to go abroad and see Mecca, etc. So I travelled down south upto Manmad. From there some one who took interest in me said that I could easily go to Bombay and, then to Mecca, etc. But I was informed (in 1913 when I was at Haripur on the way to Manmad) that Sai baba was a grate person at Shirdi who was liberally showering moneys on fakirs and would send me to Mecca, if I wanted. So I went to Shirdi. As I entered the gate of Masjid, Baba was in the main building. I looked at Him and He at me. Our eyes met. At once I felt that Sai was indeed my Guru. I stayed on at Shirdi. He fed me and other fakirs abundantly and I resolved to stay on and lead an easy life at Shirdi with him. This was in 1913. I was not taking a serious view of life then, because I was so young. My stay with Baba brought about some changes in my mentality. When I came to Shirdi, I regarded Hindus as enemies of mine. After remaining about three years with Baba, this feeling of animist passed away and I was viewing Hindus as my brethren. Now, for instance, I see with regret that at Bombay, Hindus wish to destroy Moslems and their Mosques, and Moslems wish to destroy Hindus and their temples. If both succeed in wiping out each other they will only make room for persons of other faiths to establish themselves in the place of these two.

Baba passed away when I was aged 22 and so did not benefit me on the religious side in any appreciable way. I was feeling disappointed and I set out on my travels. In 1926, I was going back north. There in the Swat Valley (Malekhand Agency), I found the tomb of a great Saint, Akun Baba who was Sayyad or direct descendant of Mohammed. It is reported of him that when Lord Roberts was advancing westwards with a view to quell the Moslem tribes there, he felt that he could not move one foot further. It is said that Akun Baba, by his magical power, locked up Lord Roberts in a hill for 3 months and 11 days and Lord Roberts communicated to Queen Victoria (the British Government) this predicament of his. Akun Baba's powers were widely talked of in those days and I lay down one night near his tomb praying that he might be pleased to take me under his wings and help me as Sai Baba had not given me help. During the night, I had a dream wherein I saw not Akun Baba But Sai Baba. Sai Baba was seated on a chair near my head, as I lay there. Baba did not

peak. When I woke, I recollected his dream or vision and found that I was still under Sai Baba's care. I had not addressed him-but only addressed Akun Baba, when I went to sleep there. Yet he, Sai Baba, was kind enough to come to me of his own accord, (to help me) in Swat Valley, 1,500 miles off Shirdi. My idea that SaiBaba had deceived me by giving me no help during the five years I was with him at Shirdi was evidently not right. I got more faith in Baba from the time of that dream or vision in the Swat Valley. I returned back to this side and I have full faith in him now. (I am married since 1924 and live with my family at Koshale, four miles from here). Baba appears before me once in two or four years. I moralise on the past sometimes and see the vanity of my poor existence. Baba was surrounded by crowds in his lifetime and it was hard to find room in the Mosque on account of these crowds. What a number of dogs, etc., were swarming round him! Now there are very few men and hardly any dogs to be seen at the Mosque which is as a rule deserted. If Baba's splendour was so short lived and if it faded away so quickly, what of me, a poor gnat?

I have heard of or seen no "Rohillas" staying with Baba. But I have known and heard of some intolerant Pathans who came to him. The late Baba Saheb, i.e., R.A.Tarkhad, told me of an incident in his life. He was sleeping on night at the Chavadi by the side of Baba. One MirJaman of Kandahar was then with Baba as a recent visitor. Suddenly, one night, at about 3 A.M. Mir Jaman got up and told Baba that the Hindus were spoiling him, and Mohammedan faith, and asked Baba if he would permit him, i.e., Mir Jaman, to take the sword and strike away at the throats of all the Hindus there and effect Baba's release. R.A. Tarkhad listened with fear and wondered if the wretch meant really to murder him in cold blood. Sai Baba, however, placated Mir Jaman by saying that he (Baba) was *pagal*, i.e., mad and the Hindus worshipping him there were mad, that he was responsible for their worshipping him (contrary to the custom and tents of the Islami faith) and not they for his mad state, and that it was his throat that should be cut by Mir Jaman, if he wanted to cut any throats and not theirs. Thereafter, Mir Jaman kept quiet.

There was another intolerant Moslem named Abdullah

Khan of Nagpur, who stayed sometime (three or four months) with Baba. He was a journalist and familiar with Buty, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. He was a Hindustani *pathan* and not a Rohilla. He died at Ahmednagar. During his stay at Shirdi, he was occasionally complaining that Baba had deceived him. Once this man beat Nana Chopdar and was charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate. He was convicted and fined. He had no money to pay the fine of Rs.15 and no security to offer and so was in jail for a while. Then Buty sent him Rs.15. It seems that he declined it saying, that “he that deceived me should pay the Rs.15 and no others.” Then Baba sent Rs.15 out on his own pocket and got him released. I learnt that this man once told Baba, “I see that you are violating the principles of Islam by what goes on here and that your throat should be cut”. At that, it seems, Baba laughed and then the man begged pardon of Baba, at which again Baba laughed.

When Baba was alive, I heard him say to someone who feared that Baba would pass away and with him all his work and influence Hunadande haninn which is Mahratti for “From within the tomb I will beat with sticks.” i.e., that death of his body will not terminate his influence or activity.

## X

### 20TH OCTOBER, 1936.

Chakra Narayana, Christian, aged about 50, Reader to Police Deputy Superintendent, Thana says:

I was Police Fouzdar at Kopergaon when Baba passed away (October 1918). I was not a believer in Baba. We were watching Baba through our men. Even though I watched him sceptically, the result was to create in me a high regard for him. First and foremost was the fact that he was not moved by women or wealth. Many women would come to him and place their heads on his feet and sit before him. But he was unmoved; he would not care to cast one glance of admiration, or of lust at them. He was clearly and unmistakably unattached. About money also, we watched him. People voluntarily gave him money. If any did not give him money, Baba would not curse or hate or be displeased with him. The

same held good about his begging for bread. He did not care for what he got. Whatever he got, he scattered with a liberal hand. When he died, we took possession of his cash; that was only Rs.16. Yet daily he was paying or giving away hundreds of rupees. Often we noticed that his receipts were smaller than his disbursements. Wherefrom came the excess for him to disburse or pay? We could not make out. This made me conclude that he had divine powers.

Again his behaviour towards all religions was noble. He would never decry or depreciate any religion or person belonging to any caste, groups or position. When I went there, he was told that the Fouzdar was a Christian. "What of that?" was his reply. "He is my brother". His powers were marvellous. A Police Officer went to him; Baba asked him for dakshina. The Officer replied that he had nothing. Baba then said, "See your purse. There is a fifty rupee note in it." The note was then produced and offered to Baba. But Baba wanted only a small amount out of it and told him to keep the balance, as he would soon be in trouble and need it. So indeed it happened. Soon after this visit, the Officer got into trouble and had to use that balance to extricate himself. After thus escaping from the trouble, the grateful officer sent the balance to Shirdi.

I helped at the time when Baba's properties were attached at his death. Statements were taken from the public as to the disposal of the property and the Mamlatdar Magistrate issued orders based upon the statements. This saved much trouble to the Sansthan. Baba's Udhi has cured many cases of illness.

## XI

### 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1936, BANDRA

Joseph Fouzdar, Retire Fouzdar, Christian, 46, Turner Road, Bandra, says:

I never went to Shirdi. But from friends here I heard of him and I have his picture here with me. I do not worship the picture or Sai baba. I regard him as a Saint. He had great power.

In 1917, Norvekar (Gajanan) was ill. His son took Rs.

500 and paid it to Baba. Baba on receiving it began to quiver with fever. When asked for an explanation. Baba said, **“When we want to do anything for others we have to take on ourselves burdens and responsibilities.”** Then shortly thereafter Gajanan Norvekar was cured of his fever.

Once I had a very difficult criminal case to detect. I prayed for help. Sai Baba came to me in a dream and gave me directions how I was to proceed. I acted on that and was successful in my detection. In 1916, there were two terrible pathan decoits. I and my sepoy tried to catch them. My sepoy was killed by the Pathan. I was wounded myself and went to the Hospital. This was in a way foretold by Baba. He appeared in my dream the previous night and showed me that two people held and dragged me and took me to a wedding.

I get my help and inspiration and great relief from my Patron Saint, St. Francis Xavier. Baba occasionally helps me.

## XII

**15TH DECEMBER, 1936.**

Dadaji Gopinath Joshi, Ram Maruti Road, Dadar, says;

I went to Shirdi in 1932. My son aged 12 months, had small-pox and fever. The illness was serious. Udhi and Tirtha were applied. Without any medicine, the boy was restored to health. I vowed, I would take him to Shirdi. Somehow, I failed to perform my vow for a long period. My boy got fits. I then remembered my vow and the breach of my promise. I vowed this time that I would positively and quickly take him to Shirdi and perform various ceremonies if he should be cured. He was cured. At once, i.e., in 1932, I took him to Shirdi. There we performed Abhishek. We then started away. When we were half way towards Kopergaon, the fits revived. R.B. Purandhare, who was with us, asked us to go back and see what performance of the vows we were still defaulting in. Then we learnt that only *Abhishek* had been done and the rest remained unperformed. So we set about fulfilling all our vows. Then the boy, who had been half unconscious and in fits till we reached Shirdi climbed up the Samadhi of Baba



and was clapping his hands. We had no more trouble. Again in 1933, we went to Shirdi. On the way at Kopergaon, we got on foot into the Godavari, as some one told us it was fordable at that time. But when I, bearing my son in my arm, and my wife reached the middle of the stream, the force of the current seemed very strong and it seemed that we would be washed down by the current. I felt giddy also. I closed my eyes and began to pray to Sai Baba for help. Within five minutes, Bala Gurav, a servant of Sai Sansthan, came into the middle of the river and held me and helped me through. He held and helped my wife also to cross the river.

We were celebrating or conducting my sons's Jayawal or tuft ceremony at Kashi and we intended that simultaneously with it, an *Abhishek* of Baba should be performed at Shirdi. But we forgot to inform Nanu Pujari at Shirdi and no simultaneous *Abhishek* of Baba was done. We went from Kashi to Gaya, and there at the Gayawali's house the fits came on again. So I remembered my failure to carry out the *Abhishek* and wrote at once to Nanu Pujari to perform two *Abhisheks*, one by way of penalty. Then our further journey was safe and the boy's health was alright.

In 1934, my boy had some sort of fever; none could diagnose it. Udhi and Tirtha cured it. In 1935, his toe had huge swelling. The Doctor wanted to cut it. But Udhi effected the cure. I rely on Baba and I am safe.

## PART II

### I

18TH OCTOBER, 1936

4 P.M

W.Pradhan, B.A., L.L.B High Court Pleader & J.P. aged 56, residing at Sai Baugh, Santa Cruz, says:

Nana Saheb Chandorkar was the cause of all my relations going to Baba and therefore the cause of my going also. It was the first week of May 1910. A group of my brothers and other relations were chatting with Mr. Chandorkar. Then my brother Rama Rao asked "Is there any one nowadays of the type of Akkalkote Maharaj?"

N.C:

Do you want to see one?

R.R:

Yes

N.C.:

In that case, go to Shirdi. In Sai Baba of Shirdi you have one.

R.R.

This is the first time we hear of Shirdi. Where is it and how do we get to it.

N.C.

It is in Kopergaon Taluk, Ahmednagar District. You have to go to Kopergaon Station (on Dhond Manmad Line) and take a *tonga*. Shirdi is 11 miles off the station.

Mr.Chandorkar gave such a vivid and glowing account of Baba's power, personality, kindness and greatness that all his hearers were aglow with the desire to rush at once or as early as possible to Shirdi and have *darsan* (sight) of Baba. These relations and friends of mine, forming a group of about 10 or 14 people started the very next day to Shirdi. They wanted me to be with the party. But I had been out and they left word with my wife and went away. I was that day with my mother who told me of their trip to see Baba; but I, in my ignorance, said to her "Who can say, if he is really genuine saint?"

When the party returned from Shirdi, I took a loan from my brother of two things that they had brought, a copy of Baba's picture and chapter 31 of Bhakta Lilamrita of Das Ganu, describing Baba's life and the miracles he wrote, promising to return them the same day. I took them home showed them to my wife, and began to read aloud that Chapter 31 to her. The effect was deep and electric. All the doubt that I had expressed to my mother vanished. I was converted. From that moment I got a firm belief that Baba was a true and great saint if ever there was one. My wife's faith was even greater. I told her that the book and the picture had to be returned that day. But she could not think of Parting with Baba and that too on a Thursday. So at her insistence I kept them on, even the next day and the third. Then as they were called for by my brother, I had to return them on the fourth day.

Now we were burning with a desire to go to Baba. But circumstances seemed to be adverse to any such adventure. My sister-in-law who had been recently widowed, appeared to be in advanced pregnancy and had no son. We all fervently hoped she would have a son and I, as the only male member in the house, could not leave the town as the delivery might take place any day.

But my wife and sister were very anxious that I should not lose the chance of seeing Baba early. So I started about a fortnight after the first party returned from Shirdi by the end of May 1910. By the kindness of Mr.Chandorkar, his two sons Babu and Bapu became my companions. At starting I had provided myself with three or four gold sovereigns (guineas, as they were called) and some notes. I got a note changed with the object that I might be able to give silver rupees when Baba should ask for *dakshina*. I had 20 rupees in cash and the rest in notes. Thus provided, I went to Shirdi. After a good reception at Kopergaon from the Mamlatdar and a good bath at the Godavari, we reached Shirdi. There at that very moment of our arrival, Baba was standing at the Lendi, as though he was waiting for us. So we at once got down and bowed to him. We put up at the Sathewada and there had the company of Rao Bahadur Sathe, Mr. Noolkar, 1st class Sub-Judge etc. Soon after, I took all the flowers, garlands, fruits etc., I had brought to the Masjid

to garland Baba and gave him all the presents. When I looked quietly into his face and eyes, I felt confirmed in my impression that Baba is a really great saint and said within myself "Thank God. I am come". This deep impression was quite opportune. Baba at once proceeded to put my faith to the test.

Baba asked me for a Dakshina. Instead of giving him silver as I had intended when I changed the notes at Kalyan, I gave him gold. I put a sovereign in his hand. Baba received it, turned it in his palms now with St. George's figure upwards, again with the written side upwards. He did so thrice and asked Noolkar each time, "What is this?" Noolkar replied "Baba, this is a guinea". Baba then asked him "What is it worth?" and he replied "It is worth fifteen rupees". Then Baba returned the coin to me saying "I do not want this. Keep it and give me fifteen rupees". Then Baba returned the coin to me saying "I do not want this keep it and give me fifteen rupees." I put the coin into my purse. But Noolkar was anxious that I should not mix up the coin touched and returned by Baba, with other coins and asked me to keep it apart as a sacred possession. Of course I did so. I then gave Baba fifteen silver rupees. Then Baba took the fifteen, counted them over and over and professed to find only ten rupees in what I gave and said "here is only Rs.10. Give me 5 more." This was really testing my faith in him. A lawyer accustomed to combat and criticise would naturally defend himself against the aspersion that he gave only ten when asserting that he paid a larger sum. But my faith had come up to the mark. I meekly accepted Baba's declaration and without any inclination to dispute Baba's words gladly gave him the other 5 rupees in my pocket. Baba was obviously aware that the 20 rupees in my pocket was intended for him and expressly got to be paid to him and under colour of wrong calculation was carrying out my intention to place that sum at his feet. After I gave him the 20 rupees on that occasion he did not ask for more, though I had a lot more in notes with me. Then I left him.

When I went to him next, he was giving *udhi* to a number of devotees crowding round him. He caught sight of me as I stood at a distance, beckoned to me to draw near, addressed me as Bhavu (as he did ever afterwards) and said "It will be alright in 2 or 4 days." Then he gave me *udhi* and I left the mosque. Persons who were present and wondered at

such deep interest of Baba in me and his regard for me, like Mr.Noolkar and Mrs.Jog came to me. Noolkar embrace me. Mrs Jog wanted to know from me what sacred reading I went on with ( to find out how I should deserve the marked treatment accorded to me by Baba). Baba, every one knew, did not care for mere wealth, gold or family position. I humbly admitted to Mr.Jog that I could boast of little sacred study, *Pothi* etc.

I thought I would return by the next day. But when leave was, Baba declined it in his characteristic fashion by saying, “Go tomorrow”. He did so on succeeding days and kept me there for eight days. I was arranging for a special dinner or *Biksha* to Baba the next day and requested him to inform me who were to be invited and what the menu was to be. Of course, *Puranpoli* was to be the crown of the dinner and for quests, he said I was to invite Babu (the nephew of Dada Kelkar), who was Baba’s favourite and Baba. He said ‘I also will come’ ‘mihiye innu’ before I invited him. The next day the dinner was prepared as directed and plates were served. Babu was invited and sat at one plate. Another was served and set apart for Baba. A crow came and lifted a puranpoli off the plate and carried it away. All hailed it with delight as evidence that Baba was going in the form to take away his own.

The afternoon, Baba touched his limbs on one side and said, “On this side of my body, there is excruciating pain”. But he added “It will be alright in 2 or 4 days.” Baba really appeared healthy, inspite of those words and what he meant to convey by his words escaped our powers of understanding at that time.

On a Thursday, during that period Baba was preparing food in “*Handi*” (i.e.,pot) to feed large numbers. He drove away every one from the masjid and was alone with his *handi*. At that time, to the great surprise and alarm of the spectators, my self and the two sons of Chandorkar went in. Baba far from being angry, received us very well, as though he had intended the expulsion of others for the very purpose of granting us a wholly private interview. Then after a little while Baba appeared to be singing out something. At least I thought it to be so. But I found that when he repeated the

words for the third time, they were. At on "kayare apala kayahmanave Sriram jayaram jaya jayaram." At once, on hearing these words I was overcome with emotion and I placed my head on Baba's feet and tears flowed freely. These words were the guru *mantra* that I had received from my family guru Haribua (whose grandfather Atmaram Bua who has a temple built for his worship Thakurdwar Bombay, was the guru of my great grandfather). And Baba was so kindly reviving my interest in and regard for that guru mantra in this fashion for my benefit. Baba was attending to my spiritual benefit without any question from me and his loving interest in me was too deep for me to return and too great to acknowledge except through tears of gratitude and joy. At the "handi", I noticed with wonder that when the contents of the cauldron were boiling, Baba used his own bare palm and not a spoon nor a ladle to stir the contents thoroughly to secure even and uniform consistency in the food or *sira*. His hand was not scalded or swollen by such use. Thence suddenly at noon, he took us three to the Lendi, a very unusual hour for him to visit the Lendi; and there he dug into the earth small hollows, gave me some corn and made me sow that corn in those hollows. Then after turning up some earth to cover the seeds, he made me water the patches sown; and then we returned to the mosque. It is that lendi garden which 7 or 8 years later (i.e., immediately after he passed away) I have purchased.

After detaining us for a week, Baba gave us permission to go away. At that time Babu Chandorkar placed a plate under Baba's feet and pouring water on them collected the water to be used at home. That was departure in the traditions of Shirdi. Till then only *udhi* was allowed to be taken away, and *Pada Tirtha* was immediately used up at the *Arathi* or at any rate at Shirdi. I took my cue from Babu and took Baba's *Padatirtha* home for the use of my mother and others. On our way, at Manmad we had only 3rd class tickets; and under the Railway rules then obtaining, we could only board a later train but not the Punjab Mail. But by a happy thought we rushed in and contrary to the rules, got into that mail and reached home 4 or 5 hours earlier than if we had conformed to the rules. These 4 or 5 hours I discovered were specially valuable and it was obviously Baba's

grace that enabled us to be so early. As soon as I reached home, I learnt that my mother had an attack of paralysis. She was having the attack of hemiplegia in our house at Bombay, when Baba was saying "My side is giving me excruciating pain." Doctors had been brought in. My sister and other relations were in discussion if I should be informed at Shirdi about the event. Mr.Chandorkar who was then present, remarked, it seems, that it was needless and that everything would be safe for my mother so long as I stayed with Baba and that Baba would himself send me back, if and when there was need. On the night when we were starting from Shirdi the attendant doctor noting the high temperature, the constricted state of the bowels and her restlessness declared that her condition was critical and that if however the bowels should move in the course of the night the situation would be more hopeful. It was that very night about 4.30 or 5 a.m. I reached my mother's place. At once I gave her Baba's udhi and *tirtha*. She then went somnolent and sometime later, her bowels moved and consequently her temperature fell. The doctor came and found that there was improvement and that things had taken a favourable turn. Quite obviously our timely dismissal from Shirdi, with Baba's tirtha and udhi, our timely catching the Punjab Mail and arrival on the critical night were all seen or foreseen and willed by Baba and the favourable turn was what he intended and foretold when he said to me at Shirdi "in 2 or 4 days it will be alright". Truly.

Sai moves in mysterious way.

His wonders to perform.

My mother recovered full health soon and lived four years thereafter. Two years before her death, she went to Shirdi and had Baba's darsan and blessing.

Without exception all members of my family go to Baba and get his blessing. I shall mention how my wife and sister got to Baba and how my wife got a special blessing from Baba.

One night, Das Ganu Mahraj performed his splendid *Kirtan* (always in praise of Baba, whatever the main and express theme of his kirtan may be) at my mother's place. Then I invited him and Mr.Chandorkar and all the friends then present to go over to Santa Cruz for rest. They all came

with the entire musical accompaniments and set. It was suggested that they should proceed with a fresh kirtan here at my house. That went on from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. the most impressionable hours of the night. My wife listening to the kirtan got a burning desire to visit Shirdi. Baba came to her in a dream she told me; and this considered as a sufficient indication that she should be taken to Shirdi. "But what of my or sister-in-law, who still seemed to be in advanced pregnancy?" I thought over it. My wife and sister-in-law were prepared to take risk of labour pains on route. I engaged a special second class railway car, paying the price of 12 tickets and arranged that the same car should be taken on via Manmad to Kopergaon and taken off to a lay-by there. We all started and throughout the journey there was not the least trouble. When we were nearing Kopergaon, my wife said that Mr. Chandorkar would perhaps be at the station to receive us. I replied that it was impossible, though I had intimated our starting to him. Yet strangely that very thing happened.

Mr. Chandorkar had gone to Shirdi on account of his ill health. He was getting fever every alternated day and the day of our arrival was the day on which he would get fever in the usual course. Yet he got my letter and asked Baba for permission to receive us at Kopergaon. Baba gave it readily. When H.S.Dixit objected and went to Baba mentioning the alternate day's fever as a reason why he should go to Kopergaon instead of Chandorkar, Baba gruffly sent him back and said that Chandorkar, and Chandorkar alone, should go. Mr.Chandorkar came and made grand and excellent arrangements for our reception and for the comfort of the ladies and all our holy baths at Godavari; and we all reached Shirdi safely. Mr.Chandorkar was not a whit the worse for his journey and was free from fever. His fever then left him for good.

On the day we reached Shirdi, Baba said to Madhava Rao Deshpande, pointing to my wife "This is the mother of my Babu"\*.



Mr. Chandorkar thought it must refer obviously to my sister-in-law who was believed to be pregnant and asked Baba, pointing to my sister-in-law. "This is the lady, is it not?" Baba replied "No, It is this" and he again pointed to my wife.

Exactly twelve months from that date my wife was delivered of a male child and we have named that son "Babu" (the name used by Baba). At the "Christening" Das Ganu, Mr.Chandorkar and all were present and it was a grand and joyous occasion reminding us of Baba's kindness and greatness.

At my first visit there was severe storm and rain for quarter of an hour when I was with Baba at the masjid. I then thought that if the rains beat like the streams would swell and getting back to my place at Bombay would be difficult and Baba would not grant me early leave to go away. Baba then looked at the sky and said.

Are Alla abhibarasath poora kara. mere balabachhe ghar janevale hai. unko sukhse janede.

**"Oh God! Enough, stop the rain. My children have to go back home. Let them go back without difficulty".** As he spoke, the rains became gentler and feebler. I felt that Baba knew my inner most thoughts. Then he gave me leave to go and I caught the Punjab Mail and took *Udhi* and *tirtha* to my mother as stated above. III(IV) 359. The night after my return my sister-in-law dreamt that a fakir robed in a *Kupni* and wearing a towel on his head was in our house. This I felt was proving what Baba said "I will accompany you home", Baba is in our house.

## II

19TH OCTOBER, 1936

SANTA CRUZ

Baba's kindness to my family was, I repeat, very great. When my wife begot "Babu", she resolved to make Baba, her father-in-law's household God. It is our custom for a lady that begets a child, when she goes to her husband's house, to fill up one end of her cloth with some wheat, coconut and fruits, tie them into a knot and unburden herself of these before her father-in-law or his Gods, i.e., domestic Images. My wife tied up these articles and carried these, and also Babu when he was four months old, to Sai Baba at Shirdi. Baba readily received the articles on a plate and took up Babu in his arms. He then endearingly addresses Babu thus "Babu kote gela hotos mala kayakas hotas kay" i.e., "**Babu, where had you been? Were you vexed with, or weary of me?**". To mark the joyous arrival of Babu at Shirdi, Baba pulled out two rupees from his own pocket, got burfi (sweets) for that amount and distributed it exactly, as they do, on the occasion of a son's birth. This was in 1912.

On this occasion, Baba pointed to the village wall stone arch and said "**Whoever rebuilds this, will get blessings.**" My wife asked him for permission to rebuild it and he gave it. Then I paid Rs.600 to N.Chandorkar to rebuild it. On this occasion, Baba said "Babu's bungalow is beautiful and ready". I guessed that Baba meant that I should buy the Bungalow I now live in. So within two months, I got a lease of it and occupied it and in six months thereafter I bought it. Baba's words thus were fulfilled by my purchase and Babu had a beautiful bungalow in 1913.

Babu was again taken to Baba for his first birthday and again commemorated it, by buying Rs.2 worth of sweets (Burfi) and distributing it to all. On this occasion, Baba asked very significantly about Babu "Has he no brother and no sister?" My wife, with some degree of bashfulness answered "You gave us this Babu only". In fact, we had a daughter at that time. Baba's words were construed as a blessing that we would get one more son and one more

daughter. That is exactly what happened. To commemorate Babu's first birthday at Shirdi, a grand dinner was prepared at Madhav Rao Deshpande's residence and all were invited. That was a Thursday. Bala Saheb Bhate excused himself from attending it on the ground that on a Thursday his rule was to avoid dining out. But when he went to Baba that day, Sai Baba asked him;

S.B: Have you dined at Bhao's (i.e., Pradhan's place?)

B.B: Baba, today is Thursday.

S.B: What if?

B.B: I do not dine out on Thursdays. That is my rule.

S.B: To please whom do you observe this rule?

B.B: To please you.

S.B: Then I tell you to go and dine at Bhao's.

Though it was 4 p.m. Balasaheb Bhate came up to me, told me what Baba had said and dined with us.

Next my wife had a dream here at Santa Cruz of Baba's appearing before her and receiving *pada pooja* from her, Mr. N.G.Chandorkar interpreted it to mean that Baba wanted her to start regular Pada Pooja of Baba at home and so bade her go to Shirdi with two silver *padukas*. She did so. When she went up to Baba, the latter who was sitting with legs folded stretched out his legs of his own accord and said "Place the Padukas on thee and do Pooja". Then my wife placed each of Padukas on each foot of Baba and worshipped them. Baba then said to Nana Saheb "nanahine maje pav paha kapun nele" i.e., "See, Mother has cut off and carried away my feet: and himself picked up the two padukas and handed them over to my wife. Ever since that date, she is daily worshipping these padukas.

Eversince my first visit , I was having my dinner at the Mosque with Baba. Baba with his own hand stuffed all food into our plates and cups in such large quantity. Instead of throwing away such valuable prasad I asked my niece to come up and take take away about three fourth of what was served to me and that sufficed to feed my family. Yet what I ate warded off all hunger or appetite for a night meal. Baba almost

invariably gave desert (i.e., fruits &c) at the end of the meal. But when I went up with Babu, Baba noticed that Babu did not care for cooked food and served mangoes and fruits first, so that Babu might have a full meal. When other children were born, I would take the three children with me including Babu, to the Mosque to dine with Baba.

My last visit to Baba was in May, 1918. I had taken with me Rs.3,800 and overstayed my intended period, on account of Baba's insistence. Baba's unuttered but evident practice with those whom he loved was to deplete their resources. "Ysyanguhamicchmi tasyavith Haraham" **"I take away the wealth of those I love"**. So when I returned from Shirdi after the month's stay, my money was reduced to minus Rs.1200. Infact I had borrowed that sum from an acquaintance, a veterinary Doctor of Poona and returned it to him after coming home.

An incident relating to Babu's illness as an infant ought chronologically to be placed before this. When Babu was 3 or 4 years old, he had serious illness. We had Madhava Bhat, a learned and pious (and on the whole well-to-do) Telugu priest at home who was greatly attached to the family and carried on Mantra Japa and Pooja in our house for our benefit. He noticed Babu's serious illness with concern. He had first no sympathy with our worship of Baba. He fancied that Babu's illness was due to our worshipping a Moslem Saint viz Sai Baba but he dared not give utterance to his thought. One night he had a dream. He saw a figure (which from the photo we had, he recognised to be Sai Baba) sitting on the top of the staircase, holding a baton (sota) in one hand. That figure (Baba) told him "What do you mean? I am the Lord of this house". The priest kept this dream to himself for a time (He had asked us to go and make a vow to Datta for the child's cure but he had been told that Baba was Datta himself).

Later Babu's condition was much worse than before. The priest noted with concern. He ran up at once to Baba's photo and loudly prayed thus "if the child should improve sufficiently by 4 p.m. so as to be brought downstairs, then I will agree that you are Datta". Within a short time of this prayer, the child's temperature was getting lower and by 4

p.m. he wanted to be carried down for amusement and his mother took him downstairs. Madhav Bhat was converted and felt that Sai Baba was really Datta. And he vowed he would pay him a dakshina of Rs.120 and paid it. The Pandit wanted to get a son and vowed he would pay Rs.108 if he got one. He got one and then paid Rs.108 to Baba. But at that very time, the Pandit vowed he would pay Rs.1,008 if my (i.e., Pradhan's) ambition should be achieved. When Mr. Deshpande referred to the gift of Rs.108 as large, Baba belittled it and said, "He is giving me much more" evidently referring to the vow of Rs.1,008.

Baba gave some words of advice to my wife (1) e.g., "If anyone talks ten words at us, let us reply with one word .... if we reply at all. (2) i.e., Do not quarrel or vie with any one not to be outdone. Early during the 32 days of my last stay with Baba, 1918, all of us escorted him with umbrella and all paraphernalia to the Lendi, we all left him there and retreated. But me alone he recalled to himself and put his palm over my head and said **"Bhav, will you do what I ask you to do?"** I said 'yes'. Then he said **"Pay me Rs.100. Bring it in a bag and deliver it to me at the Masjid quietly"**. In this way he made me give him all the sums I brought and the extra sums I borrowed. Then he made some signs which were not clear. They seemed to mean "Even if the heavens tumbledown on you, do not fear. I am with you". Baba at my first visit said that for the previous six years, he had been smoking the *chilm* that I had given him. I could not make out his meaning.

Sri Buty's second marriage to place at Shirdi in 1916 and I was present.

When we left Shirdi Baba said, tuyiyakar, vamoyeyin i.e., that he would accompany us. Physically and with a visible body he did not accompany us. But our journey was pleasant and free from danger. That indicated that he accompanied us with his invisible body and warded off all danger and trouble. After Baba blessed me and passed away, I had the following benefits. I was appointed 2nd class magistrate of South Salesette from 1920-26 and as a J.P. since 1926. I was elected fro Thana as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and sat during 1921-23. I was made a Rao Bahadur in 1927.

## III

Mrs. M.W.Pradhan's account of experience is found in 321. (1) all my children took ill of measles. The doctor despaired of young Babu. All were hopeless. I prayed to Sri Sai Baba. He appeared and said "Why weep? The child is alright. Give him at 6 or 6.30 a.m. a good feed." The child began to play in the morning. The doctor came and saw it with surprise and said "Give him no food" But the child ate everything and digested it.

323. (2) One night at 11 p., Baba appeared to me as I slept and said: **'Are you sleeping? Get up. Your boy will have convulsions'**. I got up. I looked at the boy. He had no fever or convulsions. But 'Forewarned is forearmed!' So, I got ready hot water, fire, caude cologne etc. About 2 a.m. the boy woke up and had convulsions - all our children have convulsions occasionally. I got everything ready. In half an hour, the fit passed off. Baba saved us from sorrow and danger by his forewarning. He did so often.

324 (3) Baba appeared in my dream and told me to place turmeric and saffron on his foot. I worshipped them in the dream. I told N.G.C. of the dream and he said, take silver *padukas* to Shirdi, place them before Baba and get them for worship. So I did, Baba himself stretched out both legs and asked me to place each paduka on each foot and worship. I did so. He handed them over to me, telling N.G.C: "Nanahine maje pay paha kapun nele"

325. I feared once Baba would shout and get angry at the Masjid. That day Baba did no such thing and said "See, I did not shout against anyone, is it not so?" Once, at pooja at the mosque, Baba knew of my baby crying in our *wada*, and in the middle of the pooja sent me away saying "Go home", I went and pacified the child and returned. "Now", said Baba "do your pooja".

Once the doctor said that typhoid convalescent baby should not be taken to Shirdi. But we did take him. He was ill in the train. I feared that people would laugh at me for my madness. The child had to lie down and could not even sit up. As soon as we went to Baba, the child stood up before Baba; and Baba said: **People will not laugh now**' He knew of course our thoughts in the train.

328. On 16-10-98, i.e. the night after Baba's departure, I saw his body in a dying condition in my dream and said 'Baba is dying'. Baba replied 'People do not talk of saints as dying, but as taking Samadhi'. His body was still. People were mourning. Such was the dream I felt sad. I woke at 12.30 midnight. In the morning we got from Anna Chinchinikar, a card that Baba passed away at 3 p.m. on *Dusserah* 15-10-1918,

329. On the 19th night I dreamed that Baba came and gave me 3 rupees, and that I felt distressed, as dream receipts of rupees are not auspicious. Baba said 'Receive, Receive it and give me all the money you have stored up in your box'. I woke up and sent up all that money for the ceremonies. The same night, Baba appeared in my sister-in-law's dream and asked her to send up a yellow '*pitambar*' to be placed on the samadhi. That also was done.

S.L.M.III (4) 353: I was in an advanced stage of pregnancy at Santacruz. A midwife and nurse attended on me. Four days of difficult labour made the nurse despair of my case and she went and told my sister that Mr. Pradhan must send for a doctor at once. But my sister began at once to pray before Baba portrait with the nurse by her side. As she prayed, the child was delivered at once without anyone's help. I wondered and the nurse wondered how great were Baba's power and mercy.

III (5) 381-384 Pradhan's account of experiences about the change in *TelungiSastri*.'

We had a *Telungi* Sastri, Madhav Bhatji of advanced age, a Karmata, worshipping Sankara night and day with '*Rudrabhisheka*' etc., In 1912 or so, our child Babu was one year old and go ill. Bhatji thought it might be due to worshipping a Mussalman at home and thus rousing the ire of Shiva. One night Baba was very ill and we wanted to rouse

up the Bhatji. But just then he himself came up and sat before Babas' picture and he prayed "If the dream or vision I got be true, let the child's temperature go down in 5 minutes and let him play from tomorrow and let the doctor declare that he is alright; then I will agree that you are a siddha, I will bow down and in 15 days go to Shirdi and pay Rs.108 Dakshina." His dream, he said was this "A Moslem clad as in Baba's picture, with *sota* (i.e., a small club) in hand, came near my cot and roused me and then went up the steps of the storey saying 'What do you know? This house is mine. This child I have given. You think you make the child improve. The boy mine and so at once, i will show it to you.' He went up, I woke up, and so at once came up and prayed. If he cures Babu at once, I will take Baba for a *Shiddha* Purusha and worship him" In one hour Babus' fever stopped and he became active. His coughing etc. also ceased. So the Brahmin fell prostrated before Baba and later went to Shirdi. Then Baba looking at him said, "This man calls me dog, cat and Moslem. At once Bhatji recognised his *Antarsakshitwa* and bowed at his feet. Baba said to Shama, 'How often does this Bhat worship me every day! Then Bhat prayed (1) that he should be blessed with a son and that he would pay Rs.108 (2) that if his master should attain his ambition he would pay ten times more. When he went in the afternoon Baba asked him dakshina. Shama said he had paid it in the morning. Baba said "He gave me very little in the morning. Hi is to give ample dakshina." Bhatji said that Baba knew his inmost thoughts. In one year Bhat got a son and he paid Rs.108 to Baba. Then he put up Baba's picture for worship in Datta temple, which his brother constructed in his own village.

#### IV

Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe, Retired Deputy Collector, Deccani, Brahmin, Aged 81 (born 1855), Residing at 108, Shukrawar Peth, Poona says:

I had a daughter by my first wife. I then became a widower before my forty fourth year. Many friends and acquaintances were pressing me to get married, e.g. Mr.Brave, Mamlatdar of Kopargaon. I was declining to take the extraordi-



nary step of marrying at about fifty, though I was no doubt anxious to have son to continue my line. But what guarantee or probability was there of one getting a son so late in life? So I told my importunate friends that I would wed if and only if a great Saint should so advise me.

On or about April 1904 I went with Mr.Brave to see Sai Baba at the Mosque. Then after a short time, I took leave of Baba and had got down the steps of the Mosque. The Mr.Brave told Baba "Saheb (that is how Baba called me or referred to me always) has no son". Then Baba replied: "Shadi karega to Alla bachha denga" If he marries then God will give him a son". I heard thee words myself and Brave and other began to press me again to marry. But the question of the choice of a bride would take time. I went back to Ahmednagar which was then my headquarters. About the end of that year, I learnt that an able astrologer had arrived at Poona. I consulted that man and found that his reading of the facts about my past and my daughter's past were really correct. He said that my horoscope showed that I was to have male progeny after my fiftieth year. That further strengthened my idea of marrying.

In a few months, I was transferred to Ahmedabad. When I was there, Dada Kelkar (i.e., Ganesh Damodar Kelkar) wrote to me that he had a daughter of marriageable age and wanted to know if a bridegroom could be found there. As none could be found there, perhaps the writer of the letter might have sent it as a feeler to sound my views and see if I would offer myself as the bridegroom. I thought that the letter might be prompted by Sai Baba's unseen influence and I wrote to D.K. that no bridegroom could be found or expected at that distant place and that if he meant the offer to be for myself he should consider my age, my prospects etc. He wrote that he had considered the pros and cons and would be glad to have me for his son-in-law. Then I wrote to him that in that case, he should take the girl with him from his village and go to Shirdi and request Baba to say if he approved of the match as unless Baba approved of the choice, I would not marry her, D.K. was then hostile to Baba in his views and suggested other alternatives viz; consulting a Brahmin Saint at Wye (who was his brother inlaw); he was afraid that Baba might not approve of the proposal of my marriage with his

daughter and it would have to be dropped. But I insisted that he should go and find if Baba approved. So, after all D.K had to go to Shirdi with his girl and await with Madhav Rao's aid, Baba's orders. When D.K. went to Baba, Baba at once told him "send the girl to Ahmedabad" i.e., to me. Baba's approval was communicated to me and then I married D.K's daughter in 1905 i.e. in my fiftieth year. I have a son and some daughters by that marriage.

### **Sathe Wada**

Near Baba's favourite margosa tree there were the remnants of the old village wall. Baba told me "Pull down the village wall and build". I took this to be an order that I should rebuild the village wall. Then I said to myself, I am not a prince or ruler to put up a huge village wall or restore it, and I kept quiet. Finally I found that Baba's suggestion was far more modest and was only for building residential quarters there and for including the village wall, in the construction. So I bought the land there and using the remnants of the village wall built up a wada enclosing or surrounding the Margosa tree. Baba told me that the Tomb close to that tree over which now a part of the building has been erected (leaving only a small niche for worshipping it) was that of his Guru. He gave me his guru's name. It ended with "Shah" or "Sa". I have forgotten the rest of the name. It might be "Venkusa".

I went and resided at Shirdi for sometime. Baba's Arati and Pooja on ordinary days were started but for some time there was no celebration of Guru Purnima by special worship of Baba on that day. Baba himself sent for my father-in-law and said "Do you not know that this is Guru Poornima? Bring your worship material and do your Guru Puja. Then we had Guru Puja on that day and this practice of celebrating Guru Poornima by all the devotees worshipping Baba then begun, has continued upto-date.

Baba never called me "Hariba" etc. He always called me and referred to me as "Saheb". The account in the Santkathamrit that in the presence of myself and some others Baba went into a long disquisition on the nature of God and Sadhana Chatushtaya, defining Viveka Vairagya. Samadishatka and mumukshtwa, Brahma Satchidanand etc.,

is not correct. Baba never talked of such subjects in my presence. I do not know if he addressed others on those matters.

The account given in Bhakti-lamrit, chapter 31, verses 219-236 regarding my marriage etc., are very inaccurate. These were not written after consulting me and they were not shown to me even after being written. The correct account is what I have given above.

Baba was indeed the cause of my marriage and of the great change in me since 1905 and he is the controller of my fortunes and destiny ever since. I place my entire trust in him and seek his guidance and protection in all matters temporal, religious, official and domestic. When I built a wada at Shirdi and lived or made my father-in-law live there with my family i.e. between 1906-1916 we incurred the jealousy, resentment and hostility of various people amongst whom we had to live. We could not have got on as we did despite all that, without Baba's perpetual and vigilant care for us. His active interference helped me miraculously in numerous instances. I will give a few examples.

About 1909 or 1910 I was on a committee along with the Revenue Commissioner Mr. Curtis and the Collector; and we were to meet at Manmad on a particular date and move from there to other camps. On the previous day I was at Shirdi and I wanted to take formal permission of Sai Baba to leave Shirdi, expecting that it would be granted as a matter of course. My father-in-law went and asked Baba to leave. Baba refused leave and my father-in-law came and told me of the refusal; but I told him that I could not trifle with such important official engagements except at the risk of being turned out of Government Service. He again went to Baba to make further representations and intercede on my behalf. But Baba did not grant leave. He on the other hand told my father-in-law to prevent my starting by actually confining me in my room.

Even on the days following the particular date, I was not allowed to go. After three days, I was made to start for Manmad. When I reached that station, I found the other members of the Committee had not gone to Manmad on the appointed date that the original programme had been altered

and that the committee's meeting had been postponed. I had ordered, on the faith of the old programme, my tent and articles to be sent from Manmad to the other fixed camps. By a strange inadvertence on the part of the Railway authorities my articles had not been sent away from manmad. If they had been sent, great inconvenience would have been caused to me to hunt them up and re transport them. So by detention at Shirdi I lost absolutely nothing except my peace of mind, and I was saved a lot of unnecessary trouble and enabled to spend more time with my family and with Sai Baba. Of course Sai Baba knew all things and arranged all things. But in my ignorance, I felt my position at Shirdi to be very delicate and risk. Such instances strengthen one's faith in and reliance on Baba.

In my official career, I was getting dissatisfied at not getting the promotion I deserved. My disgust I revealed to Baba and told him that I would even resign service on that account. But Baba forbade my resignation of service and said that I would get promotion. Sometime later, I was promoted over the head of some seniors in service and posted to Kolhapur as Ag. Superintendent of Land Records. I got an increase of Rs.100 in pay and eventually a higher pension than those seniors.

About pension also, there was some trouble. The pension department at first treated my last permanent place as the Deputy Collectorship and ignored my subprotem higher post. So they cut off Rs.50 from the pension which I expected as due to me. I appealed in due course and I went to Sai Baba and told him that I would forego the whole pension rather accept it with the curtailment of Rs.50. He said that I would get the Rs.50 also that Allah would help me. So I put my case in appeal before the Revenue Commissioner Mr.Curtis and with his note, I got the proper pension without any curtailment. Sai Baba controls minds and moulds events.

#### **RE.MEGHA**

Megha was a very simple yet very devout brahmin whom I found living at Viramgaon, when I was deputy Collector there. He would simply repeat "Namah Siva" always. But he did not know Gayatri much less the whole sandhya mantra. I

got interested in his welfare, and got him taught Sandhya and Gayatri. I sent him to Broach to worship Siva there, and paid him Rs.8 for his fare and expenses. He would worship Siva standing on one leg only all the time. Then I told him that Shirdi Sai Baba was really the embodied form of God Siva and made him start for Shirdi. At the Broach Railway Station he learnt that Sai Baba was a modern and his extremely orthodox and simple mind was highly perturbed at the prospect of bowing to a Moslem and he prayed to me at the station not to send him to Shirdi, I however insisted and gave him a letter to my father-in-law at Shirdi to introduce him to Baba. When he went to Shirdi mosque Baba was indignant and would not allow him to go into the mosque. Kick out that rascal, he cried at the very sight of him and he was also angry that I should have sent him a man with such hopelessly crude ideas. Megha then went to Trimbak and worshipped at Gangadhar' for a year or a year and a half. Then again he came to Shirdi. This time at the intercession of my father-in-law he was allowed to go the mosque and stay at Shirdi.

Sai Baba's help to Megha was not through any oral instruction. He worked upon Megha internally i.e., mentally. Megha was considerably changed and benefited. When he died (in 1912) at Shirdi after continuous service of Baba doing regular daily Arati service, (noon and evening) Baba passed his hands over his corpse and said **"This was a true devotee of mine."** Baba ordered that, at his own expense, the usual funeral dinner to Brahmins should be given and Bhao Saheb Dixit carried his order out.

### **Leaving Shirdi**

In the durbar of Sri Sai Baba and when he issued out in solemn pomp, I carried the mace before him. Many were jealous of me on account of the distinction I enjoyed. These and the villagers leagued together and used Nana Wali to molest me and drive me away from Shirdi. Once as I was carrying the mace before Baba, Nana Wali came up and scratched the back of my head with the sharp point of broken glass. In self defence, I had to seize him and press him down on a pile of logs lying on the roadside. Sai Baba cried out "Saheb, do not do so". I notice how the wind was blowing

at Shirdi and kept careful watch. One day, as I intended to go to the Mosque to offer Naivedya to Baba very early (as I had to proceed on a particular trip) my Father-in-law rushed in and adjured me to desist from going to the Mosque, as NanaWali was standing at the entrance, hatched in hand, with deadly intention, and as he would make short work of me. So without taking any leave, I went away and left Shirdi for good. Evidently Sai Baba did not want me to reside there at Shirdi any longer. As Sai Baba did not protect me from the attack of Nana Wali, some people called upon me to give up my faith in Baba. But I pointed out that the same argument could be used against Vittal of Pandharpur Gangadhar Shastri, the lawyer of Gaekwad, was a Vittal Bhakta and sought help and refuge in the Temple of Vithal. But there right in the Temple itself, before the face of Vittal he was murdered by his enemy, I find that leaving Shirdi and settling here at Poona ultimately have been for my good. Sai Baba is protecting me here as he did at Shirdi.

Once about 1916 or so, in pitching a tent for me, at Kothrud (a suburb of Poona) certain Mangs (untouchables) went and put it up under a sacred Audambar tree, touching it and trying ropes to it. I did not know it then. Finding that I was having mishaps thereafter I enquired into the cause and learnt of that regrettable incident I prayed to Sai Baba to help me and he advised me in a dream to get a Brahmin first to perform the purification ceremony of that tree and next to instal Datta Paduka there. I have done both and I am maintaining a *Pujari* and conducting *Pooja* through him of he *Paduka* (at Kothrud) twice every day.

Rao Bahadur H.V.Sathe (continued on 6-8-1936 and 28-8-1936)

Baba expressed my nature aptly by saying i.e. Saheb is quite simple and unsophisticated. And as that was his view, he never beat or abuse me, though he beat and abused others. Only once he threatened to beat me, and I knew that I was then at fault. It was a Dhanur Masa celebration at my Shirdi lodgings and living away from my father-in-law as we were not on the best terms I then invited others for the ceremony but not my father-in-law. I went however to invite Baba. Then he cried

**“Fetch that stick.”** I stood quiet. His mood changed at once and he said **“Never mind. I will come.”** There was another fault committed by me that day which also would account for Baba’s displeasure. That day I had gone to a Marwadi to intercede in one of his affairs or disputes. Baba did not like that.

When I had boasted that I was the only devotee of Baba who had not got a beating at his hands, Madhav Rao Deshpande communicated this to Baba in my presence and asked him the reason. Baba said **“Why should I beat him? There is his father-in-law to eat him”** Baba evidently conveyed thereby the idea that I was being constantly “Fined” by my father-in-law’s excessive demands and collections of money from me. Baba’s help to me on the spiritual side was often to keep me off from vanity, pomp or sin in thought or action. Here are some instances.

At the time, when in the wada (i.e., Sathe wada), the foundation stone was laid, there was no previous intimation of the date to me. I was however on a Poornima day. Myself and Bere started the previous day to go to Shirdi without previously intimating our intention to go there. At Kopergaon which we reached in the evening, Bere induced me to halt for the night as Baba could not easily be visited, by us at night. Next morning we went to Shirdi. Baba was then coming from the Lendi. There was a crowd of 80 to 90 spectators waiting to see him. We also went and prostrated. Baba told me “You have come just in time. The foundation stone is to be laid”. I faced that I must go through the pompous ceremony in high style. I took up a hatchet to dig up a bit of the foundation and stone. Baba stopped me at once and said **“Why do you go there? What have we to do with all this? The masons and other workmen will do it.”** So no formal ceremony of laying the foundation stone was gone through. My father-in-law told me that he knew the previous day that I was arriving at Shirdi on the Poornima day and so fixed up that date for laying of the foundation stone. When asked how he knew of it, he said that Baba was saying the previous day “Saheb is coming tomorrow. The washer woman told me of this as Saheb’s tent had come to her for washing”. In fact there was no tent sent and no washer woman could have got intimation of our arrival. Bere’s stopping me at Kopergaon was useful.

That night (unknown to me though it was) was the tenth night of the death of an agnatic relation of my father-in-law and his house was under pollution and resounding with wailing and there was none even to cook and offer unpolluted food for me then, had I gone.

On one occasion Baba who was ever watchful over his childrens' actions in sight or out of sight, saved me from plunging headlong into passion and headstrong cruelty. The facts are these. My father-in-law wanted me to buy some 20 acres of agricultural land at or near Shirdi and I sent him 1200 rupees and the land was purchased. One day when I was there, I desired to go and see the land. My father-in-law would not accompany me and was placing obstacles in the way of my visiting the land. His reason was that his brother's son (Babu) had left a widow, who was living with him and she would come to know of the land and claim a share therein. I however insist that we should go and ordered Tatyapa Patel's cart to be brought up and wanted my wife to go with me. She had first consented to go but finally under instructions from her father, she declined to accompany me. I was wroth. I seized the whip from the cartman and was intending to chastise her for her disobedience to my orders. Lo! Suddenly Megha rushed into my Wada and said that Baba wanted me urgently to proceed at once to the Mosque to see him. I went up. Baba asked me **"What is the matter? What is it that has happened?"** I saw that he knew everything and felt ashamed of myself. Then Baba added evidently to explain and justify the conduct and attitude of my wife and father-in-law, **"Your land is there. Where is the necessity to go and see it?"** How watchful he was over my conduct and welfare!

Another instance of his watchfulness over my conscience and morals was this. I was once proposing to visit for the first time the residence of a female devotee of Baba out of mere curiosity. Just before the visit, Baba asked me if I had gone to such and such a place. I did not understand the names of places and missed the point of his question. Baba then dropped the subject. I then went to her lodgings and was engaged in some conversation. Very soon evil thoughts began to invade my brain. Suddenly Baba appeared in front of that house and pushed open the door which had been closed. But not bolted. He made some ironical signs to me to convey



the idea, “What an excellent thing you are now launching into!” and disappeared. His timely interference before any evil was definitely lodged in my mind or could take shape in action saved the situation. Consciences asserted itself; tendencies to evil were definitely checked and I retreated from the place at once and never visited it again. Some time thereafter I learnt that the place I visited was locally known by the very name mentioned by Baba in his question that day.

Baba’s help to me came in family affairs, official matters, dealings with Saints, other spiritual matters etc.

### **Family Affairs:**

Baba said in 1904 just before my second marriage that God would bless me with a son if I married and he approved of the match in 1905. Then my father-in-law Dada Kelkar (or Damodar Kelkar) became deeply devoted to him and made Shirdi his permanent residence. I built the wada here at Baba’s bidding in gaav kus Bandha 1908 or so; and my father-in-law with my wife and family (and I also sometimes) lived there though its chief use was for the visitors that came to Baba. There was no other lodging (except the village Châvadi) available for respectable visitors. The foundation stone laying has already been mentioned. When the construction was to go on, the walls had to be raised and some of the branches of the Neem tree (under which Baba had practised his early Sadhana or penance) had to be loped off. As the tree was held sacred by all, none dared to cut the branches and Baba was approached. He then said **“cut off so much as interferes with the construction. Even if our own foetus lies athwart the womb, we must cut it.”** But even with his permission, the work men feared to cut it as it seemed so sacrilegious. Then Baba himself came and cut off the obstruction. Later the steps for going upstairs and a niche over Baba’s Guru’s Tomb were put up. Baba made me spend monies in this and in other matters also so as to help on religion and charity e.g. when DasGanu had his “Lives of the Saints” ready for printing Baba made me pay Rs.75 towards the expenses.

The first two children born of this second marriage were girls. My father-in-law and mother-in-law then ap-

proached Baba with the prayer that the promised son should be born and asked him "When are we to have a grandson". Baba then answered **"I am requesting Allah. He will comply with my request"** A year or two later (i.e. in 1913) my son was born. That boy is with me here (by Baba's grace) hale and hearty and the prop of my age.

I have already stated how Baba directed me to behave in relation to my father-in-law and wife. I shall mention his kindly interest in one more family affair of mine. Sometime after I retired my financial circumstances were declining. On one occasion, I sold a jewel of my wife. Baba then addressed my father-in-law and said **"Why does that fool of a Saheb sell my daughter's Jewel?"**

Baba was greatly attracted to Dada Kelkar's (i.e. my father-in-law's) nephew - Babu. He was measurer under my assistant, Limaye (I was then Assistant Superintendent of Revenue Survey of Kopergaon and Yeola). But instead of paying due attention to his official work, he would go and stay at Shirdi, doing service to Baba. My assistant complained to me that my brother-in-law (Babu) was always going away to Shirdi and neglecting his work. I communicated this to Kelkar and he said "What is to be done? He is guided and ordered by Baba." In fact, Baba knowing evidently what was happening to babu very shortly, made light of his service and said **"Blast the service. Let him serve me."** Babu was always attending on Baba and rendering as much service as he could; and Baba would always see that Babu got the choicest delicacies whenever they were available. So Limaye let him do as he liked. Babu's end was drawing near in 1910. He ate mangoes (which were always pouring in upon Baba since 1910) rather too freely. Baba warned Kelkar and told him to have some care of his nephew's health. "Babu kade laksh tteva-" He said, Babu contracted fever and as he was nearing death, Baba asked Kelkar "Are to aahe kay?" **"Is he alive?"** In a few days Babu passed away (1910) aged only 22 leaving an issueless widow.

In religious and temporal affairs I never took any serious step without consulting Baba, (either through my father-in-law or otherwise.)

### Religious matters

Baba never gave *Upadesa* or initiation to anyone. So I did not apply to him for initiation. But on several occasions I was invited to get Upadesha from others, e.g., Upasani Baba who offered to explain Panchadasi to me (in 1915 or 1917) after his return to Shirdi from Kharagpur and Miraj. People from Kharagpur and Nagpur were going to him to get *Upadesha*. The question was whether I also should go to him for that purpose. There was a lady, Athabai of Sangola, who had given *Upadesha* to my first wife. There was also the Ganapati Upasaka and Yogi of Moregaon named Vinayak Phatak Maharaj. These offered me *Upadesha*. In each of these cases, I referred the question to Baba (personally to Baba in the first case and through my father-in-law in the latter case) and Baba gave a negative reply.

Though there was no formal initiation by Baba he wished me to look to him alone with undeviating attention and he was quite powerful enough and willing to look after my interests temporal and spiritual.

Baba in the early days of my moving with him at times favoured the extension of his worship and at times did not. He made me and my father-in-law start the group congregational worship of Baba as Guru by all the devotees on Guru Poonima day as I have stated already. But when I tried to do Pooja to him as Mahadeva or Siva on “Shivaratri” midnight he did not favour the proposal. When he was first asked for permission that day he said, “No” Then we (i.e. my self and Megha) thought over it, took some Bilwa leaves and wished to do silent pooja at the steps of the Mosque at midnight (which is the time observed in all Siva Temples). When we went there, Tatyia from inside the Mosque waved his hand warning us off. But as Baba seemed to be asleep we dared to put some sandal and Bel on the steps in silence. Baba at once got up and hurled wild abuse without naming any one as the object of his abuse. The whole village was roused and they flocked to the Mosque and blamed us for trying to steal a march over the rest of the devotees and in defiance of Baba’s wishes to obtain clandestine punya by midnight worship at he steps of the mosque. Though Baba did not want me to take upadesha from others he yet desired that I should show

due respect and hospitality to Sants (saints). In fact, he made one Sant go to me.

Kaka Maharaj of Dhopeswar (near Rajapur) was a well known Sant. Some 25 years ago, he visited Poona and lodged with one Devle. He was besieged by a crowd of devotees inviting him to their place for meal and c; and I also made the same request. He regretted his inability to comply with my request. This was in the morning. Later at about noon of the same day, when I was at my office, I was surprised to learn that the maharaj had sent word to say that he would visit my house and so I sent him my tonga and went home to receive him. When I met him, I asked him how he happened to change his mind so suddenly since morning. Pointing to Sai Baba's portrait on my wall the maharaja replied "He would not allow me to rest till I came and saw you."

Shortly before this maharaj passed away, he had given leave to my son-in-law's brother Hari Gangadhar Josi (pleader, Thana) and another to go to Sai Baba and pay their respects. They started to Shirdi after Kaka Maharaj passed away. When they arrived at the mosque Baba was in a towering passion, in one of his fits of rage that seemed so ungovernable. But as soon as Baba saw these two arrivals standing outside the mosque he ordered them to be brought to him. When they went up he had sufficiently cooled down and they took darshan without any trepidation or uneasiness. Later Baba started out for Bhiksha. Then he said to them **"You have killed that old man (i.e., Kaka maharaj) and come here eh?"** Though he had not been told of the Maharaj's permission or his death he knew the facts and thus revealed to them at once his knowledge of the facts and his fellow feeling with that Maharaj.

(As you find from Vaman Rao Patel's Guru Smriti) Baba showed a bit of his chamatkar to my son-in-law Mr. Joshi, at Shirdi. When the latter asked for Udhi, Baba told him that he would get it later and in point of fact as Joshi travelled by train, a fellow-passenger gave him udhi given by Baba.

### **Dakshina Bhiksha Samstha**

In December 1915, I got a call from Baba, when I was at Poona and at his bidding I helped in forming the above

Society. I was made the president of it. We ran the Journal "Sainath Prabha" as its organ. This was not read to Baba previously or submitted for his approval.

It had a short career and was a failure. Hardly any copies are traceable. Parts 1 and 2 which alone are now available give some account of the state of affairs that prevailed at Shirdi Samsthan in 1915 to 1917 or 1918. The attempt to control monetary matters led to increase bitterness against me, resulting in Nanawali's action that drove me away from Shirdi and even led to issue of legal notices. Sometime after the formation of the Sabha (say some 11 months) Radhakrishna Ayi died. She had been in charge of all stores used for purpose of Sai Samsthan. When she died as she was an intestate Brahmin widow without heirs the Police came and took possession of all the properties in her custody. Then we had on behalf of the Sabha to apply for the return of all the articles for the Samsthan from the Kopergaon 1st class Magistrate. On the strength of local Mahajars also he passed order (M.E.R23 N2 1916) handing over Samsthan properties to the Samsthan i.e. Sabha on behalf of the Samsthan; yet internecine bickering continued. Some misguided devotees made use of the loss of a few silver appendages to the Samsthan horse trappings (worth very little after all) to issue a lawyer's notice to me in January 1918. I consulted Baba and he told me to give a reply and I gave it in the terms mentioned by Baba himself. Baba told me that he would protect me and that no proceedings would be taken. That proved to be true and no proceedings were taken against me or the Sabha. I do not know what has become of Mr. Sunder Rao Narayan who was the editor and soul of "Sai Nath Prabha". It is he who signs his "apothegms" and his "vision" in part I under the Nom de plume "Ramagir"

**Baba and other Sants:** his Antarjñana.

When I was at Shirdi one day Baba was at the Mosque. The time for his moving on to Lendi had arrived and yet he was not inclined to move out. He lay stretched beside the Mosque wall. When he had thus delayed his visit to Lendi by one hour, we asked him "It is high time for you to go the Lendi, Why do you not go?" Then Baba answered "Are maja Gajanan gela" i.e. '**Hallo! My Gajanan is**

**gone’.** Someone wrote that day from Shirdi to Shegaon to ascertain how Gajanan Maharaj the famous Saint of that place was doing. The answer came that he expired on the very day when Baba apprised us of the sad event.

### **Baba’s Prophecy.**

Sometime in 1917, Baba said **“Tilak is coming here”**. As there seemed to be nothing to induce Lokamanya to visit him, I thought Baba was referring to Tilak Maharaj i.e. Vaman Maharaj Tilak. In fact, however, Lokamanya visited him soon after (i.e. on 19-5-1917)

### **Baba’s activities**

Though Baba either out of humility or out of policy ascribed all beneficent things done for his visitors and devotees, to God he disclosed in many cases his own authorship by his words, e.g.

(1) About my pension he said (in pungentlang) that he would force the Authorities to pay me my full pension.

(2) Another instance comes to my mind now. Daji Hari Lele (Dt. Inspector of Land Records at Nasik) was proceeding to Shirdi to see Baba. On the way he went to the Library at Kopergaon and saw the Gazette. Therein he discovered that he had been promoted from Rs.125 to Rs.150. Then he came to Shirdi and bowed to Baba. Baba told him “Bring me Rs.15” the man said he had no money. Baba retorted “It is only yesterday I gave you Rs.25. Go and bring the money.” Lele then came to my wada, informed me of all the facts and borrowed the money to pay Baba.

### **Baba’s talks (Goshties):**

(1) Baba said once that as a boy he was weaving shawls, that his father was once so pleased with his handiwork that he gave him a pecuniary present of some Rs.5 or so.

(2) Once Baba said that he was ‘eating food’ (i.e., living) at the East Coast i.e., Coromandal Coast.

(3) Once he said “Pshaw what of Akbar! I have protected him in his infancy. He stood in fear of me.”

(4) the brahmin of Paithan (evidently referring to Eknath) I

knew. Brahmins of such excellent sort are not now-a-days seen.

(5) Chanbai Patel came to me and asked me about his horse. He said "Where did you drive my horse?" I replied. "Why do you charge me? Go and see: Your horse is grazing by the hedge."

This was all that issued from the mouth of Baba I used my imagination and built stories on these and wrote my "Sai Katha Karandaka". It was written without previous intimation to or obtaining the approval of Baba. Baba's utterances were short. He abruptly stopped many of his stories.

## V

### June 1936, Poona

Das Ganu Maharaj, i.e. Ganpatrao Dattatre Sahasrabuddhe, Brahmin, Kirtankar, aged about 78, residing generally at Nanded. (Nizam's State) says:

I have known Sri Sai Baba for a long time and I have given some account of him in my books (1) Bhakti Saramrita ch.26,65,66 and 67 (1925) (2) Bhakta Lilamrita Ch.31 (1906) and Ch 32 and 33 and (3) Santakatamrita Ch 57 Ch 31 of No.2 and Ch.57 of No.3 were published in Baba's lifetime.

Some facts i.e. autobiographical reminiscences came from Baba's own mouth. But they were very few. Besides, I had not spent much time with Baba. I rarely saw him. When I was at Shirdi, Baba did not allow me to stay long at the masjid. He made me go away to the Vittal temple where I stayed to write the lives of saints, or to spend my time in repetition of Vishnu Sahasranama etc. I made some inquiries about Baba also before writing these works. Some facts were within my personal knowledge. I was in active (police) service as a Havildar. I had however my literary and histrionic leanings. I took great interest in Tamashas (village plays) and took part in them. I composed poems impromptu, in lavani and other metres. While I was in service and Nana Saheb Chandorkar was D.C. or Collector's chitnis, he took me to Sai Baba. Even from the outset Sai Baba foresaw my future and wanted to save me from my own ways and choice of profes-

sion and pastime. He told Nana Saheb even in my presence. **“This man is fond of Tamashas, and of his service. Let him give it all up”**. He told me the same and NanaSaheb also. But I liked my pastimes and service. Gradually I gave up taking part in Tamashas i.e. village plays. As for service, I could not think of giving it up. Each time I was advised to give up service, I said “I will see.” Baba then said that only by sheer compulsion i.e. by being impailed, I could be made to quit service. So for about 10 years. Baba went on dinning into me directly and indirectly, that I should give up service I shall mention later how in 1903 I was reduced to giving up service after several disasters in which Baba’s grace saved me from punishment, disgrace, trouble of various sorts, and even death.

First I shall narrate how some facts about Baba’s antecedents were revealed at an examination of Baba as a witness. There was a thief charged with theft etc., of jewels in the Dhulia Tahsildar Magistrate’s Court. The accused pleaded that Sai Baba of Shirdi had given him the jewels and cited Baba as a witness. Summons came. Baba refused to receive it and had it thrown into his dhuni (fire). Anyhow the report was sent the summons had been served on Baba. But Baba did not go to Dhulia for the trial. So a warrant was issued by the Dhulia court for producing Sai Baba to give evidence at Dhulia. The warrant came to Ganapatramji, the Chief Constable of Kopergaon. He brought the warrant to Baba and informed him of its contents and requested Baba to go with him to Dhulia. Of course he had not the courage to arrest Baba. Baba was defiant. He cursed and swore and asked the constable to throw the warrant into some foul place. The constable was perplexed. I was there and told him to consult Baba’s devotee Nana Saheb Chandorkar then Dep. Collector at Ahmednagar. N.S.C was consulted and he said that if Sai Baba and the devotees disliked his going to Dhulia, the people should get a Mahazar prepared and get numerous signatures to it and send it up to Dhulia. This was done. The mahazar stated that Sai Baba of Shirdi was an extraordinary person, worshipped as God by vast numbers of devotees, that the enforcement of ordinary court’s process against him was neither proper nor desirable in view of the consequences that might follow etc., and that if his evidence



was necessary, a Commissioner might be sent to Shirdi to take his evidence. The Dhulia Court then sent a Commission. One Nana Joshi, Ist Class Magistrate, Assistant Collector came down to Shirdi to take the evidence of Baba. Three hours before his arrival Baba had sent for chairs and a table and improvised a Court at the Mosque. The Commissioner came and began Sai Baba's examination: and an extraordinary examination it was.

Commr: What is your name?

Baba : They Call me Sai Baba

C: Your father's name?

B: Also Sai Baba.

C: Your Guru's name?

B: Venkusa.

C: Creed or Religion?

B: Kabir.

C: Caste or race?

B: Parvardigar (i.e. God)

C: Age, please?

B: Lakhs of years.

C: Will you solemnly affirm that what you are going to say is the truth.

B: Truth.

C: Do you know the accused so and so?

B: Yes, I know him and I know every one.

C: The man says he is your devotee and that he lived with you. Is that so?

B: Yes, I live with every one. All are mine.

C: Did you give him Jewels as alleged ?

B: Yes I gave him. Who gives what to whom?

C: If you gave him the jewels how did you get them and become possessed of them?

B: Everything is mine.

C: Baba, here is a serious charge of theft. That man says that you delivered the jewels to him.

B: What is all this? What the devil I have to do with all that?

The Commissioner was floored by such answers. He did not know what to take down. Baba was mostly in a mood to say yes to every question. Then it was suggested that the

best course would be to sent for the village diary. The arrival of every stranger and the dates of his stay in the village are duly noted in it. If the accused who was of course a stranger to the village was not there at or about the time of his alleged receipt from Baba, that might be taken down. The diaries were sent for and they showed that no such person like the accused was at Shirdi at the time in question. Of course, it was well known that Baba never left Shirdi or its neighbourhood. Then the commissioner put it to Baba, that no such person was in the village of Shirdi and with Baba at Shirdi at the time in question and that Baba gave him no jewels and Baba said that was so and this was Baba's final statement. The examination was then over. Baba was not asked to sign or put his mark. The commission's evidence was sent to Dhulia. The accused was convicted and sentence to imprisonment.

Baba's age is a thing one cannot fix. Nor can his race and parentage be easily fixed. Forty years back I saw an old lady Salubai Shelke of Shirdi then aged 65 or 70. She told me that when she was married and that was in her 8th or tenth year, Baba came to Shirdi looking as he looked when we saw him (1895) i.e. 40 or 50 years old. Another old lady Sai Bai said "Baba came to Shirdi as a lad." This seems to make Baba's age over 100 at his Mahasamadhi. Who dare ask Baba about his age and antecedents? So nothing definite is known.

Baba however himself spoke about his earlier years occasionally. About his guru, Baba has several times said that 'Venkusa' This is found in Bhaktalilamrita (ch.31) was his guru and that by the grace of 'Venkusa' Baba had attained to his position. Most things about him were mysterious. Some of his miracles etc. were witnessed by me and some mentioned to me by others. Baba's converting water into oil and burning his lamps for a whole night with water alone was reported to me by numerous villagers who had seen it. Premchand Marwadi was one of those who refused to supply him that day with oil. I myself saw Baba sleeping on a plank suspended from the ceiling by a few slender shreds of torn cloth. The wonder was how he got up that plank suspended so high i.e. 7 or 8 feet above of the floor and 1 or 1 1/2 cubits below the roof. Four lamps were on it. People

watched to see how he got up or climbed down but could never discover either or how it supported him.

The passages 121 to 141 in Bhakta Lilamrit about Mr. Pense were mentioned to me by him. Thee three chapters 31,32 and 33 of the book were read as *Poti* (i.e. holy scripture) at the mosque before Baba: and he said **"It is Alright"** when Nana Saheb Chandorkar gave him the book. Baba did not say his five Namaz or even one Namaz, as Moslems do. When Fatia had to be done he generally ordered it to be pronounced by some one present. Sometimes he uttered the Fatia. He occasionally repeated parts of Quoran.

The instruction given to N.G.Chandorkar by Baba was mentioned to me by N.G.C. I expanded it with my own learning and gave it its present shape. But the kernel of it was given by N.G.C. Baba has several times talked Advaitic philosophy in presence. "I am God". "You are God" "All are God". He has said this many times. There is nothing Baba did not know. Baba was not explicit about what he did mostly. Here is an instance.

Once Valambi Master was Ry.Station Master at Kopergoan. He has no faith in Baba. He told me and other devotees "Baba is a mad man. Why do you all lionise him?" I, however, persuaded V.M. to go with me to see Baba at Shirdi. When we saw Baba, he was washing pots and placing them on the floor, mouth down and bottom upside. V.M. asked Baba, "What is all this?" Baba said "Every pot coming to me comes with mouth downwards" i.e., not to receive what could be put into them but in an unreceptive fashion like pots with their mouths downwards. There was at about 1898 or 1899 a notorious decoit named Kana Bhil who was robbing British and Native States, in parts of Ahmednagar and Bid districts. For three years the police were on his track, but could not catch him. I was only a havildar (co) at the time. But I and three others were put on special detective duty and directed to watch and report his movements. K.Bhil was so cunning and desperate and his C.I.D was so perfect that he spotted the three men and killed them one after another. I had done little work and my Inspector reported that I was useless and I had to put forward strenuous efforts. All that time I was passing for a Ramadas and doing kirtans in the

Ram Temple at Loni Varni, the headman (Patil) of, which was a friend and receiving visits from K.Bhil. K.Bhil found out all about me, my name, number (727) station, etc., and came one day to shoot me. I went and bowed to Sri Ram and prayed for life. The dacoit left the place with a warning to me that I was watched. I was really watched by his men and I could not leave the place. Again I got information from the village boys as to the programme and movements of K.Bhil and communicated it to the Police. The police came and put a cordon round the hill in which K.Bhil was hiding but he escaped further detective duty. Then Rale, Mamlatdar, tried the villages of Loni Varni for harbouring a dacoit. I gave evidence in favour of the Patil that he helped me with information and he was acquitted.

Absent from my jurisdiction without leave, I visited a holy place and returned up to Godavari and there I prayed and vowed to Baba holding Godavari water in my hands that if he would save me I would give up service. Then I discovered a gang in H.S. there with some booty and I got an excuse for my visit. The situation was saved miraculously. Still the ambition to become a Fouzdar was dominating me. I appeared for an examination and passed it to qualify myself. Baba told me that I was not going to get the Fouzdari post. I was posted to some place and I had to cross Shirdi on my way-but I did not wish to call on Baba as he would not approve of my continuance in service. So I was simply marching straight (and without turning into the village in the interior of which was the Mosque) on the main road touching Shirdi. Then as fate or Sai Baba would have it he came to the main road near the Lendi just as I came there and so I got down from my horse and fell at his feet. He then asked me to go over to the masjid. At the Masjid, he asked me, "Ganu! who took the vow taking a palmful of Godavari water in hand?" I answered "What harm is there? I am really going to resign". Baba said, "Wait. You will not listen to me while things are thus (i.e., smooth running)".

Then I got into another scrape without any fault of mine. A convict's fine Rs.32 was realised and sent up to my station to be credited to Govt. That was received by my

Assistant in my absence and he quietly pocketed it. Later, the man not being released, a complaint was made and inquiry followed. I was suspended. Punishment seemed imminent. I vowed that I would leave service if I escaped and then left service in 1903.

I had composed in 1898 a poem on Sivaji, which became a matter of enquiry. My defence was that I was an impromptu poet and this was my impromptu. I was not punished. Baba repeatedly told me when telling me to retire, "Go and settle at Nanded".

I: which Nanded?

Baba: Nanded in Nizam States.

I: How am I to get bread?

Baba: I will provide for you.

So I went on retirement to Nanded and there spent my time in performing Kirtans. I got food thereby.

I went on a pilgrimage to Puri and on the way, one Tembe Swami (Vasudevanand Saraswathi) whom I had known already met me and asked me if I was going to Shirdi. I said "Yes, not immediately but a few months later". Then he gave me a coconut saying, "Present this as mine to Sai Baba". I took it and kept it in my bag. During my further travels, my companions, took it out and then ate it up. When I went to Shirdi, as soon as I approached Sai Baba he said "Here is the thief. Where is the coconut given by my brother?" A friend gave me plots of cultivable land for a very nominal price. They yield me enough to live upon. These are now maintaining me. Bere's tonga escaping highway robbery which is described in B.S. Is personally known to me. I went in that tonga with Bere.

I receive no money for my Kirtans. I never did. The hat was not and is not sent round either before or after my Kirtan for contributions. My bhaktas write and invite me to their abodes in various parts of the country. I go and stay with them and perform Kirtans and write books etc. I am a single individual without any family and my needs are few. I was not one of those who got moneys from Baba. Several of those that he was regularly paying everyday were subjected to Income-Tax. After Lokamanya Tilak visited Baba (1915-1917) the Income-Tax department directed its attention to the

Shirdi Samsthan. Some officer came to Shirdi and watched the income. They wanted first to tax Sai Baba, but (perhaps seeing that he had little left with him to proceed upon) they taxed his regular donees; viz. Tatyapa Patel, Bade Baba, Bagia and Bayyaji Patel. For me as also for Mahalsapathy, Baba took care to see that we were not pestered with money and its cares. He has given me spiritual benefit far superior to monetary gifts. He has created and confirmed my faith in various ways. He has taught me valuable lessons and given me precious experience.

Once for Mahashivaratri, I was at Shirdi and I wanted to have "Gangasnan" (i.e. a dip in the river Godavari) at Singaba (three miles off Shirdi) that day. Megha daily brought that water for sprinkling or pouring (Abhisheka) over Baba as Ganga must naturally fall on Mahadeva's head. But Baba did not allow me to go. He said "Ganga is here at my feet. Do not go" I felt depressed. Theoretically, I knew that he was God Narayana and that Ganga flowed from Narayana's feet. But that was a poor weak faith insufficient to give my heart the pleasure which a tangible Ganges bath would give me. Baba knew my mentality and asked me to approach his feet and hold my palm near the feet. The water began to flow from both his feet. It was not a few drops like perspiration. It was rather a slow and thin current. In a short time, say a few minutes, I had collected a palmful of that water. Here was Ganga and I was delighted. I bathed i.e. sprinkled the water over my head. I did not drink this water. Usually I do not drink the Tirtha offered at Baba's Arati. On one occasion Jog complained to Baba about it. Baba then said that I should abide by my own convictions and sampradaya and that Jog should not trouble me.

But Baba did not always respect orthodoxy at least in some matters. My orthodoxy keeps me off from eating onions in any form. Baba on the other hand, liked onions and would seldom have a meal without onions. He told me to prepare Pitla i.e. sauce of onions, give to him and eat part of it. I prepared it and brought it to him. He asked me if I ate it at my lodgings. I said yes. But really what I did there was to touch the onion dish with a finger tip and touch my chin with it and draw a line from my chin to the nether lip as a token of my tasting it and I would wash my hand and face thereafter.

Baba knew (what is it he did not know?) how I practised this trick and he showed others how I did the trick. **“He pretends he eats but only touches it with his fingers and applies the finger over the chin”** was what he said and showed. Then he told me that I should really eat onion. He had a high opinion of onion as an item of the daily fare-though orthodoxy rejects it, chiefly on the grounds of its immediate and ultimate odour and its aphrodisiac properties, “But if one digests it i.e. overcomes it injurious i.e. lust producing tendencies it does no harm but good” was what Baba said. So at Shirdi, as long as Baba was alive I would take onion except on Ekadashi days.

Q: Did Baba rub coins smooth with mantra?

Baba occasionally smashed my programmes for visiting holy places like Pandharpur. I was keen on Bhadrapad and Aswin months-especially Aswin Ekadashi at Pandharpur. In 1916, I met Nanasaheb Chandorkar at Manmad and told him I was going to Pandharpur as Bhadrapad was about to begin. He took me however with him to Shirdi and Baba made me do ‘Saptaha’ and Kirtan there for a week. When I originally began Kirtans it was at the bidding of Nanasaheb Chandorkar and in Baba’s Samsthan at Shirdi. In fact I had started it in the usual fashionable dress (i.e. head gear) etc., of Kirtankars and shone in borrowed plumes-borrowed from Chandorkar. But Baba at once objected my adopting that dress and made me do off it. I am doing Kirtans since then in Orthodox “Dotar” (i.e. nether cloth) I was thus detained for over one month at Shirdi. Bhadrapad was gone and Aswin was to begin. I felt chagrined at being detained from going to Pandharpur and was there for Ashwin. N.G.Chandorkar wanted to detain me even then. I said within myself. "How is he (i.e. Baba) a Guru who blocks my way to God (of Pandharpur)? Baba of course read my mind and told me to go away at once to Pandharpur and told N.G.C. not to stop me. So I gladly went to Pandharpur and was there for Ashwin.

Baba did not grant me some of my spiritual prayers. I wanted to get Sakshatkar (i.e. vision) of the God that I worship-just as Namdev and others got. So I went to Baba several times with the request that he should give me Sakshatkar. He was saying each time “wait, wait”. Finally

(probably in 1916 the above period) I asked him “Baba you have been long putting off my request. When will you give me Sakshatkar?” Then he said **“You see me. That is Sakshatkar. I am God”** I replied that I expected that he would say so; but that I was not satisfied with that. I consoled myself with the explanation that my destiny did not provide for my getting Sakshatkar and that Saints could not overcome destiny. After Baba passed away, I have been seeing several Saints. But hardly any of them satisfied me. There was one that specially impressed me. Near my place- Nanded in 1919 there was a *Virakta Brahmachari* staying on a rock having no possessions and caring for nothing. I saw him first, when I was performing my wife’s ceremony and was powerfully attracted. As I went there, to take his Darshan he turned away from me and prevented my taking Darshan. This happened thrice. I was deeply disappointed, nay mortified. Anyhow, let me have the merit of feeding him. I thought, and went home, I sent up a man to that Brahmachari with food. I was agreeably surprised to learn that he accepted it. Then I was emboldened to go to him once again and asked him why he would not permit me to bow to him and to take Darshan. He said no reply.

“You call yourself a Kirtankar. Have you left off Ahankar i.e. Egotism?”

I: No. How can I? Each man has Ahankar.

He: Did you not feel ahankar, when sending me food, feeling that it was you taht were sending food etc.?

I: Ahankar being of three sorts *Satwik*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* some sort of Ahankar would underlie all action; only the worst forms are to be shunned.

He was not of that opinion. He wanted me to drown my Ego completely. He was always reading my mind. He gave me some samples of is power.

He: Are you not engaged in writing the lives of Saints?

I: yes.

Then he quoted a few lines of verse taht I had just composed six days previously and not published in any way. I has taken aback by the *Antaryamitva* of his. Again he asked



me “Did you not get Ganga water from the feet of Sai Baba?

I: Yes.

He: What did you do with it?

I: I sprinkled it over my head.

He: And you did not drink it, because you thought you were a brahmin and would be polluted by drinking it. Look at your Ego-tism.

Seeing his nature and powers, I daily spent three or four hours alone with him at night. Some of those who were going to me and having a good opinion of me and a poor opinion of that Brahmachari wondered at my conduct and one of them (let us merely give him some random name) Beake began to heckle me about it. I told him that the Brahmachari had psychic power and could even know the contents of other minds. Beake doubted my veracity and I had to take him once to the Brahmachari and tell the latter of Beake's unbelief. Then followed a very interesting conversation.

Br : (to me) what? You want to make an exhibition of me, as though I were a monkey!

I: No. But this person is full of unbelief.

Br: (to Beake) Shall I tell you some fact then about yourself.

Beake: Yes.

Br: Had you not immoral relations with Z?

Beake: No

Br: was it not Z that was maintaining you and supporting you for a long time?

Beake: No.

Then the Brahmachari clinched the whole matter of his truthfulness and his power by immediate proof.

Br: Shall I tell you what is in your pocket?

Beake: Yes.

Br: You have a letter from the Raja of Kolhapur about the affairs of ‘Satya Samaj’, which you are supporting. Take the latter out and give it to Maharaj (i.e. me D.G) (That was done).

Then the Brahmachari gave full details of the contents of the letter. My friend was flabbergasted. He had placed the letter in my hand. Every word spoken of it by the Saint was

true, and it proved that consequently what was said about z also must be true. As my friend felt humiliated and would make some progress if I left him alone with the Saint, I left him there and went away. My friend did improve in giving up his bad associations and his other bad habits. The Saint's name and fame spread so quickly that he Tahsildar insisted on my producing him one evening for delivering a Pravachan. The Tahsildar the Autocrat of Cham of the Taluk, of course, believed that the Saint could not decline to go the meeting nor decline to speak. But before the day fixed for the meeting, it was discovered that the Saint left that place. He left it for good and was never again seen or heard off.

The books I wrote about Sai Baba are:-

1. Santakathamrita - first. This was written bit by bit when I was in service i.e. before 1903 both the portions about Baba and about others. But it was printed in 1903. Baba blessed the effort. None of my books was read to Baba. Nor was Baba asked beforehand to give the information for writing the books. What he spoke of his own accord was picked up. Baba had talked of his "Selu" antecedents and I made inquiries at Selu about Baba's antecedents. Baba said about each book when placed in his hand. "That is alright". I do not know whether Baba knew how to write, read or even to sign his name.

II. Next came Bhakti Lilamrita. This was published in Baba's life time- 1906.

III. Lastly came the Bhakti Saramrita. The two chapters viz; 52-53 therein relating to Baba were placed in his hands and he said "alright". But other chapters were composed later from time to time mostly after 1918; in 1925 this book was printed as a whole.

The account given in it (in chapter 28) about Baba's antecedents at Selu is based partly on Baba's statements and partly on what the villagers of Selu told me. The only thing Baba said of Selu and the Selu period was that he came from Selu. So I started while I was in service and went to Selu to make enquiries. I cannot specify any villager as having told me anything in particular. My inquiry was 35 years back. The villagers said that there was an old Saint that a young

Fakir boy was being trained by him, that some got vexed with the Saint and threw stones at him and killed him and that the boy escaped and that all this took place 100 years previously. Sai Baba told me, in the presence of Chandorkar, that the brick he used as a pillow at Shirdi and which is still retained as a relic of Baba at Shirdi was given by his Guru to him, that his Guru was "Venkusa". The version about Baba's telling Chandorkar is my own, as I wished to avoid dragging my own name into my own work and figuring in it too prominently. Chandorkar did not know if he maintained a diary or note of his experiences. As for Ratanji incident, it was a small affair. He invited me to tea and then the Nanded Moulvi came also. Nice dishes of almonds, pistachio etc. were supplied. The cost of all would not be very great, say anything more than 3 or 4 rupees. Then Ratanji went to Shirdi. Baba told him that Baba had already received this amount and asked him for the balance. When Ratanji came back to Nanded, he narrated these facts and wondered what Baba meant by saying that he had received the sum. I asked him to see the amount entered in his accounts on the evening of the tea given to the Moulvi. The exact amount entered in that account (viz 3-12-0) was what Baba said had been given. This is the truth. The rest is all elaborated out of this. The Tomb referred to is that of Sai Baba's guru and was not visible when we saw it first. It was merely land and underneath it was the tomb. Sathe Saheb built a flight of steps over it leaving a niche for worshipping that guru.

When I first went with Nana G. Chandorkar to see Sai Baba, that was out of a desire to ingratiate myself with N.G.C., and with no particular desire to see Sai Baba or esteem for him. I had no spiritual or other temporal desire or object in seeing Baba. One year later, I chanced to see Vaman Sashi Islampurkar, an old Brahmin of Islampur near Osmanabad (N.S) a graduate (of the Madras University) and a married man. I had to attend upon him at Saigonda in obedience of my superior's orders. Finding him to be highly devout and spiritually advanced and believing that a Guru was necessary to obtain Moksha, I asked him to give me Upadesh as and he agreed. He gave me Siva Mantra Upadesh as desired by me, for then I was an out and out Shivbhakta. He told me to go on with my Mantra. I then asked him as I was visiting Sai,

whether that was harmful. He said that no harm could arise if one was firm in his faith, whatever Saints he visited. I asked him what sort of person Sai Baba was and he replied that he had himself visited Shirdi and stayed with Baba for three days, that Baba was a great Saint and Ramabhaktas, whom none had yet properly understood and that people would get to know and appreciate him later on. With this estimation in my view I had more regard for Baba and I went to him with more faith.

Two years after my Mantropadesh, I received a letter from my Guru that I should proceed to Bhusaval to meet him. There he told me that he was proceeding to Kasi where he would have his final Samadhi six months later, i.e. on the following Jyeshtha Vadya Ekadashi. His object in sending for me was that I should perform his funeral rites. The Guru shed tears as he said this. I came home and found that the Guru had sent me 500 rupees notes by insured post intended for the celebration of the funerals etc., and a letter containing his last Will and Testament. On the Ekadashi day in question, I got a wire from Kasi mentioning the Guru's death on that day. From that date, I am performing that Guru's anniversary on that Tithi. I told Sai Baba of it and he approved.

### **Baba and Orthodox Moslems.**

Baba some times came into some conflict with the local Mussulmans, as very often his acts and ideas did not agree with their Orthodoxy. Bade Baba and other once asked Sai Baba to go outside the town for saying the Kutba prayers. Baba said, "Yes, Let us go", at first; but when they finally came to take him, he declined to go. Another time they came up and offered prayers inside the Mosque. But Baba did not join them in that group prayer. At Moharram, some local Moslems came up to Baba and said they wanted to bring into the Mosque a Tajia. Then they constructed a Tajia and brought it and installed it on the fifth of Moharram at the Mosque. Baba allowed it to remain there for a couple of days and then dragged it out and placed it on his fire saying "I do not want a corpse in the Mosque". The Moslems who were working up their Tajia dared not do anything against this powerful Baba. An orthodox Moslem brought a 'Sera', i.e. an ornamental arrangement of flowers, to decorate the niche in

the Mosque and wanted Baba's permission. Baba said "Take it and put it on Hanuman". The Moslem replied that he was a Moham-medan and could not decorate a Hindu idol. Baba fulminated some foul abuse (in which Hanuman was depicted as superior Allah) and the Sera was taken away.

Baba's respect for Hanuman or Maruthi:- There was a small image of this God in a corner of the upper platform of the Chavadi. Baba was in the lower platform and when showers began to drive into it, some one told Baba that he should go up into the upper platform. Baba refused to do so saying "How can we be seated on the same level as God?" Fakir Baba alias Bade Baba brought up a recent convert from Hinduism to Islam to the Mosque. Baba slapped that convert and taunted him with the remark **"You have changed you father"**. Even towards Hindu Gods as to Allah, he would use uncomplimentary expressions in some moods. People occasionally asked him for permission to go to Pandharpur and he would reply "Go" but would add some abuse. On the other hand, when Arati was sung of Jnanadev or Tukaram, he would sit up and fold his palms in reverence.

Baba's treatment of Advaitism is not easy to make out. He never expressly dealt with it. He would say "I am God", "God is in all" etc. He was really Advaita personified. He was sitting up still whatever went on. Thirty two dancing girls would come and play before him daily; he would never care to look at them. He never cared for anything. He was detached and in his Ananda state once a devotee asked him "What is God (Brahma like?" Baba did not reply to him but sent some one to Bagchand Marwadi for 100 rupees. That man did not give it but sent his Namaskar to Baba. He sent the man to another person with the same negative result. Baba then sent for Nana Saheb Chandorkar and asked him for 100 rupees. Nana Saheb Chandorkar sent a chit to the said Bagchand Marwadi and the latter sent 100 rupees at once. Baba merely remarked "All is like this in the world". The questioner asked me later on privately why Baba gave no answer. I explained that the demands for dakshina and the response thereto were the reply to the questioner. When other asked for money, it was not forthcoming. But when Nana Saheb Chandorkar wanted it, it came at once. Similarly the man who merely wants to know Brahman does not get it.

It is he who is qualified to know it that gets it. The lesson is “Deserve before you desire (Brahman)”.

As for miracles, I have hardly seen any of Baba. I saw him about 1898 sleeping on a plank suspended about 7 or 8 feet above the ground. The wonder was how he got into or out of it, without a ladder. How he could swing himself up or down, none saw.....They supporting threads were weak and lamps were loosely placed on it. They would fall down if one swings into it. When I went to see him as he lay in it. He got angry and drove me off. Baba was occasionally doing something strange between 1p.m and 2 p.m at the mosque with a cloth screen in front of him and when he was alone. He would take out of a pouch 10 or 15 old coins. They were of various values and descriptions i.e. 0-0-3, 0-0-6, 0-1-0, 1-2-0, 1-4-0, 0-8-0, 1-0-0. He would rub his finger tips constantly yet gently against their surface (whether with or without mantra, I cannot say). Their surfaces had all become worn out and smooth. He would say, as he rubbed his finger against the coins, “This is Nana’s, this is Bapu’s, this is Kaka’s, etc.” If any one approached, he would gather the coins, put them back in the pouch and hide them.

Baba spoke thousands of “goshties”. I will narrate a few. Once he said “I was at Punthamba. There was a struggle there between two parties. I wondered why they fought. I found near them a potful of coins. That was the bone of contention between them. Then I quietly moved up and carried it away. They found that their wealth was gone and began to mourn and lament. I was saying to myself. “Who am I? What is this wealth? Whose is it? What confusion and struggle for this? The pot is mine and I am the pot’s.”

Baba once spoke thus: “My mother was greatly rejoicing that she had got a son (i.e., me). I was for my part wondering at her conduct. When did she beget me? Was I begotten at all? Have I not been already in existence? Why is she rejoicing over this?”

Once at Shirdi, somebody had prepared “Sira (i.e., sweetened semolina pudding). Baba asked me if I had been given ‘Sira’. I then said that I was not on good terms with B.....a and that I had not been given ‘Sira’. Baba then gave me

instructions. **“Who gives what to whom? What is this ‘Sira’? Who eats it? Do not say of anyone that he is inimical. Who is whose enemy? Do not entertain any ill feelings towards anyone. All are one and the same.”** That idea is brought out at the end of Ch.II of my commentary on Amritanubhava.

A religious person of Satara once offered to teach me Vedanta but I said that I could rely on Sai Baba’s help in taht mater. Then that person jeered at Baba and said taht as a Moslem he knew nothing and could teach nothing of Vedanta. I did not waver in my faith and so I went to Sai Baba and told him that I wished to write a commentary on well known Vedantic work. Amritanubhava. Baba placed his hand on my head, blessed me and gave a permission to write. I found that the numerous goshties I had heard from Baba furnished me with fresh analogies and similies to embellish my commentary with and avoid a repetition of the stock similies. I have composed numerous Kirtans and Stotras and written other works. A list of them is given in Ch.63 of Bhakti Saramrita P.333 including Manache Sloka-Jalada Dhus.

Baba occasionally sang Musalmani songs that I could not understand.

## VII

**May, 1936**

Dattatreya Damodar Rasane, alias Nana Sahib Rasane (or Daulatshah), Son of Damodar (or Anna) Savalram Rasane, Kasar, aged 40, Ravivarpur, Poona says:

My father is an old devotee of Sai Baba. He went to Baba about the time Nana Saheb Chandorkar went to him. Then my father had no issue and wanted to go to Baba to get his blessings for obtaining issue. About 1900, a devotee had sent Baba a parcel of excellent Goa mangoes. Of these he kept apart six and distributed the rest as prasad to persons present. They wanted him to distribute the remaining six also. But Baba said he had reserved some for Damya (i.e., my father). But they said ‘Damya is not here’. **“He has arrived at Kopergaon and will be here soon”**, said Baba. Soon after that, my father went to Baba and presented him with flower gar-

lands, *chadar* etc. Then Baba said **“Damya! Take these fruits now. Eat and die.”** My father was frightened at these words. But Mhalsapati who was there told him that it was a blessing to die at Baba’s feet. Thus encouraged, my father thought he would eat the fruit. But Baba came to his relief with these words. **“Do not eat the fruits yourself. But give them to your junior wife. You will have two sons first. You should name the first Daulat Shah and the second Thana Shah”** etc. My father returned to his home at Ahmednagar and gave the fruits to his junior wife. He then noted the names to be given to the promised sons in a notebook. One year after that, I was born. When I was 15 months old my father took me to Sai Baba at Shirdi for *darsan* and he then asked Baba “How shall I name this child?” Baba replied **“have you forgotten what I told you? You have written it at page 3 of your notebook. Did I not say that he should be named Daulat Shah?”**

In my fifth year (i.e. in 1900) I was taken to Shirdi for my tuft ceremony and given my first initiation into the mysteries of the Alphabet. Sai Baba held my hand and wrote on the slate etc. Thereafter I was taken to the school at Shirdi. When I was to be married, four girls were offered to me. My father never acted in any serious matter without previously consulting and getting the sanction of Baba. He went to Sai Baba and placed before him all the four horoscopes (i.e. of the offered girls) one of which had 2,500 or 3,000 rupees dowry and asked him which was to be chosen. Baba selected a poor girl’s horoscope and gave it into the hands of my father. That was the girl I married. My father invited Baba to attend the marriage which was to take place at Pandharpur. But Baba replied, **“I am with you. Do not fear. Whenever you think of me, there I am with you.”** My father pressed him further to attend the marriage. Baba, however declined the invitation with these words: **“Without God’s permission nothing can be done by me. I will send Shama (i.e. Madhav Rao) to attend it as my deputy.”** And Shama attended it at Pandharpur.

I have a younger brother and he was named according to directions of Baba. As for the issue of my marriage, two girls and a boy were born but expired within a few months of their birth owing to fits. The male child died in 1926, my wife’s health was bad and I was in great depression of spirits;



and in that state I prayed to Him thus; instead of giving me many babies that die quickly give me at least one child that will live long". When I was sleeping there at Shirdi. Baba appeared in my dream and said that male child I was grieving over was born in Moola Nakshatra (i.e., under the constellation Moola) and that was harmful to the parents. I saw in that dream a bright circle like the sun on Baba's breast. Or rather inside the sun, Baba was sitting with my deceased child on his lap and he said "I took away this dangerous child from you. I will give you a good child. Do not fear." Before this time our family had migrated from Ahmednagar to Poona. When I went home I looked up the dead child's horoscope and noticed that Moola was really the constellation under which the child was born. In fifteen months of the visit I got a son who is still alive. This was in 1918.

My faith in Sai Baba increased. I look upon other Saints as Sai Baba and when I bow to them, I say either expressly or within myself "I bow to Sadguru Samartha Sainath." In 1927 I visited Khedgonpet and bowed to Narayan Maharaj with this thought or these words. He told me "Your guru is Paramaguru. He is of a higher sort than myself. Why did you come here? Your prarabdha- *sanchita* is there. Your choice is excellent. Go there and you will achieve your purpose." This was before the birth of the son I referred to in the last paragraph.

In 1927 my stars were not auspicious and my health was bad. I went up to the temple of Sitaram Uttareswar (i.e Siva) 2 miles from Junner (about 40 miles from Poona) and worshipped the God every Sunday. One Sunday at 9 p.m when I placed flowers on the God with the words, 'Namaskar (i.e., Salutation) to Sai Baba", I saw a light at the image of the God and in that light the form of Sai Baba, whom I am always thinking of. Then my health improved and my drooping spirits revived. A saint, Janaki Das is living there. Every Sunday I went and bowed to him also with Sai Baba's name on my lips. He then told me "You have resorted to a great saint. Why do you come to a poor saint like me? People like myself seize the feet of Sai Baba. Then I went to my lodgings and slept. Sai Baba appeared in my dream as a fakir and said "You are full of anxiety. Give me *biksha*, your entire

body and mind as biksha.”

I : I will give this biksha and then inform my father.

Baba: How can you do it without consulting your father?

I: I am master of my life. My father has other sons and he will not object. You gave the children and there can be no objection to my being given to you.

Then Sai Baba took my body up in his palm and put me into his breast pocket. I was filled with bliss at the thought that he was so kind to me as to put me near his heart. When I woke up I found myself happy and my mind at once attained indifference. *Udasinata* or *Vairagya*. Things did not attract me and hold my mind as they did formerly. Two or three months later i.e. in 1928 (phalugun vadya) a son was born to me at Pandharpur. Fifteen months later, when I and my father went to Shirdi, he prayed to Baba that I should have one more son. In 1931 I got another son and that child was named Saidas. On the second day of its birth, it had high fever. Baba's *udhi* and *tirtha* were given to it and cloth relics of Baba were enclosed in a *Tayath* and tied to it. It recovered and got alright. When it completed its first year, it was taken to Shirdi; abhishek was done, clothes presented to Samadhi and Brahmins were fed. In 1931 I was placed in charge of the bangle business. I insisted that it should be named after Baba. It is called (after getting Baba's permission by casting lots before his picture) Sri Samartha SaiNath & Co. It is conducted on lines of probity and God conscience. Any *udhi* and *Tirtha* that I give in Sai Baba's name cure and bless the person that receives these.

On 1-9-1932 I was on pilgrimage of Muttra and had an attack of cholera. Death appeared imminent. My father asked me what were my last wishes. I said I merely wanted to be taken to Shirdi, to be burnt there if I die as Sai Baba was my Krishna. But with Baba's photo placed over my head (*udbatti* being burnt before it) and with the frequent application of Baba's *udhi* and *Tirtha* at Muttra, I was somehow pulling on. At midnight, my sister-in-law Subadrabai who was there had an *avesam*, that is, the spirit of Miradatar a saint of Unava (in Gujarat near Sidpur) spoke through her mouth. Miradatar was a renowned Mohammedan Wali (i.e., Saint) and spoke thus (through her) “You are calling on Sai,

He is old and cannot easily move. He is my uncle (Kaka). On his behalf and as he sent me, I have come. Have no fears. You will have his blessing. You will see him in spirit tomorrow. Prepare a cup of coffee and give it to the patient.” Coffee was prepared and I took it with a little of Baba’s udhi in it. Thereafter fever ceased and I had no more motions. The cure was so sudden as to surprise the doctor whom I went to see the next day. “Yesterday, this man was at point of death and how does he get so quickly cured as to come here today?” Was his question. I replied that Sai is a doctor of doctors and that his sacred udhi saved me.

When I was young, say seven years old I went to Shirdi and was massaging Baba’s foot. At that time Baba began the distribution of sweets with his own hand to the children present. Naturally my attention turned to the sweets and I grew slack in massaging. My mother was at my side and she beat me saying “You are thinking of sweets and neglect the service of Baba”. “You, old woman” cried Baba, “Why do you beat the boy?” My mother requested him to give me a good desire to perform service to Baba. Baba answered “The boy will serve me well. God will endow him with pure desires. Do not fear. Do not beat him.” When I was twelve years, I went with an elder cousin to Shirdi. We had 100 rupees with us. Baba asked for dakshina, 10 rupees once, 15 rupees another time etc. Only 25 rupees were left with my cousin in his pocket and we at once wrote home to Ahmednagar for more money to give Baba and for our return journey. That evening Baba asked my cousin for 25 rupees and he replied that our money had been exhausted and that we required money for our return journey. Baba’s retort was quick. “Why talk all this humbug? You have got 25 rupees in a corner of your pocket. The M.O. you have written for will come here tomorrow. Do not fear.” My cousin paid up the 25 rupees at once.

Baba used to say “Who gives me one, to him I give two. Who gives two, to him I give five. Who gives me five, I give him ten.” There was besides the obvious meaning of God’s or Baba’s returning one’s gift manifold and esoteric meaning in these word.

## VII

Damodar Savlram Rasane, Kasar, alias Anna Rasane S/o Savalram Rasane, formerly of Ahmednagar now at Poona says:

What my son said is true about his birth. When I went to Baba, desirous of issue, he was kind enough to remember me and give me his blessings. When I was still on my way to Shirdi, passing through Kopergaon station, he mentioned at Shirdi that I was coming and reserved mango fruits for me. He gave me those fruits with the blessing that I should give them to my junior wife and that she would bring forth two sons first. She at the fruit and gave birth to two sons, one fifteen months after my visit, the other years later and he gave names to both in advance. I noted those names in my note book (page 3) and these children bear those names also, in addition to the usual Hindu names I have given them. I prayed to Baba for a second grandson at his samadhi and he was born. When I first went to Baba, one Bala Patel of Nevasa or Seagoan was sweeping the masjid and doing (in various ways) service to Baba.

I always took Baba's advice and acted up to it and the results were always satisfactory. Once I had an appeal in the High Court, and the lawyer had written to me to go to Bombay. Then Baba detained me and prevented me from going. Yet the result of the appeal was in my favour.

Nanasaheb Dingle brought a big silver plate full of various dainties and begged Sai Baba to eat. Baba shouted out. A black dog ran up and licked up some of the food. Nanasaheb Dingle who was standing near looked at it with disgust. "Is it for this pariah dog that I prepared all this", he thought within himself. Baba at once flung away the plate with its contents towards him and said "Take it away". I was present then.

I remembered always Baba's treatment to low creatures and men of low position as his equals or as himself. Once when I went to Baba and knowing that he would not care to go to my lodgings and have his dinner there, requested that he might send Bala Patel to be my guest. Bala

Patel was of a low caste. So Baba in granting my request said "Don't cry Dhut Dhut at him" i.e. do not humiliate the guest by giving him place far away from your own place of eating. I agreed. When I had prepared sumptuous meals, I spread one plate for Baba and filled it with all eatables and then called out "Baba, come!" A black dog came in and ate from the plate. I waited reverently till it finished its meal and then gave meals to others and took my own. I gave Bala a plate and made him sit near me and not outside the house.

My mind is always dwelling on Baba, and often I see him here. Sometimes Baba abused me and beat me even fiercely. But I knew that as with Akkalkote Mahraj, blows and abuse have an auspicious ending. So I never resented or grumbled and I never gave up my attachment to him. He has asked Muslims to do their namaz and then go to him to read their Quran; he has talked with moulvis on their religion. I was not asked by nor have I given any information regarding my experience to Das Ganu Maharaj or Dabholkar. I went to Baba for the first time about 1895. In the year after I went Ramanavami Utsav celebration began and for these 40 years. I have provided one ornamental standard for that occasion every year. That was before Nana was born.

The Statement I had three wives is wrong. I had two both living when I went to Baba, I had consulted astrology, Ketu was in the fifth place in horoscope and so there was the difficulty of getting issue. But Baba, a Satpurush, over came all that. He anticipated and provided for the issue of so many years. He said 8 children will be borne to my younger wife, to whom I was to give the four mango fruits he gave me. As for business consultations with Baba, the proposal about speculating at Bombay in cotton was from a broker. He was not to be partner. I was to be sole venturer. I went to Baba, thinking I would allot a share to him in the profits and I was massaging his feet. Then Mahalsapathy, I and Baba alone were the three present. Baba replied expressly that he did not wish to get involved in any Samsara (like sharing profits). So I gave up that idea. On another occasion, I went to Shirdi and there I expressly asked Baba if I could trade in grain, wheat etc. He said that the prices would fall and that I would have to sell at a lower price than the price at which I bought. I gave up that proposal. But when I mentioned the prophecy

of Baba to a merchant friend, he showed me the prophecy was falsified by the steady rise in prices for many days. But Srawan came and there were good rains. The prices suddenly fell and the grain storers had a serious loss. Baba saved me from that fate.

I never started any transaction without getting sanction from Baba. When he was in the flesh, I went to Shirdi and asked him mentally. After 1918, I still consult him, by chits etc. and he guides me still. Once when I sat at his feet along with many others, I had two questions in my mind and he gave answers to both.

I. There are so many crowding to Sai Baba. Do they all get benefit from him?

To this he replied orally. "Look at the mango tree in blossom. If all flowers turned fruit what a splendid crop it would be. But do they? Most fall off (either as flowers or as unripe fruits, by wind, etc.) very few remain".

II. My second question was about myself. If Baba were to pass away, how hopelessly adrift I would be and how am I to fare then? To this, Baba answered that he would be with me whenever I thought of him wherever I thought of him. That promise he has kept up before 1918 and after 1918. He is still with me. He is still guiding me. This was about 1910-11 when my brothers had separated from me and my sister died and there was a theft and Police enquiry, all of which incidents upset me very much.

(These are mentioned in S.L.M. III (5) 368 and 369)\*

## VIII

8th December, 1936

Abdul, Son of Sultan of Nanded in Khandesh, Aged about 65, Mussulman, residing at Shirdi says:

I came to Shirdi 45 years ago (1889) from Nanded on the banks of Tapti. I was under the care of Fakir Amiruddin of Nanded. SaiBaba appeared in the dream of that Fakir and delivering two mangoes to him directed him to give those fruits to me and to send me to Shirdi. Accordingly the Fakir told me of his dream, gave me the fruits and bade me go to Sai Baba at Shirdi. I came here in my twentieth year. Even Nana Saheb Chandorkar had not then come to Baba. Baba welcomed me saying "mera kavala ala" i.e. My crow is come" Baba directed me to devote myself entirely to his service. From the beginning, I lighted and fed with oil five perpetual lamps i.e. those at Lendi, Masjid, Chavadi, etc. As for food, Baba was not giving me or any one else food. I got some food somehow and lived 5 or 6 years in what is now the stable. I was always by Baba's side rendering service. I read Koran near him at the mosque. Baba occasionally opened the Koran and made me read the passages at which he opened the book. He occasionally quoted passages from the Koran. I went on writing down what Baba was uttering. This is the book (in Mahratti and Modi script) which contains the gracious utterances of Baba. Everything which fell from his lips is sacred.

I make use of this record in the following way. By Baba's blessings, I have full faith in what he has said guiding me and every one aright. When any one wished to know about the future or other unseen and unknown matter, he comes to me and states the problem. Then I reverently consult this book of Baba's utterances and the answer that comes out of the page opened comes out correct. This has been tried and proved many times. This gift of prophecy is due to Baba's grace. I shall give two instances of such consultation. When the well in the Sai Mandir was dug, the water proved brackish. Baba had attained Mahasamadhi at that time. I consulted his utterance book. Baba's reply was that as a result of deeper digging the well water would be-

come sweeter. I dug the well deeper by two feet and well water was no more brackish. A second instance is Barrister Gadgil's. He wanted to know if his son would return from England. I said he would and he did. I use this manuscript book of Baba's utterances along with and just like the Koran. I go on reading it reverently, getting absorbed in it and go on rolling my beads at the same time.

Baba sat behind what is now a pillar like structure at the Lendi in which a "Nanda Deepam" or perpetual lamp is kept up. I found generally that Baba sat behind the Lendi pillar which enclosed the lamp and not in front. From there the lamp was not visible to him. I never saw him gazing at that lamp. I was the person to do the required service at the Lendi and at other places for Baba. I used to fill pots with water and place them near Baba at the Lendi lamp place. He would sit near two such potsful of water; and he would go on pouring out the water in various directions. What that was for and whether he would utter any mantra while doing so, I cannot say. Except me none else was present when he poured out water as stated above.

I do not think that any other Mohammedan except myself was reading Koran or other Holy books sitting by Baba's side. Baba would occasionally go on speaking out scared words and I have noted them in this note book. By Baba's order or permission I have taken all this down. The writing can be read by you or other devotees. The script is either Devanagari or Modi.

(N.B. Abdul hands over the notebook to B.V.N. who finds they are in Mahratti language. There are prayers to Maruti in those reports of speeches of Baba. There are recitals of the Avatars of God dovetailing Mohammed and numerous others with the Hindu Dasa Avatar. Quite obviously, Sri Sai baba and following him Abdul, revere the Hindu Avatars, Maruti etc and pray to them).

As stated already I use these books not merely for daily reading but also as "Sortes Virgiliani" for purposes of prophecy.



**10th March, 1938,**

**Shirdi.**

No Mussalmans came and read books like Koran and Shariff to Baba or asked him for explanation. Several Fakirs and Saints came here. But I do not know if he talked with them on Koran and Shariff. I was busy with activities (physical) in the service of Baba, sweeping and scavenging all streets here, and then read Koran etc., near Baba, keeping awake all night. Baba's practical advice to me was that I should not go to sleep over my Koran reading. He said "Eat very little. Do not go in for variety of eatables. A single sort i.e. dish will suffice. Do not sleep much." I followed the advice. I ate very little. I kept awake all night and in a kneeling posture was going on repeating the Koran etc., near Baba or meditating. Baba told me to have *Dhyan* on what I read "Think of whom I am" he said to me.

One night I was tired and tried to sleep, holding my palms in front of me to rest my drowsy head. Then Baba said "Are you trying to see the Moon?" That night I fell asleep and fell upon Baba and his gadi in that sleeping condition. Baba gently stroked my feet and I awoke. Next day, strange to say when I took water in my palms and looked, there was a big moon in that water. It was 2 p.m. This was what Baba had spoken of. I used to look after the Lendi place and its light i.e. the ever burning light maintained by Baba there. It was in those days placed in a hollow in the earth scooped out to the depth of about 2 feet and protected with a cover to save the light from being blown out. There was a *pandal*. A zinc sheet was the top of the *pandal*. Some 20 curtains of cloth were tied all round, to form something like a tent. I remained in it and looked after the lamp in the centre of it. That light has been shifted from its place now, very slightly, and is put in a raised pillar of bricks and mortar containing an enclosed chamber for the lamp. When Baba sat near to lendi he would sit close to the light. I filled two buckets with water and placed them near him. This water he would scatter around that lamp. He would get up from the Lendi and walk a few yards in each direction and go on gazing at the direction.

My service to Sai Baba was service to him and to all. I washed Baba's cloths in the streamlet (odai) flowing at the

village boundary. I swept the mosque, the chavadi and surrounding places and lit the lamp in these places and fed them and the lendi lamp with oil. I not merely swept the village streets but also removed the night soil. Baba called me Halalkoor (scavenger) and “my miriambi” I fetched water and did sundry services. Ayi during the early years of her stay did part of the street sweeping work. Even then, my work supplemented hers. Baba protected me and protects me by giving me the needed food and ensuring my safety and progress.

About 1927 i.e. after Ayi and Baba passed away. I was in Ayi’s sala, reciting Quran, The three walls of that dilapidated mud building suddenly collapsed and I was buried waist deep in the debris. But Baba saved me from any hurt. Baba has given me his blessings and kept me with him. First my Guru himself directed me to be with and serve Baba, and I did so. But later my Guru came to Shirdi and wanted me to go away with him. I replied that I could do so, if Baba so ordered. But no such order having been issued I stayed on with Baba and my former Guru went away from Shirdi. Baba’s blessings to me were strange and sometimes concealed in abuse and violence. He has beaten me and Jog many times. He said to me.

\*1. Tereku dariyakupar uttar diya

2. Tere matti sunana bana diya

3. kya badi madi mandhiya

Like this, he uttered blessings and prophecies, seated before me in the morning at the chavadi and then started for the mosque.

Baba was constantly saying many things about avatars etc. These have been written down in this note book.

(Here Abdul takes out and shows an old book parts of which are written in Devanagari character, parts in Modi and parts in urdu. He does not wish to say who wrote out these pages. His own knowledge of these scripts, according to

some of his fellow-devotees is too poor to enable him to write these well. But he went on, at the request of this writer to read out Baba's utterances from the book. Baba said of the Avatars, what follows:-

Baba said, First was Omkar. From Omkar Bhavakar.

## IX

11th September, 1936

Abdul Rahim Samsuddhin Rangari, Mussulman, Painter, aged 65, residing at Mahagiri, Thana says:

In 1913, there was plague at Thana and also, I believe, at Shirdi. My wife was then suffering for about a month from some disease. Her throat, cheek etc., were swollen and she could eat nothing. Medicines were tried in vain. A neighbour of mine Mr.R.G.Gupte, a local pleader advised me to take my wife to Sai Baba at Shirdi as that would cure her. So we went. When the journey began, she was unable to eat anything. But as we went on, at Igatpuri, she was able to take tea and again at Nasik something more. This was an auspicious indication. She was fast improving. We went to Shirdi. Then I went into the Mosque and bowed to Sai Baba. He spoke to me in Hindustani.

Baba: Whence are you coming?

I: Thana.

Baba: What for?

I: My wife has swelling in the throat etc.

Baba: Ask her to come up the Mosque.

I took her up the steps and she bowed to Baba. He touched her hand, and said "**Khuda Achha Karega.**" (i.e. God will set matters right). I gave him rupee 1-4-0 without being asked; and he accepted it and gave me Udhi. I stayed two hours thereafter. Her swelling was fast subsiding. So we started back at once without the permission of Baba. He had told me to stay. But as a cure had been effected, I thought, we could start off. I did not like to stay in a strange place, unnecessarily, especially with my wife and a two year old son.

The tonga by which we came, was in the village. We took it and started off to Kopergaon. We went up half the distance, without any trouble, but thereafter, the axle of the tonga broke, and we were stranded on the road. It was about 10 p.m. No conveyances were available. We could neither walk back nor go on so many miles at night. The road was a lonely road and we felt the great danger we were in, exposed to the inclemency of the night and the chances of molestation

by highwaymen. Our predicament was unenviable. We repented the scant regard we had shown to Baba's words. Two hours passed in this condition. After midnight, we heard the rumble of some carriage and a voice crying out "Thanawala, Thanawala." Then a tonga came; it was the driver calling to "Thanawala". I said I was "Thanawala" and asked him how he happened to know our plight and go there at a most unusual hour. He said that Sai Baba had sent him. "What for?" I asked. "To fetch you" was the reply. Then we took the tonga and went to Shirdi. It was about 1 or 2 A.M. When we reached the Mosque, Baba said "you went away without permission. So you fared in this way." I answered "Yes, I beg your pardon. This way my lot for having left without permission." Then Baba made us stay near the Mosque for the rest of the night, and he went in and carried on his usual meditation. In the morning, he went out for his Bhiksha (i.e. to beg his bread) and brought bread and vegetables. After taking part of it, he gave us the remainder and asked us to eat it. We ate it. My wife was able to eat that solid food. Then he gave us leave to go. I went out, looked for a tonga and turned saying that no tonga was to be seen. Baba said "Go and see, there is a tonga." I turned and looked and found there was a tonga. How it suddenly happened to be there, we could not make out. Baba blessed us and we left. My wife retained her good health. She died several years later. This was my only visit to Shirdi. But it gave me firm faith in Sai Baba. I remember him and other Saints when I go to bed. Whenever I think intently of Baba. I actually see him before me. We had very little talk with Baba during our two hours stay in the day. I found Baba was smeared with sandal paste over his hand, face, etc. Moslems do not smear themselves like this. I asked him how he put on all this. Baba said " 'jaisa desh thysa vesh' (i.e. Do at Rome as the Romans do). Instead of worshipping their own Gods, they worship me as their God. Why should I object and displease him? I myself am a devotee of God."

He added "If you had come yesterday, it would have been better."

I: Why

Baba: There was music. I wept all night. They abused me.

I: Why did they abuse you?

Baba: When I say “abused”, people do not understand, But you will understand.

I thought that “abused” was amused” really.

(Some Saints show their indifference to their praise by speaking of it as “abuse”. In the Bhajan referred to above, Baba would have been highly praised and all the time. He would treat it with the same indifference as if it were abuse. Again in the praise, melting music would be wedded to pathetic appeals to God. At these Baba would weep)

I: “One who loves God would weep, laugh or dance as the songs in praise of God go on.”

Baba: Just so. You are right. Have you your own Guru?

I: Yes. Habee Baleeshah Chisthi Nizami.

Baba: That is why you understand.

I remembered that my Guru (who had passed away 12 years before my visit to Shirdi) was generally accompanied by music when he went out.

## X

### 27th September, 1936

Rajaballi Mohammed Khoja, Contractor, Turner Road, aged 49, Bandra says:

I saw Sai baba some eight years or so before he passed away. I went, as I had heard good accounts from people here. I had work at Nasik and I went there. Some carts of tanning bark were being delayed delivery at Nasik, even after I went there. So I had nothing to do and I used my time by going to Baba. I regard him as a great saint with vast powers (which are possible only to those who have “*atmajnana*”) I went and presented him a coconut and sugar candy. I was not asked for dakshina and gave none. I asked leave to start the day of my reaching Shirdi or the following morning. But Baba said “That man is not yet ready to deliver your goods.” I therefore had no object in wasting more time at Nasik and spent two or three days in Baba’s company. I had nothing particular to ask of him. I wanted only increase of

faith. I wanted that at my death, I may die possessed of full *Imam* or faith so that I may have a good end. I prayed to him (mentally) for that and asked for his blessings. He placed his hand on my hand and blessed me. From that moment his blessings have borne fruit. My faith has steadily increase. Besides that I have a great benefit from my faith in him and in his Udhi. For example five years back, my she-buffalo was in great travail, in trying to calve. Pained at her suffering I sent for the Veterinary Surgeon. He tried his best. Especially as I was the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee of the Municipality he would be glad to help me in such a difficulty. But he could do nothing. Then I besought myself of Baba's udhi. I placed some udhi on the head of the buffalo and hoped that Baba would kindly come to its aid. In about ten minutes, she safely calved; there was no more trouble. There are numerous cases in which I have used Baba's udhi, with signal success. I take it myself in this way. I apply a bit of it on my chest, eyes, forehead and think of Baba. Then all my difficulties are overcome.

Baba is undoubtedly a saint of vast power. "Is" I say. Saints according to Islamic tradition do not die. They pass from one state to another. That is all. I have similarly visited tombs of other saints e.g. at Delhi. And I have gone to numerous living saints e.g. Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, Baba Jan of Poona (1928) etc. I have had numerous experiences. These give me earthly benefits here and strengthen my *Iman* or faith on which I have to rely at death. There is a saying, (which I firmly believe and act upon) that once being in the company of a saint is better than saying a hundred prayers by yourself.

I have here the porcelain statue and picture of Sai baba. My family burn *udhbathi* before it on Thursdays.

## XI

**15th December, 1936**

Adam Dalali, aged about 70, Estate Broker, living near the Naupada Mosque, Bandra says:

I am an old Bhakta of Sai Baba. My experiences are already found in Sai Lila Masik. I have long been going to Sai

Baba. He was so kind and generous. He has helped me on many occasions. I shall give a few striking instances.

My son had to be married. I intimated the fact to Baba and asked for his leave and sanction. Each time I asked , he put it off. I was writing also to him. Even then the reply sent usually back to me by Baba was his usual "Allah Malik Hai". At last after three years he replied that my son's marriage may be celebrated and he fixed a date for it and ordered me to celebrate it on that date. That was alright. But how were the funds to be provided by a poor man like myself? See how Baba provided for me! I had undertaken to pay the expenses of the bride's party also. I looked to Baba for aid. Some ten days prior to the date fixed, I got a sudden work entrusted to me and a sudden payment for it. Thus I got some relief. Then with similar accessions to my little marriage fund, I was able to celebrate the marriage on the date fixed by Baba (about 1913 or 1914)

Another and later instance of his help was towards the close of Baba's career. I had acted as a broker between a Marwadi and the man who mortgaged a building to him, giving him a title deed purporting to be issued by the Collector. This title deed was impugned and the police charge-sheeted me and the mortgagor for using a fabricated document etc. I went to Baba and prayed for his help He said "Do not fear. Everything will come right." Then I went to Mr. Tendulkar and entreated his wife to pray to Baba for me and say that I would be discharged. She said so. That day I was discharged and others, i.e. the Mortgagor were committed to the sessions, wherein I was examined as a Prosecution witness.

I have had numerous experiences, I have forgotten them. But they were all about earthly i.e. worldly matters. I did not read Quran or ask for spiritual advice; nor did Baba ask me to read Quran or speak to me of spiritual matters. Baba used to ask Bade Baba to go and read Quran or attend to his work. I do not now remember any prominent or scholarly Moslem that went to Sai Baba. He has come to me in other forms and dealt with me e.g. Once he came as a Brahmin and begged for something. I gave him two annas then. Once he came to me as a Marwadi and said he was hungry. I gave him four annas and asked him to go to a Marwadi's



hotel to get his food. Then when I went to Shirdi, Baba dropped significant hints showing me that he had visited me in those forms e.g. on the latter occasion, he said of me (at Shirdi) to some one else “I went to this man, he sent me to the Marwadi hotel to eat”. I always used his Udhi and Tirtha. I have got his picture here at home and I burn *Udbathi* before it. Even in recent times, I have been going to Shirdi.

## XII

### 8th December, 1936

Nandaram Sivaram Marwadi, Shroff, Merchant, aged 70, residing at Shirdi says:

At the time of the second visit of Plague at Shirdi i.e. 1833 (1911 A.D) the villagers were quickly leaving the village. Some men were seated one day at the Maruti temple and as I passed by remarked that my eyes were red (with fever) and that I was evidently to be struck down by plague. I was startled to hear this. I got up on horse-back and went to the Maruti temple. People advised me to pray to Maruti, with an offer of coconut and oil, to save me from death. I prayed and made those offerings. I thought I should fly from Shirdi and go to Ekruka. So I went to Baba for permission. Baba however dissuaded me from leaving the village. He assured me that I was not going to die. “I will not let you die, till I die”. He said and gave me Udhi. I stayed on in the village and my fever abated and finally disappeared.

## XIII

### 15th October, 1936

Lakshman Govind Munge, Petition writer, aged 72, 43, Main Road, Nasik says:

I went to Baba over 46 years ago. I had relations (now dead) at Shirdi viz., Vamanrao Rangnath Vizapurkar and his brother Sakharam. I was a clerk under the Senior Mamlatdar, Chidambar Keshav Gadgil. That Mamlatdar went to see Baba, (as also Nana Saheb Nimonkar) and I accompanied

him. They took darsan of Baba. I followed suit. Yet I wondered how Baba was being worshipped by Hindus. When I was in this mental state, Baba told Mr. Gadgil "Give me my Karkya, my Udbattipoodi and my one rupee". This request for my rupee etc., at once arrested my attention. The previous night just before retiring to rest, when we three (I, Gadgil and Nana Nimonkar) were alone in our night's resting place, Gadgil set apart some dates (Kharka), one rupee, and a packet of scented sticks (udbatti) saying these have to be given to the saint. Baba's calling offer these showed clairvoyance or omniscience (Antargnan). These were given to Baba and he accepted them. Then Nana Saheb Nimonkar voluntarily offered a ten rupee note to Baba. Baba declined the gift, however, saying "I am a fakir. I will not take this." Baba at once disposed of the above articles. The rupee was given to the oilmonger for supplying oil to light the mosque. The sticks were burnt and the dates were distributed to all. These facts were very striking and I felt that Baba's worship was proper.

I visited Baba in 1890 when I was aged 26. Sai Baba was then at the Maruti Temple at Rahata. I had gone to Rahata in order to get the help of my maternal aunt's husband at Rahata. My marriage was settled. But I had to get jewels to deck the bride with. I thought my uncle would help me in that and so went to Rahata. There finding Baba at the temple, I approached him. Baba welcomed me with these words "Come Child, I was thinking of you yesterday", and asked me to shampoo his leg. I did. Then he took up a mango and gave it to me to eat. I ate it. It was so very sweet. Then Baba asked me questions.

Baba: "What for have you come?"

I: "My marriage is settled. I have no jewels. I have come to borrow jewels".

Baba: "Who is whose? Who gives? Who receives? None will give timely help. If you require Rs.1,000 or 2,000 (worth of ornaments) receive it from me".

I was looking at Baba as he sat robed in a sack cloth and holding a mere tin for his only utensil. "How will he give me all this?" Was the thought that occurred to me. I went then to the house of my relation i.e. maternal aunt's husband

and explained my need. He said that he had no jewels. I returned in a cheerless mood, as I felt that the marriage must fall through for the time being for want of jewels, and must be put off. Just at that juncture, a friend came to me and I told him of the exact situation. He at once came to my rescue and by his introduction or intercession, a Gujarati Sowcar at Sinner lent me some anklets, a nose screw and he took out 30 tolas of gold which were converted into jewels in one day, which also were lent to me (on interest). So Baba through this friend and the Gujarati fulfilled his promise and the marriage was duly celebrated without any postponement. After this event, I paid my yearly visits to Baba. For some years I was getting children but they died after a very short life. In 1912 I went and cried before Baba about this misfortune of mine, and prayed that he would give me one son blessed with longevity. Baba said to me, "Why do you ask me for one? I will give you two". I have accordingly got now 2 sons (aged 13 and 10) and 2 daughters (aged 27 and 18). I worship Baba's picture at home, and pray to it. My prayers are granted. Here is an instance.

I had a guest and his daughter staying with me. The daughter fell ill. The case took a serious turn. She lost consciousness. Her life was despaired of. I took Baba's Photo and Baba's udhi and placed the former at her head and applied the latter to her face and body at night. In the morning, consciousness was restored and the mother vowed to pay 10 rupees to Baba and that was paid.

#### XIV

**29th November, 1936**

Gangadhar Vishnu Kshirsagar (of Nevasa), Dehastha Brahmin aged 51, Telegraph Head Signaller in the Irrigation Department, Sonawadi, Kopergaon says:

I lost my father when I was 5 years old. We had lands. Bala Nevaskar "Jayagudi", Baba's devotee was our lessee. He claimed our land as his own. My maternal uncle, our guardian, represented us. Bala Nevaskar asked him to go with him to Shirdi and leave the settlement of our dispute to be done

by Baba. They came here from Nevasa with my mother. My uncle and mother were total strangers to Baba. As soon as they came to the Mosque (Dwarka Mayi), even before they bowed, Baba said to Bala Nevaskar, "Hand over the lands to the children. Why trouble them?" We went back to Nevasa. But Bala refused and we got possession through the court. Bala became mad. At that time I was then aged 16 (1901). After madness, he did not return to Shirdi. I never saw Baba. My mother and maternal uncle occasionally came here and saw him.

Two years ago, I got transferred to Sonawadi. Since then, I am visiting Shirdi and singing songs before Sai Mandir. On 27-6-1935, I had a dream. I saw Sai Baba standing before me and saying "To day your house is decreed to you, why are you sleeping? There is jatra at Shirdi. Come and eat." He took me to the eating hall and I took food and bowed to him. I awoke. Four days later, I got a letter from my brother that on the date of my darsan (27-6-35) our case is appeal (about our house) in the Ahmednagar District Court was decided in our favour. My faith in Baba has been greatly increased thereby.

## XV

### 9th December, 1936

Bayyaji Apaji Patel, aged 47, Mahratta, Land owner and Revenue and Police Patel of Biragaon, residing at Shirdi says:

I knew baba since my babyhood. My house was one of the few houses from which Baba took his biksha i.e., begged his bread from the beginning of his life here and up to the end. For some 3 years, Baba would go over about 8 times during the day to our house to beg for his bread. Next for 3 years he visited us for this purpose four times a day. For 12 years, he visited us twice a day and during the last 12 years he came to us for bread once a day only. From my 11th year, I used to serve Baba. In 1896 i.e., my seventh year, the Ramanavami Urus celebration began. It was then that Baba began to allow Hindus to affix sandal or to do pooja to him and Muslims to read Koran before him at the masjid. This

urus was started by Appa Kulkarni out of gratitude to baba for the acquittal in the embezzlement charge brought against him. When Hindus affixed sandal paste to Baba, the latter applied sandal marks with the hand (Punja marks) on the walls of the masjid and other Moslems did the same. Baba then applied sandal paste to Mahalsapathy's forehead and the some Moslems. Mahalsapathy applied it to Baba's forehead. Baba then allowed Namaz to go on at the mosque and enjoined silence on all others while Namaz was going on. Baba himself recited the Namaz sometimes. That was only on Saturdays. When Pedas or other sweets were brought to Baba, he uttered the Kalam (which is the same as Fatia) over the sweets etc., and then distributed them to all Hindus and Moslems alike. Baba finding that Hindus and Moslems would have differences as to the way and manner of celebrating the Urus allowed Sandal Panja to be put on all - Hindus and Moslems alike. My father, Nana Sahib Chandorkar, Tatyapa Patel etc, all bore the expenses of the celebration.

One day, when I was 11 years old (1901-2) Baba stopped me from going away to tend my cattle. Then he suddenly spoke angrily at me and others, and broke four mudpots. Then he blew "Bum Bum" on the back of his hand indicating that death or some inauspicious event was coming. This was at 9 A.M or 9-30A.M. That night my father's sister's son Daji Kote, aged 30 died of fever. During the last 14 years of Baba's life, he gave me daily four rupees. Even on his last (Samadhi) day, he gave me four rupees. As to the use of his gift, Baba once told me neither to lend the moneys he gave, nor make a gift of them. "Do not eat and excrete this, Do not give it away to others." So I have invested it in purchases of land. I purchased 84 acres of land out of Baba's gifts. I have had already 10 or 11 acres of other land.

Baba has helped me with his wonderful knowledge of the future. (1) About my cultivation, there was the strong temptation to plant my lands with sugar cane as so many do. Baba's advice was "Don't". But I yielded once to the temptation, despite this advice. A loss of 300 rupees in the money invested on sugar cane planting and the going without the usual supply of dry crops I would have got on the land, that was the result of disobedience. (2) In 1913, my father who was over 70 years of age went out as usual on horse back and

returned with a stroke of paralysis. I went to Baba and asked for his Udhi. Baba said "I will not give Udhi, Allah Malik Hai." I wept. On the 3rd day of the attack i.e., on Kartik Suddha Ekadasi, Sunday, a specially holy day, my father breathed his last. Next day I went to he masjid and massaged Baba's leg as usual. I used to boast and feel proud that I had Bhima's strength. So I tried to lift Baba up in my arms after the massage to carry him and place him before the fire. Many a day I have done so. That day I could not lift him. Baba laughed at me and he put down my pride. That was a Dwadasi day, Baba then taught me two lessons- not to be proud, and the other not to feel grief for the death of my father. "Why should you be sorry? In 5 months he (i.e., my father) will come back." Then my son was born. He is aged 22 years and 8 months.

Baba gave me his last instruction or moral lesson on the day he reached his last. After sending away Kaka Dikshit he gave me a moral lesson and enjoined silence on me with these words. "If you reveal it to any one, you will die." He added i.e., "me jato mereku badaku uchaude sagale brahmana majaya jabalur tahatilu i.e., I am" going. Carry me to Wada. All brahmins will be living near me." With these words, he breathed his last. After these words were spoken Nana Nimonkar poured water in to his mouth but the water came out. I held my hand below his chin to catch the water. Baba leaned upon me and expired. When Baba expired there were troubles of all sorts. Government took charge of all the properties. There was wrangling between two parties. Moslems said that Baba should be buried in a separate building to be constructed at the expense of people who (like me) had been benefiting by his daily bounty. We stood out for burial in the Dagdi Wada in accordance with Baba's wishes. The Kopergaon Mamlatdar Mr.Kulkarni was on the spot and the Rahata Foujdar Chakranarayana also. The Mamlatdar decided that the public including both Moslems and Hindus should express their views and he would agree that the wishes of the majority should be carried out. Moslems prepared Mahajar with 100 or less of signatures. We prepared Mahajars and got numerous (over 200) signatures including prominent names, e.g., H.S.Dixit, Bapu Saheb Jog, Bala Saheb Bhate etc. Therefore our view, being that of the majority, prevailed and Baba's body was

interred in the Dagdi Wada. In 1910, Shirdi had its second visitation of plague.

Four years ago, Baba gave me timely intimation and help. At Shirdi, a bull was marked with a trident and being thus dedicated to God Shiva was freely grazing all over the village and near our Lendi garden. It was injuring our gardens and we all contributed some 3 rupees and odd for the expenses of sending it to a pinjrapole at Yeola. The bull was entrusted to Bhiku Marwadi with the money and he took it away to be left at the pinjrapole. He returned and told us that he had performed that duty. That night Baba appeared in my dream and said “kuyn sothe. Merekoo kasaeke dari bandaya, i.e., “Are you sleeping? I have been tied to the door of a butcher”. I woke and consulted Tatyapa Patel and others. We concluded that the bull had been left with a butcher and not left at the pinjrapole at Yeola. So I started at once, went to Yeola and searched for our bull at the two pinjrapoles there. It was not there and we were informed that Bhikku had not brought our bull there. Then I went round and looked near the butchers’ quarters. Our bull was lifting its head over a wall. It was in a butcher’s place. It was to be cut up that very day by the butcher and he told us that he had purchased it for 14 rupees from Bhiku Marwadi. The animal was rescued and placed in the pinjrapole, and Bhiku was charged, convicted and sentenced to 2 months’ imprisonment.

## XVI

### 18th September, 1936

Ramchandra Sitaram Dev alias, Balabhau or Balabhat aged 55 (60) Brahmin, Lanlord, Varsova Road, Andheri says:

I saw Baba first in S. 1830 (i.e., 1908). I had already heard of him from Das Ganu Mahraj at his Kirtan at kalyan. I knew Amir Sakkar Khatik i.e. butcher of Bandra. He also spoke highly of Baba and asked me to go and see him. So I went to Shirdi along with Sri Krishna Patil. Sathé’s wada was the only resort in existence then. But we had our lodging at Ganapati Temple. On that day, there was no crowd of Bombay visitors but there were crowds of the locality and neigh-

bour hood. I was intending to go to Akkalkote and Amir Sakkar said “Shirdi is on the way. Call there and then go to Akkalkote.” So I wanted just to see Baba and start off for Akkalkote.” When we saw Baba he said “I must go to Akkalkot and thereby expressing the predominating idea in my mind. I was struck at once by his power to read what I had in my mind, and I decided to spend the day with him at Shirdi. But I had no end to achieve by my visit or stay beyond the pleasure of being near a great soul. Next day I went away, with his leave, to Akkalkote. I was being drawn to him. So I repeated my visit e.g. I went there next Deepavali. At that time there were crowds from Bombay with Baba. There were 5 or 6 accompanying me. I sat up between 8 P.M. and midnight with Baba (at the Mosque) and I then asked him to give me Upadesh and be my Guru.

Baba: “It is not essential that one should have a Guru. Everything is within us. What you sow, you reap. What you give you get. There is no need for a Guru. aapala javalachu aahe

It is all within you. Try to listen within and follow the direction you get, “we must look at our self. That is the monitor, the Guru”. aapana pahaya apala apan pahava

At the time I approached Baba for Upadesh and even now, I had and have my own Sampradai Guru at Ratnagiri. As my faith in SaiBaba grew, I gradually dropped my visits to Pandharpur and Akkalkote. I was doing two services, one was Asst. Master in a local fund School and the other stamp vendor’s work. Even the Shirdi visits dislocated my school work. Baba detained me beyond my leave days. The school authorities inquired where I was spending away my time and heckled me about it. I had to choose between Shirdi and school work. I gave up school teaching, but I retained the stamp vendor’s work till five years ago and then got it transferred to my son. That gave me a net income of 20 to 25 Rs. per diem. When I gave up service, I was only 32. But I kept up my faith and my financial position was satisfactory. I attended each Shri Ramnavami of Baba. When Baba was in the flesh, he gave me personal directions. After he passed away. I get my guidance from him by casting chits before his picture and getting one picked out after prayer for guidance.



Later on, (while he was in the flesh) I got afraid when I saw that in my place Andheri, there was a terrible robbery. I saw the inmates of the house that was robbed at the hospital with severe injuries inflicted by the robbers. I prayed to Baba in my own house to help me and save me and my family from such misfortune. That night Baba appeared to me in a dream and said he had come with ten Pathans and that I need not fear. Just at that time, the washermen using B.B.& C.I. Ry. Property for their washing, were refused further access to their usual washing places. Ten of them came to me and wished to build huts for themselves on my land. I readily agreed. They still pay me monthly 200 rupees as rent besides giving me their company by which we are safe from robbers' attacks. The existing well had no sufficient supply of water for their purposes. I consulted Baba and acting on his advice, I dug a new well in the place approved of by Baba and there I had abundant supply of water. In respect of this big building, I had to dig a well first and I went to Shirdi and asked Baba. Acting on his advice, I dug it and it has turned out into a very good well. Then I began the building after getting Baba's personal sanction at Shirdi. When I went there, I had funds only for putting up 5 suites of rooms and wished to build only these. But Baba drew on the floor before him 25 lines and said "one rupee for each line, i.e., each sets of rooms. Give 25 rupees." Though I was intending to build only 5, I paid 25 rupees. The work began, suits were slowly being added on till in 1920, the total number of sets of rooms became 25. It still continues to be only 25 rooms.

I think and feel that Baba is still alive. Still he guides me. My sons also have the same faith, I have sent my account of experiences to the late Mr. Dabholkar.

## XVII

**10th December, 1936**

D.M.Mulky, M.B.B.S., Medical Practitioner, Gadag says:

It was in 1915 that a sad incident took place in my family. My eldest brother's son, a distinguished I class B.A., aged only 18 with all bright prospects before him, suddenly

became a convert to the Christian faith. The father, who doted on the boy, was simply stunned and could not find any solace, no matter whoever it was who talked to him. It was then that the late Hon. Mr. Hari Sita Ram Dixit (Sri Sai Maharaja's right hand practically) took my brother and the family to Shirdi and by His Grace, both the father and the mother found peace once again in life. Their another son, who is also B.A. and is now in the G.I.P. Railway's service, was a patient of Chronic Osteomyelitis which was being treated by the best surgeons of Bombay then without any effect, and this boy's wound in the bone was fully healed by the Vibhooti of Sri Sai Maharaj and his loving and merciful dristhi (glance) only. Somehow or other these people began Bhajan, off and on visiting Shirdi, and I had no idea of this at all. In 1916 I was posted to Bombay in the Government service attached to the Parel Laboratory and I found that these things were going on in my brother's house, only more or less secretly. I had not even seen the photo of Shirdi Sai Baba till then; nor even later, till the next incident, which I mean to detail now.

It was in the month of October, 1916, that I fell very seriously ill and my temperature used to be ranging between 105 to 106. F without any intermission and the local doctors were doing their level best to relieve me. Unfortunately there was not the slightest improvement. After a week nearly, one Thursday evening at my brother's place, they performed the Puja in the evening and I heard the Bhajan etc., and this was very strange to me, because I had not seen such things there, and I confess I was also more or less atheistic in tendency and I don't know it may be that Shri Sai Maharaj, an Avatar of Gurunath, wanted to save me from an atheistic doom. My temperature was about 104.6 and that night, I got a dream wherein an old man with a long white kupni to cover his body and some white cloth tied over his head (after the fashion of what men and women do in South India after a head bath) appeared and said that I should not worry, that I should at once come to His darshan and that the fever would pass off at once if I promised to do so. The frightened me and I screamed and woke up at the sound of my own screaming. My sister-in-law- she was and is still more than a mother to me ran up to my bedside, found me in horrible perspiration

and in tears. I explain to her the dream and she at once brought a photo of Shri Sai Maharaj and asked me whether it was the same. I could at once recognise the old man of my dream and we at once decided that I should take the earliest opportunity to visit Him. The fever did not come on again; I was fully alright and went on with my duties; and being young and with all the temptations of a city life before me I did not go to Shirdi and entirely forgot about it.

All this while, I was doing my level best to get out of Bombay into Moffussil service and I could not succeed at all. In this way I was going on in Bombay.

About February, 1917 Shree Maharaj wanted to remind me about what I dreamt and how I was not keeping my word and he did it in such a kind way. I was transferred from Bombay to a place called Malegaon, a Taluka in Nasik District and the only way which took me there was via Manmad and Kopergaon is the station which takes me to Shirdi. I went over to Malegaon, and then in my heavy work, I forgot to do the needful with the result that I was once again given a reminder. I was conducting a forceps delivery case, and some decomposed fluid from (the operated parts of) the woman jumped into my left eye, which I did not realise till too late. The eye was swollen and it was very bad. I was all alone there; and I prayed to Him probably never more seriously than at this time; and He heard my prayer without trying to admonish anybody. I have since then been of the firm conviction that Shri Guru cannot see His Bhaktas suffer whatever Chandalas they may be. What He wants is nothing but unadulterated Bhakti entirely devoid of egoism. The Civil Surgeon at Nasik was of the opinion that I would lose my eye, but thanks to Sai Baba, it got alright in a week's time. I got my wife there and both of us vowed that we would not return to Bombay without seeing Shri Maharaj and as this was on our way back, we thought that it would not be difficult. At the end of a month, I was asked to go back to Bombay; and to act up to our vow, we came to Manmad a little early to catch the early morning train from Manmad to Dhond. While I was strolling on the platform a Deshashtha Booking Clerk accosted me casually and we fell into general conversation. Somehow I mentioned to him the object of my staying at Manmad and then the fellow began a tirade against Shri Maharaj which

attacked even His moral character and this dissuaded us from going to Shirdi and we caught the next immediate train to Bombay and ran away as we would from a serpent. I regret this even to this day, whenever I remember it. After a month in Bombay, my sister in law did succeed in inducing us to go over to Shirdi and though there came some obstacles in the way. We never cared for them this time; and I thank God, that we remained firm and got the darshan. The station incident of a month previous was mentioned by Shri Maharaj; and I need not tell you that we were put to shame and tear for even thinking of having listened to that scoundrel.

I was in Shirdi for 4 days and on the day that I went to ask His permission to go back, He told me that I should read Jnaneshwari, and that I would find in order on my table "transferred to Bijapur on promotion." I made my deep pranams and went away; and to my greatest pleasure, I found this order on my table. Again with His kripa, I have been faithfully performing Jnaneshwari Saptaha every year. I am not a Mahratti student. I could not read or write Mahratti characters. I belong to South Kanara District, Madras Presidency, and my second language was Canarese for Metric and French for the previous. You see even now when I read the Gita, I believe it is due to His kindness that I am able to do so. From Bijapur I went on Field Service and after the war I have been in Gadag. Since the incident above related, I have been firmly convinced that Shri Guruji is always watching over us, and it is a pity that we are not able to recognise it. Various troubles arise, have arisen and will arise; but I know and believe that He will see me through.

### XVIII

**1st December, 1936.**

Nagesh Atmaram Sawant, aged 42, Mahratta, Police Sub Inspector, Bombay City Police says;

I learnt of Sai Baba in December 1922 by reading Sai Lela Masik at Sawantwadi. His Lilas drew my attention. In 1923 December a lizard fell on my head and that has a very inauspicious significance. My wife was then pregnant at pen

dur (Malwan Taluka). In January, 1924, I went to Nasik for training at the Police school. My studies did not attract me. I was often thinking of Baba and hoped he would save me and I often prayed to him. I got a picture of Baba from a friend. P Dev for worship. I had failed in my departmental examination at Nasik. People who fail are not given a chance of becoming S.I. I continued as acting S.I. for about five years. I was unwilling to go to Nasik again as it was financially ruinous and I was fully confident that Baba would make me permanent S.I. without my passing the Examination. From 1924, I began my regular annual visits to Shirdi for each Punya tithi (i.e., Dusserah). In 1926, during Mohurram ordinary leave would not be granted, but I was anxious to go to Shirdi for the Dusserah. Baba appeared in my dream then and I saw him sign some paper in that dream I construed it to mean that I was to sign and send an application for leave. I did so and got leave without any hitch.

In 1929, February, there were Hindu Muslim riots at Bombay. I was on duty at Parel. Suddenly I had headache and fever. An European Police Officer (who was not of my division) came there to see the situation and he said to me "You do not look well". Then he went to my Superintendent, who was on the road and got oral leave for me to go. He took charge of my place. That was about 3-30 p.m. I went home. In an hour, I learnt that there was a riot in that very place which I had left and that the European Officer was killed during that riot. That sickness continued. I went to the Police Hospital and it was found to be typhoid. After 17 days, I dreamt one night that a big strong man with a black dress on his body and a black cloth on his head caught hold of me and was dragging me. I shouted out "Baba Baba". Immediately a white individual in white dress appeared and struggled with the black man and I escaped from the clutches of the black man. I shouted "Baba and Datta Maharaj". Then suddenly, Baba appeared before me out of the frame of the picture that I worship and disappeared. The black man and the other man had already disappeared. I had at that time the smell of soja, Udbath (i.e., Agarbatti). Since then my fever left me. In July, 1929 as a special case, I was exempted from the Examination and given a permanent appointment, as S.I. When I was lying ill in Hospital, my mother had a dream in

our village, wherein some one appeared and told her “Do not fear, I will bring your boy safe home, getting him leave.” In a week’s time, I got 3 months leave and went home.

Abba Savant, a friend of mine, aged 44 is a Constable at Bombay living near my quarters. He reported to me that a fresh sadi he had given to his wife one night was placed on a table. She had disbelieve in Baba and told him (Abba) that night “You say this is Baba’s gift. But you earned the money by your toil”. Later on in the night or in the morning she again looked at the New sadi. It had every appearance of being burnt in the middle as though a hot coal had been placed in the middle of it on the top fold. All the folds had been burnt through, in the middle and the cloth was of no use. She said “Let us see if a new cloth would be given by Baba tomorrow”. Abba suddenly got some money next day and bought her a sadi.

## XIX

### 2nd December, 1936

Kasibai Hansraj widow of Hansraj, caste Vani, age about 45, residence Sakori.

I and my husband went to Shirdi 20 years ago. In Margasir about December, 1916, just after Radhakrihna Ayi died, we went and stayed for about 6 months. My husband had Asthma. Narasing Baba Maharaj of Nasik had told him that as an evil spirit was possessing his body, we got no issue and that he should go to Shirdi Sai Baba who would give him two slaps and exorcize it. That is why we came to Sai Baba. Baba gave my husband two slaps saying “**Evil spirit be off**”. From that time we lived there. My husband’s Asthma abated. It was operating during the day but did not trouble him at night. Before we came to Shirdi it was troubling day and night. Baba was catching away at night when we lived there. At the end of our 6 months’ stay Asthma ceased to trouble my husband by day even. Before I mention that, a chamatkar on Baba’s part in healing him has to be mentioned. Soon after we settled here, Baba told my husband that he should be strict about his diet and avoid curds, and

other acid and pungent articles of food. When it came to acting on this advice, my husband found it hard to follow it, as these were what he liked most. He did not relish his food without curds etc. He would sooner give up life than curds, he declared. So every day for two months we were trying to prepare curds at home, for in this village curds are not easily to be had at noon. We kept milk heated and cooled for curdling every night and then we would go and attend the Noon-Arati of Baba at the Mosque. Everyday almost for two months a cat would steal into our lodgings in our absence, jump up the sling in which the curd pot was kept and drink it off. As our meal had to be after Arathi my husband found that there were no curds to take. One day he resolved to catch the thief in the very act and so stayed away from the Noon Arathi. The cat came in, my husband allowed it to get in, to watch how it could possibly reach the curd pot which was kept so high in a sling. But it did. Anyhow the cat had dipped its mouth into the curd pot and the curds were not fit for use. He quickly watched its drinking and when it got down he used his stick severely on its back, by way of summary punishment for its larceny. In the afternoon, people resorted to Baba at the mosque and got *udhi* from his hands. We went there; Jog, Madhav Rao Despande, Kaka Dixit, Buty etc., were there. Baba addressing them referred to my husband and said **“There is an (i. upantiya e., one who does the reverse of what he is asked to do) who wants to die by eatin g sour and pungent things. But I would not allow him to do that. To day I went to him in the form of a cat. That fellow has given me a caning on the back. See here.”** Then Baba exposed his back from under the Kupni; and there we could see a weal or stripe such as caning might cause, what a wonder!

Thereafter my husband wanted no more curds to be prepared and no more acids etc., to take. This accelerated his improvement very probably. Baba was not for giving him any medicines. First I gave my husband daily some medicine for the asthma. Baba then said that he also had Asthma and that as I was giving medicine to my husband he had thousands of women who would give him medicine; “But what is the use?” He added “Allah Malik hai” (God is the Lord). So I stopped giving medicines. It is without resort to any medi-

cine that Baba got my husband's asthma cured. That cure lasted for a year or so. Then my husband had again his asthma. That was in 1918 or 1919 and then he was cured by Upasani Baba when the latter went to Sion.

Sai Baba used to say many things. I remember some, while he was all along living at Shirdi alone he would suddenly declare **"I have been to Kasi and had a bath and just now I have returned. Why do I want a bath here?"** or **"I have been to Kolhapur, or Audumbarwadi and I have just now returned."** Jog told me that Sai Baba gave him darsan of himself as Akkalkote Maharaj, at his (Jog's) request.

## XX

**26th September, 1936.**

Dinkar Rao Jaiker, Son of Shyam Rao Jaiker, aged 38, Ville Parle says:

I have been with Sai Baba.

Once when I was in the Masjid with him, there was a severe storm howling, the wind and rain were fierce. After a few minutes, Sai Baba stepped on the edge of the premises and cried out (evidently to the storm) jara dhava "Stop a Bit."

Then the storm abated very quickly.

## XXI

**2nd December, 1936**

BhikuBai, wife of Bayyaji Patil Kothe, caste Mahrathi, aged about 42, residence Shirdi says:

My parental home is Ahmadnagar. I knew Radhakrishnabai as a friend at Nagar. She had a photo of Baba and she told me about him there. She was worshipping him with Arathi etc. She told me, she wanted to go to him. Her paternal grandfather was a lawyer there. Baba Saheb Ganesh was his name. She resided with him. I was wedded to one at Sangamner and he died and from there in my 14th year I came here, as Radhakrishna Ayi, my friend was here



serving Sai Baba (1908).

Gangagiri Baba of Vanjargaon was performing a huge Nama Saphtha under the Tamrind trees (near the wada). There was a huge gathering every day and among many pilgrim groups that came, one was from Sangamner and when that returned to Sangamner, it brought from my friend R.Ayi a photo of Baba, a lot of Burfi *Prasad* and an invitation to me to go over to Shirdi and settle there. I accepted the invitation and came here without jewels and property. I then went and saw Baba. He told me to live with R.Ayi and be busy serving. About the end of 1916 i.e., 1 or 2 months after R.Ayi died, I had gone to Nagar to draw my pension as the widow of a man that died in the war at rupees 6 per month (which I still draw). On my way back, at Kopergaon, near the banks of the Godavari, I was reminded of the fate of R.Ayi, who was burnt there. My mind was all in a turmoil. I had brought over my garland to Shirdi for Baba. When I went to place it on Baba, he said **“I don’t want this garland of mental uneasiness”**. He did not receive it. H.S.Dixit requested him to take it as I had brought it from Ahmednagar for him with such great trouble. I then went near Baba lifting up the garland with both hands. Then I neared Baba, the garland somehow snapped into 3 parts; one was left in each hand and one fell on the floor. How it got severed like that I could not discover. Baba was simply saying “I don’t want it.”

I had brought with me along with the garland a water melon and some milk sweets and I placed the *pedas* and the cut fruit before Baba. Baba took them up and distributed them. Then I took a slice and cut off the outer skin and presented part to Baba and asked him to eat it. Dixit also requested him to eat it. Baba then said **“This woman was weeping and shedding tears at Godavari and she has brought it with such a troubled heart and so I will not accept it.”** The fact was that at the river bank I was weeping and blaming Baba mentally for not having saved Radhakrishna Ayi, i.e., for allowing her to die such a wretched death. Baba knew everything that was in my heart and hence his refusal to accept my present.

Baba at his noonday meal daily gave me a vessel full of food which I took home. On the day of Baba’s expiry, I was

greatly agitated at his leaving me desolate and I was weeping at about 10 p.m., in my house saying "Baba I cannot see you again." I came out and outside my front door I saw a serpent and felt that it was Baba and said "I cannot recognize you in this serpent body I know only your Sai Baba form." The serpent disappeared.

## XXII

**3rd December, 1936.**

Mr.Clerk, Parsi, aged 44. Clerk, Bombay Office says:

In 1913 I first came to Sai Baba at Shirdi. That was because some friends told me that my elder brother's lunacy which could not be cured by doctors could be removed by the grace of Sai Baba. So I brought him here. First he slightly improved and we were asked to go away. But his trouble resumed its vigour after we returned to Bombay and he began to give trouble to his mother and others. So I wrote to Baba and was directed to go again to Shirdi with my brother I came with him and left him here. Mr.Amidas Mehta was looking after him and I send 30 rupees a month for his support. After some months stay, by merely attending Baba's Arathi and taking his Asirvadh, Udhi and *Thirtha* my brother improved. This was remarkable as all sorts of reason was medical and other treatments had failed to cure him, while Baba's grace without any medicine cured him. Our faith in Baba became stronger and I was always having his small picture with me in my room. I occasionally visited Baba in his life time. But that was only for earthly benefits I was much younger in those days. I was away at Basra first and then in 1917 and 1918 I was at Suez, leading a merry and reckless life and had no serious thoughts. It is after Baba passed away that I am developing my attention to the inner and nobler life. I never asked Baba for help in the spiritual direction. First my brother's mental malady and next the need to get my two younger sisters' married, etc, were obsessing my mind. It is for such things I sought Baba's help and I trusted in him fully and he was merciful enough to grant all I asked for and a great deal more. My sisters got married and as for myself I was never left in want.

In 1920 I got married and that was by Baba's grace. I was getting only 100 rupees (60 plus 40) and could hardly maintain a family. Yet but Baba's grace I got married. I have one son and one daughter. My wife is very sickly. I have constantly prayed to Baba for her. Recently one month back she was in so desperate condition that I intently prayed to Baba pleading that if she died, my mother, a poor old lady of 70 would die of the shock. By Baba's will my wife recovered; but my mother who had no visible illness at first except old age developed double pneumonia and passed away. My father passed away in 1904.

Baba used to come often in my dreams when I was 12 years old. (I was always looking at his picture and bowing to him.) If he came in my dream, that was a sure indication to me that some evil or other that was afflicting me or about to befall me was removed or averted. My experience with Baba was very happy. Whenever I went into his presence, I forgot everything. I had no trouble, no anxiety, no care, no fear. Everything was blotted out and I passed a blissful time in his company. That was most wonderful. Even now if he comes in dream vision, that effect is reproduced. He was so kind and all knowing, as I may shown even in his dakshina matters. I was very poor when I went to him. At first in 1913 I was on 60 rupees. He would ask me for dakshina. At times he would take away all I had in my pocket. Once 8 rupees was cash I had in my hand. He took it away as Dakshina. After I said that I had no objection to part with every pie, he did not go on asking any dakshinas from me. I never came to harm by giving away what I had. He blessed us by what he gives and even by what he takes away from us. I spent very little time here and had so very few visits during his life time that I have no spiritual experiences. I have not studied religious works, i.e. *Gathas* even now. I cannot say how Baba would affect a learned Parsi versed in Parsi sacred works.

We have to know God and unite with him. So we must begin at the bottom with right thoughts which would lead to right actions and ultimately to God. We pray to God as symbolized by the Sun, the Ocean and Fire standing before any of these three. Regard for Zoroaster does not conflict with worship of Sai Baba. Zoroaster merely organised a pre-existing faith and reformed it by removing the abuses which

crept in by the remissness of priests. We pray to Baba and get various earthly benefits. I do not know if there is anything in Parsi religion or religious books against this course being adopted by us.

## XXIII

**6th September, 1936.**

Somnath Shankar Deshpande, Son of Shankar, Nana Saheb Nimonkar, Brahmin, Inspector of Police, aged 51, 37, Saniwar Peth, Poona says:

I am the son of Nana Saheb Nimonkar. Our place Nimon is 20 miles off Shirdi. There (at Nimon) we have our Vatan of Deshpande. Shirdi is on our way from or to Kopergaon. And at Shirdi, we have relations. Balwantrao (Father of Madhava Rao Deshpande i.e. Shyama) was my father's uncle and loved my father. Once he took my father to Sai Baba saying "People believe he is a mad fakir. I doubt if he is really mad but you had better go with me, see him and give me your opinion." Whenever Balvant had gone to see Baba, the latter kept him at a distance by taking up a brickbat and either flinging it or threatening to fling it at him. Thus he kept away people from going into the Mosque where he stayed. But when my father went to see him, he flung no stones and they approached quite close to him. My father's heart was attracted to Sai as soon as he saw him and on his return home he assured his uncle that Baba was a Saint and not a mad man. The uncle wondered why stones were hurled when he went to Baba formerly but not on the present occasion. "That is because you doubted if he was mad, but I did not " said my father. Since then, my father paid annual and later biennial or more frequent visits to baba - as his faith was steadily increasing.

My father was an Honorary Magistrate of Sangamner and there he met Nana Saheb Chandorkar (the Collector's Chitnis) who also was an admirer of Baba and both would talk together about Baba. When Nana Saheb Chandorkar started the idea of rebuilding Baba's Masjid and collected subscriptions, my father contributed his mite and what is

more he supervised the building operations. Baba would not let the workmen to go on with the work as he complained of their work and undid their work. The building was long being prevented from completing even its foundation. Baba however had great trust in my father and my father hurried on the work all night when Baba slept at that chavadi. Baba showed his faith in my father by making him his banker during the years (1916-18) that he stayed with Baba. As funds came, Baba would hand them over to my father. Even Madhav Rao mistook them for gifts. My father stood in no need of gifts. We had about 500 rupees per annum from our Vatan and I was sending him all moneys he required. Besides, my father also knew the truth of Baba's often repeated statement. "Fakir's money is forced away". If one grasped at and swallowed a Fakir's money, he will in due course have to disgorge it all, to the last pie. My father desired and got from Baba gifts superior to monetary gifts i.e. our temporal and spiritual welfare. So my father paid up all the deposits for Baba's expenses. Baba himself frequently called upon him for these expenses e.g. (a) Burfi would have to be purchase and distributed as present (b) firewood on a large scale also had to be bought etc. We called my father "Kaka", so did the villagers; and so also Baba called him "Kaka".

To illustrate the spiritual benefit received by my father, I will give an instance. My father wished to read "Bhagawat" etc., in Sanskrit as "Pothi"- but his ignorance of the language stood in his way. Baba once said to him:

S.B: Why don't you read Pothi?

N.N: I do not know Sanskrit.

S.B: Never mind. Masjid Ayi will teach you Sanskrit, and gradually you will learn. Begin.

Then with faith in Baba's words, my father began the daily reading of Shrimad Bhagwat and its commentary- both of them in Sanskrit- without understanding what he read. Gradually he began to understand all that he read, and he advanced so far as to proceed (at Baba's bidding) with the Gita and next with Jnaneshwari. All these he understood, and when Kaka Saheb Dixit and Jog had doubts, he cleared their doubts. They were learned scholars and had regularly studied Sanskrit. But my father had not, and so they said

my father's understanding was inspired by Baba's grace. But Baba once stopped his further explaining things to others. "Why should we explain things to others? That will make us puffed up with self-conceit." As for quasi spiritual benefits derived by my father instances will be given presently of the cures he effected when he spent his last two months with me here at Poona.

Temporal benefit may include not only the growing esteem in which he was held by all who knew him and the consequent increase of his influence, but also the safeguarding and advancement of the interests of all members of his family, including my self. I had been taken to Baba from my infancy by my father and Baba spoke to me and spoke of me always affectionately giving me the sobriquet, "Somniya."

In 1912, I was a police Sub-Inspector at Kopergaon; and Shirdi was within my jurisdiction. As soon as I got my first pay, I sent rupees two every month by M.O. to Baba. That was my father's order and possibly his vow. I continued that payment every month up to 1920 i.e. till shortly after my father's death. When I was at Kopergaon my father and I went down once to Shirdi. Then Baba asked me to pay a dakshina of 10 rupees and I did. It appeared to have no significance at that time. But about six months later, I got the order that my pay was increased by 10 rupees from that date (i.e. the date of my paying the dakshina). I got a transfer in 1912 from Kopergaon to Poona. Another instance of Baba's care for me was mentioned by my father, even before I got my service. It seems that Baba, sitting at his Mosque, would take up coins and be rubbing them with his fingers saying "*Kakacha*" "*Somyahca*" etc. My father said that showed that I was often in Baba's mind and that augured nothing but good for me. Of numerous instances of Baba's taking all care of us, Yogakshema bahamyaham the chief may be his looking after my father himself during the last 3 years of his life. In 1916, my wife was in the family way and we looked forward to my parents to come here, so that my mother may help in the delivery. We had no other help. My father and mother left Nimon on that account to go to Poona. But as Shirdi is near and as there were rumours that Baba was passing away, they first visited Baba. Once they went to Baba, he detained them and did not give them leave to go

away- either back to Nimon or forward to Poona. My father did not understand the reason for this refusal and Madhava Rao on his behalf asked Baba for leave.

Baba: Do you want to kill my people? Is Kaka eating away your father's property?

Madhav Rao: But his daughter-in-law is pregnant and needs help.

Baba: Arre 'Kaka' why are you anxious? God will help.

Baba also said to my father at that time, "bury me and then go." When Baba detained my father, he tied a cloth bandage to his own arm which he kept on for three years and removed only four days before his death. My father died four months thereafter. That is just what he anticipated and told Madhav Rao when he left Shirdi two or four days after Baba expired.

When my parents were being thus detained at Shirdi, we at poona were relying solely on their going to us for the accouchement and made no other arrangements up to the last. Suddenly one night my wife told me "I feel that pains are coming". At once, I ordered a tonga and took her at 10P.M to the Poona Municipal Maternity Hospital and left her abed. The nurse that ought to have attended on her was talking with me in an adjoining room. It was about 11 P.M. At once we heard the cry of the new born child, a male child. The delivery was over without any help. It was a safe delivery. At that time- or rather just before delivery, Baba said to my father at Shirdi: "There was a woman. She was taken to a place. There she was delivered safe, of a male child."

Soon after the delivery, I sent my brother with "peda" which is usually presented to all on the birth of a child- to Baba and to my parents at Shirdi requesting that my mother may go over and help us at Poona. Permission was not given to her to go. My father then told my brother of what Baba had said to him about the delivery on the very day of its birth. That was Bhadrapad 1916.

Another instance of Baba's care for our family is this. In December, 1917, plague was beginning its ravages at Poona; and during Xmas holidays, I started with my first son Gopal, then a child 2 or 3 years to Nimon where my brother's

wife had recently had a safe delivery. On the way, we halted at Shirdi. Baba in sending me away with the usual Udhi said "*Porala jiv lav*" which means "Save the child." Interpreting it as a mere blessing intended for my Gopal, I gave him the Udhi and started off in a tonga to Nimon. When we reached that place, my brother's baby, 12 days' old, was in a precarious condition. It had become cold and chill and the parents lost all hope and thought the child was dead. Then I brought to mind my thought of Baba's words at parting and found that he must have referred to this child and not to my boy. I searched for the Udhi he had given me. But it had been lost during the journey. So I took the baby on my lap and sent up a fervent mental appeal with all my strength, with all my soul entreating Baba to save the child. In 15 minutes' time, the child improved and became alright gradually and is now called "Datta" i.e. God's gift, in consequence. Plague was still prevalent at Poona when I wanted to return. When I wanted to start from Shirdi back to Poona, Baba was loath to give me permission. But I had no "leave" to stay and must rejoin duty on 8-1-1917. So my father put Udhi in Baba's hands and practically forced him to give me leave. So we returned on 3rd January. My landlord was there down with plague and on the 4th, my wife was attacked. We could not escape elsewhere; my self, children and all stayed there. Baba saved her and saved us all. She i.e. my wife recovered her health but her eyesight was lost. At that time the question of leaving the town and going to a health camp was mooted before Baba; but he did not permit it. "Why leave home?" was what he said. We followed his guidance and were safe. When my wife was unwell, we had also requested my father to go to Poona. But Baba then told him again "Bury me and then go."

In March or April, 1917, I fell ill, it might be plague or Typhoid perhaps. Again I wrote to father to go to Poona. Again Baba refused permission- but said "Why are you anxious? Your Somniya will recover and come here to see us". I had twenty one days continuous fever and lived on water alone. Then I recovered. I took leave for a period of two or three months for convalescence and went first with my family to Belapur where the Samadhi of Vidyanandswami (who gave me my regular initiation into my mantra and my Bhakti marga) is. There I stayed for a while and my mother came



there and took us all to Shirdi, I had improved very little at Belapur and was very weak. When I went to Shirdi, Baba said I should be given a little *Kichadi* thenceforward. That was done. I stayed there a month and picked up my health and strength.

I was with Baba some days before he passed away. He was ailing and people were anxious about him. When I wanted to start he was unwilling to permit me to go. But I had to go and I went away to Poona. Some three days after Baba passed away, my father left for Nimon and then he went to Ahmadnagar and thence at my request (as I had pain in my side) he came and stayed with us, at Poona. Here he continued till his death which was some two months after he came there. My father had intense *dhyasa* of (i.e. absorption in) Baba during the closing days of his life and he treated (or looked on) all persons going to him as Sai Baba. He was a Ramabhakta all alone and he died with the words “Sri Ram” on his lips. Of course, Sai Baba and Sri Ram are not different. I was privileged to serve Sai Baba during his life for four days. My father had been called away to give evidence at Ahmadnagar and had to stay there four days. When he started for Nagar, he left me at Shirdi to do every service to Baba that he usually did. There was one difference however. He did the service sitting being an old man. As a younger man, I did the service on my legs. I found the service was physically taxing all my energies to the uttermost. To be at the beck and call of Baba all day and till he retired to rest was no little effort. During those days, I had a blessed vision. I was at the Mosque. Baba was in his usual place and Madhav Rao near the steps. Suddenly, Baba appeared to me in the form of Maruti. There was not more Sai Baba’s usual figure. There was the Maruti body. Only I did not see if there was a tail. Seeing that form I told Madhav Rao at once “Take his darshan. See He is Maruti”. Baba was undoubtedly a Ramabhakta. Baba on Chavadi days would stop opposite to Maruti Temple and muttering something, wave his arm towards Maruti fifteen or twenty times. My usual current of thoughts was worldly. But as I stayed near Baba, my usual current of thoughts was switched off; and there was a new current of thoughts within me. However, I had very little

touch with Baba - unlike my father whose powers and nature seemed to have developed greatly by contact with Baba.

When my father was at Ahmadnagar about November, 1918, I was suffering from pain in my side- as though it was the commencement of Appendicitis. So I wrote to my father and he came and stayed with me at Poona. He came and applied Udhi to me and from the very next day, there was no more pain. My brother was with me and he was showing signs of incipient consumption. My father gave him Udhi and Tirtha and he recovered. My nephew "Datta" had itch all over his head, My father gave him 'Udhi' and cured the itch. My father was always orthodox and paying strict attention to his religious duties. Baba respected his orthodoxy and would not give him any prasad that an orthodox man should not take.

I noticed Baba's foot prints. There was a clear "*Matsya*" mark on one foot, and a clear "*Dhanushya*" on the other. Only great Saints can have such marks.

## XXIV

**9th march, 1938.**

Madhav Rao Deshpande alias Shama, Brahmin, aged about 80, Dixit Wada, Shirdi.

Upasani Baba when he came to Shirdi first was sleeping and boarding here. He was still unwell. He cried in his sleep, "I am dead," and he asked me to request Sai baba to help him. I told Sai Baba that Upasani Sastri was expecting death and getting frightened. Sai Baba replied maranakunaitaranakuye jaga that this place Shirdi is for saving and not killing people. At first I (like others) took Upasani Maharaj for a detective. But he assured me he was not one. Sai Baba at the first visit asked him to stay on or return within eight days. Upasani did not agree and pleaded distance from Dhulia, etc., as his reasons. Finally he put up in this (Deekshit) Wada for 21 years. Sai Baba told him to remain four years in Khandoba temple, and promised him Khandoba's grace at the end of that term. This was said by Baba about 15 days after his second arrival. G.S.Khparde held his reading classes down-

stairs. Upasani Sastri, etc., attended it. Upasani Sastri would spend much of his nights in talk upstairs, when he lived at Khandoba's.

Sai baba's statement that he was four years younger than myself cannot be understood as relating to this life. He looked my senior in point of age. He told me of my relations with him in previous births. Once he said to me "You and I were living in the same lane, in a former birth." The little girl of three Santi Kirvandikar who fell into a well and was upheld by Baba's hand, slowly left in the water and thus saved from any hurt by Baba's grace and who called herself sister of Baba is now alive. Her father Baba Kirvandikar (now dead) was then living here. When she fell into the well, H.S.Dixit, G.M.Buty: etc, were here. That might be about 1915. She is married and is now living with her husband at Malegaon, which is 30 miles off Manmad.

I was an Assistant teacher in a school which was located in the place where Baba's horse is now stabled. A window of that always looked on the adjoining mosque. Through that I occasionally watched Sai baba who was taken by people to be a mad fakir. I had no regard for him then. I remained a teacher five or six years. I gave up the place, as I was transferred. Ganu Master then took my place. Nana Ratna Parkhe was my Headmaster and superior. One Laxman Master was another teacher above me. Our family belonged to Nimon, where I was born. But my father came and settled here, when I was two years old. Ever since, I have continued here. I studied here. After resigning my place, I used to visit Sai baba off and on. In five or six months thereafter, I was convinced that Sai Baba was God. How my faith grew even when I was a teacher. I shall mention. I used to sleep in the school. Baba was the sole occupant of the mosque. Yet I could hear English, Hindi, many languages being spoken in the mosque (at night) evidently by Baba. I inferred that he had remarkable powers and began to have faith in him.

When I was still at School, Chidambar Keshav Gadgil came to Shirdi and asked me. "It is said a great sādhu is here. Where is he?" I replied that there was none at Shirdi and from the school I pointed to the mosque and told him. "There is only this mad Fakir." Mr.Gadgil went to the

mosque. Sai Baba showered abuse on him. But the abuse was productive of faith and joy. Gadgil had worshipped or paid his respects to a saint living at Bhima Shankar temple at Poona. That saint had asked him to go and see the saint at Shirdi. That was why he had come to Shirdi. Now Sai in his abuse referred to that and Gadgil felt sure that Baba was a Gnani, a great saint. Thence forward he frequently visited Baba and became his stanch devotee. At the first visit of Mr. Gadgil he was a Chitnis, and with him came Vaman, a special Munisiff, and Sitaram Patwardhan, an Educational Officer, and a *tongawalla*. I went with these up to the steps of the Mosque, Baba forbade us from climbing the steps and began his shower of abuse. Therein he said "I am a Moslem. Go and fall at the feet of the sādhu at Bhimashankar temple, etc."

Ananda swami (Andandanath is not the correct name) was a devotee of Akkalkote Maharaj (who passed away about 1878) and had established a mutt at Savargaon (6 miles off Yeola) where he lived. He was about 95 years old in 1885 when I and Nandram Marwadi etc., went to see him, at his mutt. He wore only a *langoti* and was a great *Sakshatkari*. At the close of our visit Anandaswami came with us to Shirdi to see Sai Baba. Sai Baba and he saw each other but exchanged no words. Thereafter Anandaswami returned and told us his opinion of Sri Sai in these words "here is a diamond on a dung hill." Bala Chopdar (now aged 60) was then aged only 7 years.

Gangagir came to Shirdi and conducted grand Saptha repeating with numerous people mantras etc., for 7 days with Homa and fed large numbers, at the close of the Saptaha. He did so only once. That was long after Anandaswami's visit. Gangagir also saw Sai Baba and expressed his very high opinion of Baba.

Nana Saheb Nimonkar, was older than myself by atleast 5 or 6 years.

I shall recite Baba's strange goat purchase. Once a man had a number of goats with him. Two of his goats were worth about Rs.4/- each. Baba went to him, paid 32 Rupees for them and bought them. I and Tatyapa Patel learning the price Baba had paid said that in the bargain Baba had been duped, as the goats were worth only 4 Rs. each. Baba then

got pulses etc., for about 11/2 Rs. and fed the goats with the pulses. Then he explained why he acted like this. He found he said that the goats were looking at him entreatingly. Then Baba notice them. They were in their previous birth two women that had served Baba. But they were fiercely quarrelling with each other and had killed each other. They took birth as goats. Baba then went and returned the goats to their owner.

Pishya was a Rohilla. Many Rohillas came here in Baba's time. At Neemgoan there were the landlords, Baba Saheb Dengle and his younger brother Nana Saheb Dengle. Neither of them was an official. But they had much influence with officials. Nana Saheb Dengle came to Baba when I was a teacher at the school.

When Nana Saheb Nimonkar was staying at Shirdi, his son and daughter-in-law at Poona were attacked by plague. Mrs. and Mr.N wanted permission to go to Poona. Baba did not grant permission. Mrs.N. then wept. Baba said to her "Why do you cry? In 15 days' time your son will come here." Accordingly the son and his wife recovered and the son came to Shirdi within the period fixed by Baba.

Sai Baba enabled people to escape the clutches of death in such "*gandas*". Compare this with the way in which Samarth Ramdas enabled one to escape such a *Ganda*. At a particular time death was to seize a devotee. But Ramdas told the latter to remain by his side and be vigorously holding on to the feet of Ramdas. The appointed time came and passed away. Death had been kept at bay by Ramdas, and his devotee escaped death on that occasion.

Nana Wali was 70 years old at the time of his death, He was *Gurubandhu* of Yeshwantrao, the departed Dev mamlatdar of Nasik.

When our Nana Wali came, he was old. Baba encouraged him and said Nana kulup laga diya killi tere pas hai. nereku daganai denga. Mai daga nai denga. Nana wali was a *Sakshikari* Purusha, who had thorough *Vairagya*. He ate pig's filth. He kept scorpions in his mouth and also yakuli and. unner. Once he spat the unner Wali on Sai Baba. He wore no sacred thread.

On the day Baba passed away, Nana Wali declared "I will clear Off" and he died some days thereafter.

## XXV

26th September, 1936.

Mr. Kolambo, i.e. D.V.Sambhare, Gowd Saraswat, aged 57, Ville Parle says:

Baba was smoking his *chilim* and passing it round among those near. I am a *bidi* smoker. I was some distance away from them being seated near the steps. I felt a desire to have a puff or two out of that chilim. As soon as the thought struck me, Baba called out “you boy come here. Why keep yourself so far! Come near. Have a smoke”, and offered me the chilim. I joined the group and drew a few puffs I was glad alike to see his knowledge of my desire and his kindness in graciously offering his chilim to me.

Besides smoking, I had a more dangerous habit, the habit of drinking. Baba came to me in a dream on 1-2-1917 and sat on my chest and said Boy! What are you doing? I promised to abstain from drink. From the very next day I rigorously abstained from touching any liquor. On 15-2-1917 came a test. The manager of my office was giving a send off to his children and I was of the party invited. He insisted on my taking a peg of whisky and soda. I pleaded that the doctor had advised me to abstain. I did not mention Baba’s name in such lighthearted company. He did not mind the objection and was still insisting. Then came miraculous help. The electric lights went out and my manager went away to find out how the accident happened. Just then my neighbour, the “misty” drank off my glass and I was counted by the manager who returned to me, soon after as having complied with his request.

Baba’s dakshina demands were often associated with a moral, e.g., putting down boastfulness, cupidity, evasion of obligations etc. Some months after the above incident I was at Shirdi. Baba did not ask me for any dakshina at all though he was asking others for it. I concluded that my having corrected my vice was, in his eyes, the great merit which was recognised or rewarded, by immunity from paying dakshina. I was at the wada boasting of this immunity in the presence of

friends. At once came a call from Baba and when I went to the mosque. Baba asked me for 2 rupees dakshina and I paid it. There was another devotee who had gone to Shirdi, who had a balance of 18 rupees odd with him. He had handed it over to me in secret with the view that he might truthfully tell Baba that he had no money if Baba should ask him for dakshina. This man was at the Masjid when I went to the Masjid and paid my 2 rupees. Baba turned to him and asked for 2 rupees dakshina and in order to prevent his evasive excuses, added "Take it from this man (pointing to me) and give it". The man's device had been found out. He got 2 rupees from the deposit with me and paid it. That man is (N.V) a proprietor of a press, Mugbat, Bombay. This was some time before Baba passed away.

We were there a few days before Baba passed away. When we went to take leave, we had no anticipation of the coming catastrophe. But Baba evidently knew of it. He said "You are coming from Bombay. You must go on hearing me speak. I should go on hearing you speak. But you are going away. Well well, (i.e., with hesitation). Go, You are going to reach your destination tomorrow noon." Any how leave was given that evening and we started by that night's train via Kopergaon, hoping as usual to reach Bombay (via Manmad) by 7.30 or 8 a.m. But when we reached Manmad we learnt that the engine of a train had gone out of order and there was a consequent delay of some four hours. As we reached Bombay, it struck twelve noon. Baba's anticipation or prediction was fulfilled. Baba passed away a few days later and we could then see why he was rather hesitating to give us leave. That was the final parting.

Some fourteen years ago, one night Baba came to me in a dream and said "Boy, you speak of me to others as your Guru. Have I given you prasad, i.e. initiation?" Then he made me wash my hands, and gave me a Maharatta sloka to repeat. I repeated it very well in my dream. This was my initiation. But when I woke, I remembered nothing of the sloka and even now I cannot recall the sloka. Two years ago, I completed my fifty fifth year. According to the rules of our company, one should retire at 55. So I was getting ready to be relieved. But at that time, I had a dream. Our big boss, the director, came

in the dream, to me and made me understand that I should not bother about leaving the company. Up to this time none has asked me to retire.

I have responsibilities to my family as I have 4 or 5 daughters and a son. Baba looks after all my affairs. I do not pray to him for anything. He knows what I require and it is up to him to give us what we need, if that be his wish. Why trouble him with requests, as though he either did not know what we want, or knowing it would not give what is good unless pestered with requests? We are content to let him do his will for us; and we are happy.

## XXVI

**9th December, 1936**

Tukaram Barku, Aged 40, Mahar, Landlord, Shirdi says:

I have had some experiences of Sai Baba personally. In 1912, when water was first let into the Godavari Canals here, I was starting from Karanjigaon, a village twenty miles off to get some work and thereby to maintain myself. At the very start when I was in this village on the Kopergaon road. Baba met me on his way to Lendi or back from Lendi garden. He put his arm round my neck and said "Do not go." I disregarded this advice and went to the said village. The day after I reached it, I had fever that continued for a long time. Working for bread was out of question and I had to depend upon the kindness of some relations there to look after me. After 15 days of such fever, I felt strong enough to get back to Shirdi. But even here I was suffering from fever for about 45 days. Then I asked my mother to get me Baba's Udhi. It was applied to me and the very next day the fever ceased.



## XXVII

23rd September, 1936

M.G.Pradhan, Clerk, Collector's Office, Revenue Department, (Old Customs House) living at Venkateshwar Press, Chawl, near Sandhurst Road, Bombay says:

I had heard of Sai Baba. I had lost my 7 years old son Dattatreya and was greatly upset. I was thinking that I should go and see Sai baba. One day, I had a dream in which I saw five sadhus seated. I asked one of them "Which of these is Sai Baba?" And he pointed to one as Sai Baba. Then I proceeded to (Sai Baba) Shirdi taking with me Sitaphal (custard apple), Ramphal etc., of my own garden at Janjira, and presented them to Baba, took darshan and sat before him. The figure I had seen in my dream as Sai Baba was the very figure that I saw at Shirdi. Baba began to fall foul of me and abuse me saying "Why does the fool go on lamenting the loss of a son? It is merely going to the earth. The body must go to the earth. Why go on lamenting for that?" Again he said "Scatter your Ramphal far and wide." That (I learnt) meant, scatter knowledge, of course after obtaining it.

Then baba began to describe to someone present my house and my garden and state the exact number and locality of my Sitaphal and Ramphal trees etc., with the accuracy and certainty of neighbour, who had actually seen it often. He told others of me that I had lost my son fifteen days previously and was vainly lamenting over it. He was going on removing my poignant grief and fortifying my faith in him, by abundant proof that he knew everything about me and about every one that came to him. I stayed there for four days. During those days, many came to him and he told them facts about them which they mentioned to me and others, as remarkable proof of Baba's knowing everything.

This was the real starting of my faith which has proved a valuable asset for my spiritual and temporal life. Though I did not visit Shirdi again till 1935, I had got such intense faith that whenever I was in trouble, I beheld his person in dreams and he gave me help. For the last two years, I have not had such visions or contracts. My faith had

first got a stay by the sudden and unexpected obtaining by me of leave, funds etc., for my first trip to Shirdi. I noticed that during the 4 days I stayed at Shirdi. Baba was full of Udasinatha. He rarely spoke. Mostly he remained absorbed in himself, and looked as immobile as one drunk or insane. One grand instance of Baba's help to me (long after he left the body) may be now given. In 1932, my young son was attacked with severe fever. After 3 or 4 days of such fever the pulse appeared to have failed. Our medical man Mr.J., M.B.,B.S was brought down to see the boy. He said that the pulse had ceased and the child was dead. He began to console my wife. I was quite ruffled and unwilling to accept his view. I took up some Udhi of Baba and applied it to the child's face and had placed Baba's photo before the boy and I was intently praying to Baba. The medical man said I was superstitious. I declared that Baba was God and would save the boy. About three fourths of an hour passed. Then the boy regained consciousness and actually got up and later began to play.

## **Part III**

### **I**

**3rd May, 1936.**

Mama Dube (i.e.Kashinath Dube), Shopkeeper, Brahmin, Poona, age 70 (whose statement is also reported in Sai Leela Masik, Vol, V., parts 2 and 3, p. 607) says:

I was at first quite indifferent to sadhus, saints etc., One day about 1909, a lady took a loan of Rs.10 from me at Kopergaon where I was and she promised to return it after she came back from Aurangabad and she also told me that a great and powerful saint, Sai Baba, lived at Shirdi. That was the first time I heard of him and I vowed or thought that if the Rs.10 loan were returned (of which I was not sure), it should be devoted to Sri Sai Baba. I went to Aurangabad and unexpectedly the loan was returned. Later on, I went to Shirdi and saw Sai Baba but did not mention my vow to him. He asked me for dakshina 3 or 4 times on the first day of my visit, first Rs.5, next Rs.2, next Rs.2, next one and did not ask me anything for two days thereafter, though I saw him all the three days of my stay there. His demand totalled Rs.10, just the amount I vowed, I would give him.

### **II**

**23rd May, 1936.**

Ramachandra Vaman Modak, B.A., Engineer, Seth's House (near Peru's gate) Sadasiv pet, Poona (Sai Leela Masik, Vol III, part 9, p.399: Udhi used to drive off snakes from the house) says:

I went to Sai Baba about 1909 and was impressed well enough to repeat my visits. My last visit was in 1916. The most momentous of my visits was in 1912. My employment was that of Senior Government Auditor of Municipal and lo-

cal accounts of West Kandesh Division and my headquarters was nominally at Bombay. My wife and children, however, were stationed by me at Dhulia. In 1912, I had some official troubles or foreboding of troubles especially with a particular higher officer, who was waiting for an opportunity to sack me. They were trying to force me to appear for a departmental test, in which of course that particular officer would have an excellent opportunity to sack me and even declare me unfit to continue in service. The question was, if I should face that danger and by passing the test qualify myself for higher appointments or simply remain safe on my pay of Rs.120 and refuse to go up for the test. At this juncture, having learnt of Sai Baba's omniscient kindness and vast powers of control I determined to make him my sole guide and Providence to help me in deciding aright on this matter of great importance. I left Bombay for Shirdi (which is outside my jurisdiction) informing no one and taking no leave from my department to enable me to be away from work. I hoped also to return quickly in which case no leave would be necessary. I went straight to Shirdi. It always gives me (and other devotees also) great relief to be in the presence of Baba. *Care leaves one as soon as he is in that presence and happiness fills his soul.* Next morning, at 7 A.M (i.e. the usual time to go to Baba to take leave), I was being put off. I could not start as Baba had given me no leave. He knew full well that I had gone there in an irregular way without the sanction of my superior and unknown even to my family. If there were consequences to be faced, Sai had to face them. But Shama i.e., Madhavrao Deshpande knew my difficulties and interceded on my behalf, telling Baba: "He has stayed several days. Give him leave to go." Baba gruffly answered him that I had gone to see Baba and not to see Madhav Rao. Turning to me also, he asked whether I had gone there to see him (Baba) or to see Madhav Rao. Baba gave me the assurance that all would go well with me regarding my official problem as in other matters. In fact he detained me at Shirdi when the test was going on at Bombay. The die was thus cast and Baba settled it as the best for me that I should not go up for the test examination.

On the night of my fifth day's stay, I had a dream. I saw therein that I was back at home, that my young daughter

was welcoming me, asking me where I had been all these days. I woke up and felt assured that Baba was going to give me leave. At once I prepared for departure. I dressed myself up and despite my friend's protest that there was no guarantee that Baba would give me leave even that day, I went to the gate of the mosque. Baba was in a towering passion fuming and fretting with a stone in his hand and was moving up and down at the mosque. He saw me standing at the gate. In ten minutes' time, he calmed down and took his seat on the *gadi*. That was the place where he should be approached and I went and prostrated. Of his own accord, he said **"Take udhi and go away."** That was the way leave was granted for departure. "But," I asked Baba, "Where am I to go? Please tell me that" - as I wanted definite oral solution by him of my problem- whether I should go to Bombay direct, which would mean attending the test or whether I should go to Dhulia which would mean refusing boldly to attend the test. Baba's answer was **"Go home, You children are anxiously waiting for you."** That confirmed my dream and settled my course. I went to Dhulia and only later on to Bombay.

When I went to Bombay, in the usual course, some trouble might have arisen on account of my unauthorised absence. But, strangely enough, everything went on smoothly. My clerks, who would have to go with me on my tours, wondered where I had gone away. My family fancied I was at Bombay all the time. Anyhow by Baba's grace, my absence was not officially noticed and did not lead to any official trouble. On the way from Shirdi to Bombay on this occasion, as usual, I had to go naturally via Manmad. The Deputy Collector of the Division was camping there at Manmad and he had sent me a letter asking me to halt en route at Manmad and I intended to meet the D.C. But when I started and thought of stopping in Manmad Baba said **"Pshaw, Give that up. He is not here. There is no hurry,"** At that time, I did not understand what Baba meant. But, when I got down at Manmad I learnt that the D.C had got a wire from which made him suddenly break up his camp there and hurry away elsewhere. So Baba was right, as he always is. During these six days of my Shirdi stay, Baba was impressing my heart with spiritual experience, I felt that he was all in all for me and that I needed nothing more for my mundane or spiritual wel-

fare. That was a decidedly critical and precious period of my life.

I had, however, my usual inclination to rely on my Vedantic and religious studies. I had also not taken to Sai with the great earnestness which so many devotees evince. I was still very much in the world. In 1914, I had a confirmatory experience of what I had received at the hands of Sai in 1912. Another great saint gave me impressive hints of the value of Sai as a guide and of the experience he (Sai Baba) had imparted to me. A lady had asked me to go to Govind Bua at Sonagir, more especially as it lay on my way home i.e., to Dhulia. But, I had engaged a *tonga* to take me direct to Dhulia and fixed up a programme not providing for an intermediate halt. But, as fate would have it, the cart in which I and my cook travelled, broke down, the iron tyre came off clean and at least three hours would be needed to mend the wheel and continue the journey. The place where it broke down was Sonagir. My cook went, bathed and took *darshan* of the Bua and without any bidding from me asked him if I (his master) could come up for *darshan*. "Yes", was the answer, "let him come after a bath." So I bathed and went to him with a coconut and a rupee. Then, he said "Hallo, you rogue, you have had a precious thing given to you. You tasted it for a while, and yet, you run hither and thither after worthless things". That, of course, was a reference to Sai Baba's gift to me in 1912 during those six days. I understood it in that way. He further said "In any case, you have come to our own house" and thus identified himself with Sai Baba. Thereafter, he asked me to provide *biksha*. "Prepare *sira* and *puri* for me." That meant, I found, that I had to pay for that day's *prasad* or food at the Mutt. I did so. The Bua sat up for the meal at my request. We had a *lota* cup and filled it with water and placed it near Bua's seat. The Bua dipped his finger into the cup of water extracted from it miraculously a thin *puri* and ate it saying "Here also we prepare *puri*." The *puri* he brought out of the cup of water was thin and nice. That prepared for the *biksha* was thick and rough. How *puri* could be extracted from a cup of water was the wonder. It impressed us with his wonderful power. Such a mighty man

assured me of the value of the experience I got from Sai Baba in 1912.

I had not many opportunities of seeing Sai Baba. In 1916 was my last visit to him. Then, with my wife who also had great devotion to him, I went to Baba and returned the same day. In 1919, I retired. Sai Baba is not dead. He is still as ever. It is in a strange invisible ethereal manner. I feel his guidance, direction and control in my affairs. I have felt it on many occasions. For instance, in 1919, I retired on a pension of Rs. 81-8-0. But retiring was good for me. As soon as I retired, I joined a friend in working certain mills and from 1919 up to 1930, I had a monthly income of about Rs.250. This was Sai's provision for me.

I have always had indifferent health and actually my eyes have given me great trouble. I have lost one eye, and I am slowly developing a cataract in the other. But Sai Baba, whom I am worshipping every Thursday and remembering constantly has been looking after my interests here and hereafter. I feel no anxiety for my temporal or spiritual future. Both are in Baba's hands; and I am safe. Here is another instance of Baba's kind care for me and mine. In 1916, I was laid up with fever, cough etc., at Nasik. An old friend of mine in the medical service undertook my treatment and had prescribed chloral hydrate for my cough or bronchitis, as he diagnosed it to be. My wife had, however, a fear that my case was not so simple. She prayed to Sai Baba and sent for Col. Buckley. As soon as the colonel came and examined me, and looked at the bottle of chloralhydrate, he took the previous doctor (who was his subordinate) to task for his poor diagnosis and declared the case to be one of pneumonia- double pneumonia, and threw away the chloralhydrate as harmful, before it was administered to me. Then, under his treatment and by Baba's grace, I pulled through. It was really by Baba's grace that my wife was inspired to send for an able doctor and that the wrong prescription and treatment were changed at the very nick of time- just when the wrong and harmful drug was about to administered to me.

## III

26th May, 1936.

Gopal Bhaskar Datar, B.A, L.L.B., Brahmin, Pleader, (Station Road), Thana says:

I am now a Sai Bhakta. In 1917, when I was at Ahmadnagar, I had opportunities to see Sai Baba. But I was deterred by the accounts I had heard of him. He demanded and took much money as *dakshina* and the water in which he bathed was taken and given as *tirtha* for devotees to drink. These repelled me. I contrasted them with the conduct of Narayan Maharaj for whom I had regard. The latter, when I and one other each gave him a rupee, he returned the rupee, adding to it some sugar candy as prasad. Later, after reading Upasani Baba's life and listening to his lectures, I saw him at Bombay and went to Sakori. His, U.Lilamrita which I read in 1931, gave me a good impression of Sri Sai Baba and after my visit to Sakori, I went to Shirdi. There the gleaming eyes of Sai in the portrait, the *dhuni* and the mosque impressed me greatly and I said to myself: 'Here is a Master!'. Next, I read Sai Lila Masik and especially Anna Dabholkar's book, as it appeared in that Masik with the "Anubhavas" i.e, experiences. I was convinced that Sai Baba was my destined guru. I have stuck to him ever since.

Some experiences that I got confirmed me in my faith. A lady in the house who was suffering from internal pains for a long time and had vainly tried some medicines, was listening to me as I read Dabholkar's book aloud. There was the incident of Sai Baba intervening to save a frog that was caught by a snake, in what I read. She had heard it half dozing. She prayed in that half dozing state to Sri Sai Baba thus: "Oh Sai Baba, you have pity and help for humble suffering creatures like a frog, have you no mercy for me- a human being?" She then heard a voice that seemed to emanate from a peg on the wall, - "Will you give me Rs.5 dakshina for the Dasserah?" And she answered that she would, in case she got cured. At once, she woke up from her dozing condition and narrating the above, wanted Rs.5 to be sent up as her contribution for Sai Baba's Dasserah celebration. That was done at once. She improved and her agony



abated by evening. This was in 1931 or 1932.

Some time later in 1932, I used to get Sai Baba in my dreams wherein he would play with me as he would play with little children. In one of the dreams, Sai Baba was requested by Upasani Baba to help me and he agreed. Still later, I was in a great fix. I had lost or mislaid the letter of a wandering client, whose presence was urgently required by the court. I tried to learn his whereabouts by inquiries in vain. At last, in despair, I prayed to Sai Baba. The next day, I chanced to place my hand on the rack in my office room and I found the missing letter and that enabled me to secure the party's presence in proper time. Two or three years ago, I was given a commission to examine some witness on interrogatories sent by a distant court. The interrogatories and other papers were one day missed by me. I searched in various places for them and was much dejected at my failure. I expected then I would have the mortification to inform the Court of my negligence and ask for fresh copies of the interrogatories, etc. A 'Varkari' (one constantly going on pilgrimage to Pandharpur Vittal) had come to my house then; and having served him with zeal for some days, I told him of my worried state. "It will be found" he said. There was always my daily service to Sai Baba also. The day after the Varkari left, I discover the missing papers amidst the papers of a totally unconnected case.

I was formerly ignoring *Shradha* and other ceremonies, being carried away by the social reform ideas that these were meaningless superstitions. I had no faith in them. But my faith in the revived as I revere Sai Baba and as one Mr. Nana Nachane, (a Prabhu) clerk in the Presidency Magistrate's Court, Kurla, Bombay and devout Sai Bhakta gave me the following account of his experiencing the kind mercy of Sri Sai.

Very recently, Mr. Nachane's wife died, leaving him her little child to take care of. The loving husband wished to be assured of her getting *sadgati* and therefore, resolved to go to Nasik and perform all the required ceremonies on the bank of the Godavari. But, being unaccustomed to these, he hardly knew what steps should be taken and whether he would have sufficient funds to cover all the expenses. With

such fears, he started, taking 80 rupees with him. In the train he suffered other troubles and a fellow passenger gave him great help. That passenger, learning of his fears, told him that he would see to every ceremony being properly performed within the funds in hand. This kind friend accompanied Mr.Nahchane to all places and directed the ceremonies and controlled the expenditure- displaying a knowledge very wonderful for one, who belonged to a *Sudra* (Mahratta caste) and was merely a peon in some Bombay institution (the address and particulars of which he gave) as the friend described himself. After a great deal of self-sacrifice, that friend, without gaining a single pie or advantage, accompanied Nachane for several days and parted company with him promising to meet him again within a fortnight. But he did not. So, Mr.Nachane went to the place described by that friend and found there was no such peon in the institution mentioned by him. Mr.Nachane was convinced that the kind and very wise 'peon' was only a form taken by Sai Baba to help him in his distress. I felt sure that as the all-wise Sai Baba helped this devotee to perform the funeral ceremonies successfully. Such ceremonies must have a real use and must be worth performing. I am now performing them ever since I heard Mr.Nachane's account.

#### IV

**26th May, 1936.**

Kasinath Kander Rao Garde, B.A., L.L.B., 65, Retired Sub Judge of Nagpur, Congress Nagar, Nagpur, says:

Our family guru is a Ramachandra Tikotkar. My own personal guru is Ramanand Bidkar Maharaj. He was deep in wisdom and possessed marvellous powers and knowledge. After giving me *upadesh*, he told me that I should go round seeing a number of great souls, i.e. saints, taht he had seen in his tours, and he gave me a list of them. He told me taht all these saints would feel they are of one family and they would recognise me as connected with their stock and accord me a hearty welcome. That would confirm me, he said, in the belief of the truth and value of his instruction to me.

One of these saints that I was ordered to visit was Sai Baba of Shirdi. My guru Bidkar Maharaj in 1898 told me to visit him, saying that he himself (B.M) had seen that saint (Sai Baba) 25 years back, i.e., about 1873. I went to see Sai Baba in 1912 or 1913 during the May vacation, as I was then SubJudge at Khamgaon. As soon as I went and saw him, without any introduction or announcement, Sai Baba welcomed me heartily saying i.e., **“Welcome Ramdas”**. Ramdas is not my name. But, the hearty welcome he gave me was in accordance with that my Guru Ramanand Bidkar Maharaj asked me to expect and the word ‘Ramdas’ I took to be reference to that guru, by whose order I went to Shirdi and also to the earlier family guru, whose name was Ramachandra. I stayed there with my college chum (of the Deccan College) Bala Bhate, who lived there, at Shirdi, a life devoted to Sai Baba. Each succeeding day, I tried to go but the journey was put off, for 6 days as Baba said **“Wait till tomorrow”**. Meanwhile, I had kept with me Rs.6 or 7 for the expenses of my return journey.

Sai Baba asked me first time a *dakshina* of Rs.2 and Rs.1 each day for four days thereafter. On the next day thereafter, when I had got Rs.0-3-6 left in my pocket, Baba said of his own knowledge, **“Why keep that Rs. 0-3-6 with you? Give that up as dakshina. God will provide you with plenty”**. I at once gave up the 0-3-6 I had. Before I started for Shirdi, I was at Poona Reay Market and I purchased three excellent ‘Payari’ mangoes for presentation to Sai Baba, and as soon as I saw Sai Baba, I presented them. Sai Baba then took them up, eyed them with joy and said they were nice looking and ordered them to be cut up and he distributed the pieces as *prasad* (taking a piece himself). Before cutting the fruit, Sai Baba, out of his own vast knowledge, said **“Hallo! These fruits he (i.e. Garde) had purchase in the market for me and has brought the whole lot to me, without tasting any part of it. This is the opposite of what a pandit did the other day. Pandit had got a whole packet of laddûs intending to give them to me. But, on the way after bathing at the Godaari River, he got hungry and ate away some of the laddûs and brought me the remainder. These fruits are not or sesha like that”**.

This narration showed us (1) that he appreciated the pure and strong bhakti that we, devotees, should have towards the guru, avoiding the slight involved in presenting him with *sesha* and (2) that by his (Sai Baba's) knowledge, even of unseen events taking place far away from Shirdi, he deepens and strengthens the faith and reliance we place in him and in our guru. My faith in my guru's teaching and my adherence to him was deepened by all that Sai Baba said and did.

On the 8th day, I got Sri Sai's permission and left Shirdi with money lent me by Bala Saheb Bhate. Once, during those 8 days, I saw a strange sight. Hari Sitaram Dixit had returned, after conducting some big case and with a trunk full of solid silver rupees which were his fees- it may be Rs.1000. He placed the trunk before Sai Baba as an offering to Sai Baba. Baba dipped both his palms into the silver heap and gave away palmful after palmful of rupees from the trunk to fakirs and others, who were gathering there in crowds waiting for such windfalls. The entire money was in a few minutes thus gifted away. H.S.Dixit felt in no way disconcerted at the disappearance of his hard-earned cash.

A few words on Balasaheb Bhate may next be mentioned. At college, he was a free thinker, a free smoker, a veritable *charvaka*, whose creed may be thus summed up, "Eat, drink and be merry to-day, for tomorrow we die'. Katr yatra Bhante tatra Dhumaha I used to remark jocularly at his inveterate smoking being myself free of the tobacco habit. He became *mamlatdar* and was a very efficient officer much liked by his collector. He was Mamlatdar of Kopergoan for about 5 years (1904-1909). All that time he was scoffing at his educated friends (who met him on their way to Shirdi) having any respect for Sai, whom Bhate described as 'as a mad man'. The friends asked him just to see Sai Baba once and then form his judgement. In 1909, Bhate camped at Shirdi and saw Sai Baba day after day. On the fifth day Sai Baba covered him with a *gerua* garment. From that day, Bhate was a changed man. He did not care for earnings or work. From that day up to his death, he only wished to be at Shirdi, to do *seva* to Sai Baba, to live and die in his presence. Sai Baba made his friend Dixit draw up an application for leave for one year and with Sai Baba's help, Bhate's signature was

gut to it. The Collector gave him one year's time to see if he would return to his old self. But, at the end of the year, he still continued to be 'mad after his guru' and was granted compassionate pension of about 30 rupees as one afflicted with 'religious melancholia'.

Asked for the reason of his change, Bhate told me the putting of the (Bhagawa) *gerua* garment on him by Sai Baba marked the crisis. 'By that' he said, 'my original frame of mind was removed and in its place quite a new frame of mind was put in'. After that attending to worldly duties- especially official duties- became unthinkable. He then lived at Shirdi, attending to his *Nitya Karma*, *Upanishad*-reading etc, before Sai (Sai would offer remarks on that reading occasionally). His wife and family came to Shirdi and lived with him.

I have written a short account of my visit to Sai Baba. The reasons for the visit and the reception I got at his hands are published in the Mahratti biography of my guru.

## V

1st June, 1936.

Minathai Ganesh Kulvalekar, daughter of Nanasaheb Ganesh Chandorkar, age 49, near Kasba Ganpati Temple, Poona, says:

I am the elder of N.G.C's daughters. I have two younger brothers. Bapu, the younger is aged 40. When I was 12 or 13 years of age (i.e. 1899-1900), I went to see Sai Baba long with others of our family and went often late, not after 1918.

Chidambar Rao Gadgil Chitnis introduced my father to Sai Baba when he was mamlatdar at Ghodnadi. An early incident was this. We were staying at the *chavadi*. Leaving my father behind, the rest of us were starting to leave Shirdi. Sai Baba came up and asked us for *biksha* and said '**Do not go**'. Our journey was stopped. We gave Baba, the wayside food we were taking for the sake of the children. Baba's eyes sparkled like jewels.

I remember one or two instances of Sai Baba's signifi-

cantly stopping or delaying my father's journey. My father was starting at the proper time to catch a train at Chitali, as he had to meet the Collector. Baba permitted one Haridas to go for that train, but stopped my father. Haridas in a hurry left without a meal. My father took his meal leisurely and half an hour later than Haridas, My father was permitted to go. He went and found that he was in time for the train as the train was arriving late that day as timings had been changed that day. My father told me about this later. This was about in 1900.

Myself and family were starting from Shirdi to attend a marriage at Nasik, Baba first did not give us leave but said "Do not go". We had not got ready cooked food for the children to eat on the way and thought that at Manmad, we might try to feed them. But the train was derailed at the station before we reached Manmad and we stopped there for three hours. Baba's stoppage evidently indicated this stoppage on the way and his final permission indicated all would be well.

My husband died of plague at Poona in 1904, when I was but 17 and there was no help for me. My mother arrived in time to see him alive. I had just then conceived. In 1905, when I was in advanced pregnancy with serious difficulty at Jamner, was the Gosavi incident and Baba's *udhi*. But, I knew nothing of it then, in my pain. In 1908, we were at Pandharpur. My brother Bapu Rao, as a little child of 4, went daily in the morning, placed a flower on Sai Baba's head and worshipped him. That was the beginning of the regular worship of Baba, as others were not permitted till then to do what Bapu did. Before that there was no regular system of daily worship of Baba.

When I was 18 or 19, in about 1906, some one was taking *darshan* of Sai, with spectacles on and they dropped. Someone present said that the glasses should be offered to Baba as a gift. But Baba said, **"I do not want glasses. My glasses are worth Rupees 40."** My father interpreted to us "glasses as self-realization and worth Rs.40 as occurred 40 years ago". Baba looked about fifty and was gray when I went first in 1900 to Shirdi. He continued more or less the same up to 1918. His death was during the influenza epidemic (1918-19) that raged throughout India.

The following facts I learnt from my father:

1. Sai Baba had known him for 3 or 4 generations.

2. Sai Baba was constantly using the word “*Narayan*” in his talks thus -Narayan Teli, Narayan Dhobi &c. N.G.Chandorkar inferred that Sai Baba must have been a Brahmin *Sanyasi*, as Brahmin *Sanyasis* must constantly be saying ‘*Narayan*’.

3. Gita was repeated by Sai Baba. Sai Baba knew Sanskrit.

My father was orthodox and never drank the *tirtha* of Sai Baba. H.S.Dixit and others took it. About 1899 or 1900, my mother’s sister’s husband Balasaheb Binnewale (who died 5 or 6 years back) went to see Sai Baba without any faith in Sai Baba, out of a desire to oblige my father. Balasaheb was a worshipper of Datta. When he went and saw Sai Baba, he saw him as a figure with three heads (i.e.) as Datta himself. He, at once, believed that Sai was Datta himself and continued a devotee of Sai till his death.

## VI

10th June, 1936.

Vinayak Daji Bhave, Brahmin, aged 37, Shirol Kolhapur State, says:

I was a clerk in 1932 in the B.B.C.I.Rly.Co.on Rs.90 per month. I was anxious to find a guru and read *Guru Gita* from 13-4-32 for one month. I had not found any guru or obtained a vision of Datta in that period as I had hoped to find. Then, one Thursday sacred to the guru- I went to a Datta temple. There is an image of Datta in that temple. But, when I went there in the place of that image, a samādhi neatly sculptured was what I saw. Next morning, I went to a friend’s house and opened Anna Dabholkar’s book on Sai Baba and my eye lighted on the picture of Sai samādhi found in that book - a picture I had not seen before. That was an exact picture of the tomb I saw at the Datta temple. So, I inferred that Sai baba was to be my guru. For a time, I took his *udhi*

and read some books about him. But I soon got dissatisfied. A tomb is not a guru. I wanted a living guru to go to and to commune with. So again recognising that the devoted study or *parayana* of Guru Gita was the surest method of obtaining a guru, I began my *parayana* once again and went on with it for a week. Then I saw Narayan Maharaj of Khedgaon in my dream. Inferring that he was to be my guru, I went to Khedgaon. There, at night, I had a dream in which Narayan Maharaj appeared and told me "I and Sai Baba are not different from each other. Why do you not go there?" I replied that there was none to direct me. I woke. Later, I went to Shirdi and took Sai Baba as my guru. My palm was read by one *sādhū* and he said 'Sai Baba is your guru'. In 1933, my son had plague and he recovered by the use of Baba's udhi alone.

My sister had given away a silver cup and Rs.100 to one Dutta Maharaj, who promised that she would have Ram darshan. She did not get any Ramasakshatkar and she feared that the Maharaj would not return the silver cup. I told her that if she vowed to make a gift of it to Sai Baba's Sansthan, in case the Maharaj returned it, Sai would make the Maharaj return it. She vowed so; the cup and Rs.100 were returned and her vow was fulfilled by presenting it to the Sansthan. Her name is Durgabai Kakatkar. I knew of Sai Baba even in 1916. My mother Annapoornabai Daji Bhawe went to Shirdi. There when she tried to enter the mosque, Sai Baba prevented her saying it would pollute the mosque. When she returned to yeola, she received a card from Yootmal that her daughter-in-law (i.e., my brother's wife) had died on a particular date- which was the day before my mother's visit to the Shirdi mosque. She had to observe ten day's pollution from that day and was under 10 days pollution when she was at Shirdi. She did not know it then. But Baba knew it evidently.

At my mother's death, we offered the rice ball "*pinda*" but no crows would touch it. My sister then vowed that she would send 50 rupees to Sai Baba's tomb if crows should come and take the *pinda*. Then the crows came and ate the *pinda*.



## VII

17th June, 1936.

Mukunda Sastri Lele, C/O Krishna Sastri, age 58, Vydik life, Konkanast Brahmin, Sanivar Peth, Poona, says:

In 1912, I was often at Shirdi with Sai Baba. I once went with Nanasaheb Chandorkar in a *tonga*; the horse reared. The carriage fell down. I and Nana came off without hurt. Then Baba at Shirdi did the Sanka sound and said ( ----- ) (i.e., “Nana is now about to die. But, will I let him die?”) 8 days later, I and Chandorkar went to Shirdi. Then Bapusaheb Jog told me that Baba cried out as above 8 days back and asked me ‘Was that true?’ ‘Yes’, I replied and narrated the facts.

In 1914, my wife was pregnant, 8 months with child. Baba gave me two (pieces barfechivadri of *Barfi*) and said ‘Go’. Then I went home and my wife had a delivery. I have three or four children now.

Sai Baba told me to recite Narayan Upanishad (Taittiriya Bhaga) at the *pooja* of Baba at the masjid and I did so for 10 days. I taught that Upanishad to H.S.Dixit. Baba recited before me etc. (froarpichent sudurachar m Bagavad Gita) and some more at times. He knew Sanskrit.

## VIII

7th July, 1936.

Cursetji Shapurji Pestonjamas, Parsi, aged 75 Kolaba Khusrubad, Baug, formerly in Railway Service and Yard Master, Reclamation, says:

I went to Shirdi and saw Sai Baba, and stayed there for three or four days. That was the only time I saw him. I and my brother-in-law went there and were accommodated on the ground-floor of Dixit’s Wada while mine owners and other rich people were accommodated upstairs. As we went and sat at the mosque before Sai Baba, this thought was in our mind, though we did not express it (viz) “What sort of justice is here, in this *darbar*! Big people enjoying comforts

above and poor people left downstairs to suffer inconvenience'. Then Sai Baba told some one present: 'Take these people up', and we were given accommodation upstairs. This was at once proof of Baba's reading our hearts and of his love of equality and justice. When we left him finally, he came out and graciously waved his hand, as sort of 'God speed' to us.

Except this, I have no experience of Sai Baba. I believe he is God.

## IX

**20th July, 1936.**

B.Laghate Esq., B.A., L.L.B., Ex-Sub-Judge, Brahmin, aged 70, Shaniwarpeth, Poona, says:

I went to Sai Baba about 1913 or 1914. I was in trouble and I went to get his *ashirwad* (i.e.) blessings to get rid of the trouble. When I approached him, he asked for *dakshina* and I gave it. He said to me of his own accord 'sow margosa and afterwards cut off that tree'\* I could not make head or tail of this utterance. I was evidently not the *asirvad* I went to him for. I was disappointed and I never went to him again, though at about that time, I lived with Mr.H.S.Dixit (who was a staunch devotee of Sai Baba) for three years.

## X

20th July, 1936.

Kusha Bhav' (alias) Krishnaji Kasinath Joshi son of Kashinath Padmakar Joshi, Joshi Vattandr, Brahmin, aged 70, (10 miles off Ahmednagar) Mirazgaon, says:

I was given a mere elementary Vernacular School Examination education to qualify myself for a school Master's place on Rs.5 or 7 per mensem. I got trained also for the hereditary duties of the village priest. I did not care for either. We were poor. In these circumstances, I wanted to devote myself to a life of *bhakti*. I found a Guru in Datta Maharaj, a truly great and *Satvic* soul. He took me away from time to time and trained me in yoga. Under him I learnt Asanas, *Pranayama* and the rousing of the *Kundalini* Sakti. But, in my youthful waywardness, I was not contented with all that and asked my Guru to impart to me the mantras he knew which gave worldly power (e.g) creatin maran, unchatan, vasikaran g spells and breaking spells, exercising devils and invoking them & c. The Guru very unwillingly imparted the *mantras* to me, on account of my importunity and I went through the necessary *japa* and *sadhana*. I wore an iron bangle, repeated the *mantras* as prescribed for the required number of times, I succeeded in getting possession of the coveted powers. I could simply utter a mantra and order the production of sweetmeats, *pedhas* and the like. And the articles I ordered would at once appear and be filling my hands. These I would show to others and distribute. The *pedha* etc., I could not use. I could not and should not eat or sell them but I gave them away to the admiring or wondering people about me. I could also destroy the evil spells of others. The production of *pedha* etc., was not by the use of evil spirits (e.g.) Yakshas, Jinns etc., This latter method is dangerous. It will extinguish one's life. The spirits might even begin to cause physical harm to the man, who uses them. In my case, the articles required were produced purely by mantric power without the use of these evil spirits.

When I was aged about twenty two and fully armed with these magical powers, my Guru resolved to go away from our society into the Himalayas and live there alone right up

the end of his life. He started north and took me with him up to Delhi. There he wished to part company with me finally. As to what I should do, after he went away, he told me that there was one Sai Baba of Shirdi, whom he referred to as his elder brother "maja badila Bhai" and that I should go to him and do whatever he directs. Saying this, the Guru went away and disappeared from me and this part of the country, and I have not seen or heard anything more of him since.

Then (i.e) in 1908, I went to Shirdi and found Sai Baba. He would not allow me to be with him till I should throw away my iron bangle and stop the production of *pedhas* etc., by mantric means. As his order was strict; I broke and threw away my iron wristlets and stopped my mantric production of articles like *pedha* etc. To sustain myself I begged food here and there at Shirdi. I had no abode. He ordered me to sit in a corner of the mosque and go on reading Dasbodha during the day, and I did so. At night, I would sleep in any place I could find space to lie on. He gave neither me nor anyone else any *upadesh mantra* etc. The town people from Bombay etc., were not coming to him then. Only the villagers would go to him now and then, and ask him to remedy their trifling complaints (e.g.) stomach ache, fever etc. He gave his *udhi* to all these from his ever burning fire (*dhuni* which he maintained at the mosque). He was not asking for *dakshina* from all but only a few pice (e.g) 4 or 5 he would ask for and getting these, he might buy fuel for his *dhuni* or some such article of necessity. As for big people I remember that Nanasahab Nimonkar was obtain with him, and as for his talks, I never heard him say anything about *maya* or *Brahma* or *Mahavakya tatwas* or *Viveka*, and *Sadhana Chathusthya*. He imparted faith to those resorting to him faith in Ishwara, by exercising his wonderful powers; they would go on with their devotion to their *Ishtadevata* and finally, he would grant them *Sakshatkar* of that particular *ishtadevata*.

As for myself, I stayed three full years at a stretch with him and then went on visiting him during the nine years that followed. During that period of nine years, he told me to see a person with three heads. That of course, I took as a direction to go and see Datta at Gangapur. Every year I visited Gangapur twice once in *Guru poornima* and next in *Magha*

*poornima*. Then, once he told me to do 108 parayanas of Guru Charitra, taking three days to finish each parayana. I did this at Gangapur and stayed there 10 or 11 months for this purpose. As my powers, he had interdicted their use. But, out of his kindness, he gave me some other power. It came about thus. One *Ekadashi* day, I sat by his side.

Baba: What do you eat today?

I: Nothing, today is *Ekadashi*?

Baba: What does *Ekadashi* mean?

I: It means a day for *upavas*

Baba: What does *upavas* means?

I : It is just like *rojas*

Baba: What is *rojas*?

I: We take nothing except *kandamula*.

means root and usually 'Sweet potatoes' and is the food that is eaten (onions should not be taken by the orthodox) on *Ekadashi* day. Then Baba picked up some onions, evidently having a phonetic equivocation, and told me to eat it. Seeing Baba was persistent and not wishing to run counter to his wishes, I yielded, but added 'If you eat it, I will eat it'. Then Baba ate some onions and I ate some. Then as visitors began to arrive, Baba was enjoying some fun at my expense.

Baba: look at this *Bramniya* ( a contemptuous corruption of the word *Brahmin*), he is eating onions on *Ekadashi* day.

I began to defend my conduct or justify it.

I: Baba ate it and I ate it.

Baba: At one stroke, was having humour at my expense and the manifestation of his powers and he declared that he had not eaten onions. At once, he vomited out something. That was not onion but sweet potatoes (*Ratale*)

Baba: See, it is not onion but sweet potato I had eaten.

Now here was my opportunity. By his miraculous powers, he had produced sweet potatoes from his mouth. I treated it as *prasada*, fell upon it, seized it with my mouth and

ate it up. Baba abused me, kicked me and beat me. But I did not thiamind all in the least, as I was overjoyed at having got his *uchchishita* as prasad. I knew also that as with Akkalkote Maharaj, so with Baba his beating and abuse were auspicious and beneficial. If Baba kissed a man and sent him off, as he did sometimes, that was not auspicious, But in an instant, Baba's mood was changed, His anger, real or pretended, gave way to warm appreciation of my unquestioning faith in him and he lovingly placed his hand on my head and blessed me. He said that I would thenceforth have the power by barely thinking of him and holding up my palms, to pour abundance of udhi from my palms.

(At this stage, Kushabhav at once put his two empty palms together and held them above and in front of his face, lifted his face up and closed his eyes, for (or as though he was in) prayer and in a minute he cried, 'Here is udhi!' Hold your hand under and receive the udhi' and he began to drop a stream of fresh udhi from between his palms. We (i.e.) I, B.V.N.Swami and Mr.Avaste, stretched out a piece of paper and took some ounces of udhi, folded the same into packets and took the same.)

This miraculously produced udhi could be distributed by me to those who have faith and want prasad from me, and the udhi would remove troubles. This power was at once vested in me and did not require any japa on my part. I am since then using this power to grant udhi prasad to those who want it. This udhi will remove various evils and can be used. It might even cure lack of issue. But, in cases of menstrual disorder, it would be better to see the issueless lady, before deciding on the remedial measure necessary. As for the old power of producing pedhas etc., I am mostly obeying Baba's interditory order. But occasionally, I have yielded to the importunity of people, who ask me to produce pedhas etc.

This power of counteracting evil spells and black magic I have exercised without compunction. Within the last month Mr. Rajmachikar's grandson was getting mysterious '*biba marks*' (i.e. marks of the marking nut) on his body or on his clothes or bed clothes without any visible cause. That is a well known species of black magic and there are specific

mantras (that I have practised) to counteract these and other similar evil practices. I was sent for and I came and went on with these counteracting mantras and my Datta Pooja, *arati* etc., at Rajmachikar's. That checked the black magic. On 18-7-36, Saturday, when as usual, the magical *biba* marks should appear, none appeared and the evil spell is now counteracted.

After I stayed three years with Baba, my father came up and took me. At my departure, Baba said '**Next time when you come, come two of you**'. A little later, I and my father went to Shirdi and paid our respects to Baba. Then he said that by his phrase 'come two' he means that I should marry and come with a wife. Soon after my father took me from Shirdi, I had married a wife; yet still I liked to go and stay with Baba. So, I went to him alone, and stayed with him for a long time, though married. Then my wife came up and took me away with her. Now I have children and grand children.

On one of my visits, Baba told me "Why do you take the trouble to come up all this distance to see me. I am there'. He then have a specific description of a plot of land in my village as his residence. I went up later and after clearing the prickly part on it, I found there was a samādhi. I bought up that land and at that samādhi, I have my worship. There Baba gives me darshan. So I am not going to Shirdi after that except for the *Ramnavami*.

The power of producing udhi etc., which I have got is communicable by me. But the would-be recipient of the power would have to undergo a rigorous course of an austere discipline (e.g) six months of absolute *brahmacharya* (i.e.) continence).

### 30th August, 1936

The name of the saint that appears at Mirazgaon is Pakir Shah. He lived 200 years ago and held the land in which his tomb now exists, as an dinam grant from the *jagirdar*. I now own that land. He has no disciples or descendants. He is different from Sai Baba. He occasionally talks of Sai Baba. He talks very little. It is mostly darshan of him

we get. Now, during the *Chaturmasya*, even *dharsan* is stopped. We can now hear his voice but not see him during these four months.

(Just as he entered today at 10p.m, into Narayan Rao Bhide's room, Kusa Bhav said, 'here hold' and produced vibhuti or udhi and applied it to Mr.Bhide's forehead and gave bits to others.) The production of this udhi is not the result of any mantra, but is the result merely remembering Sai Baba. The former power of producing pedha is different. The pedhas I produced are merely property fetched from elsewhere. That power did not include the production at will of udhi. Now it is production (by thinking of Sai) of udhi. Formerly it was merely transferring pedha, etc., from one place to another. This Pakir Shah does not give one any help; by his speech etc., in one's progress in *jnan* or bhakti. It is merely to inspire faith that he appears. He is to be seen and worshipped or bowed to. His statement about Sai Baba is that Sai Baba is alive. He gives no details as to what form or what condition Baba is in whether Sai baba remains only as a spirit or has taken fresh form in some human body, etc. He says that he and Sai Baba are interrelated as persons of the same order or set.

## XI

26th July, 1936.

Balakrishna Govind Upasani Sastri, S/Oh Govind Gopal Upasani Sastri, Brahmin, aged about 69, retired Professor of Sanskrit, Saniwarpeth, Poona says:

When plague was raging at Poona, my college was closed for many long months, and then I went on pilgrimage with my mother and wife. When I went from Haridwar and Rishikesh to Tapovan, there I met a *sādhū* who glared at me at least he was persistently looking at me. I bowed to him and he still looked at me, and asked me 'Are you not from Satana?' 'Yes', I answered, for Satana is my ancestral village. Then, I, in my turn inquired of him who he was. 'Come here again tomorrow at this time (afternoon) and I will tell you, he said. I then went to my quarters and informed my mother.



She thought that this might be our (family) Mutt Founder, Sri Uddhava of Mulhare (Mayurapura). Next day, she wanted to come to the saint and she accompanied me to the appointed place at the time fixed. After 15 minutes of wandering up and down, she thought it was a wild goose chase to find a wandering saint and went away. Almost immediately after she left, that saint appeared before me and said, with a grave countenance, 'Do not act in this manner again'.

I: In what manner?

He: Only those directed to come should come. There is always difference between one individual and another alike in physical and other peculiarities. No two are exactly the same. So only the bidden person should come.

I agreed to abide by that rule.

Then as I wanted to know his identity, he informed me that I had a *saligram* among the Gods that I worshipped at home and he gave me an exact description of it. I said that I had that saligram. Then, he added, that he was the person who gave it to Uddhava Maharaj from whose grandson, my grandfather had got it. It has been a heirloom with us and I am still worshipping it.

Still as his identity was not clear, he thus replied to me talking this time in *Hindustani*. Till then, he was talking in Marathi. He waved his hand so as to attract my attention and said 'Lo, there was a tree. Two persons went up that tree. One came down; the other went up'. He wound up with the remark 'You will come to know' and then he disappeared.

He looked like a man of 50 or 60 years, rather bulky and stout and he wore only a *coupina* and no other article of dress.

Many years later, say about 1910-11, (31-12-1911) I was trying to utilise my Christmas Holidays for a trip from Dhulia southward to see if any trace could be found of my younger brother Kasinath (i.e. Upasani Baba). He had contracted some strange disease in the course of his efforts at pranayama. He could not lie down lest breathing should stop. He had no sleep, nor good digestion. So he left home and we had no trace of his whereabouts. As I was in the train

from Manmad going south, it stopped at Kopergaon for a few minutes and the local mamlatdar Mr. Bhat, a friend of mine who was on the platform made me alight and spend a pleasant day with him. He told me that Sai Baba was a saint living 6 miles off (i.e) at Shirdi and worth a visit. He sent me in his tonga to that village.

I went to the mosque and found Sai Baba at the dhuni in the mosque. He was standing close to the fire and occasionally turning round himself. He saw me and invited me inside. I went and prostrated myself before him. Gazing at me, he told me to go to Khandoba's temple. I thought he recommended that visit to see the image of that God and I said that all Gods were there with him, and was quite content to see him. He repeated the words "Go to Khandoba's." I inferred that he wanted me to get away and not to stay there. So I went to an adjoining house and there they told me (after I mentioned Baba's order) that there was one Upasani Sastri at Khandoba's. I then went to Khandoba's and found my brother there. He said that he was remaining there by Sai Baba's order and that he saw very little of Sai Baba. I then gave him or rather one Dada Kelkar on his account some Rs.4 for his food expenses and went back to the Masjid. I stayed at Shirdi for one or two days at that time.

On the first day, he asked all generally for *dakshina kukshana* some gave. He extended his palms towards me and asked for *dakshina kukshan*. I said I had nothing and made *pranams*.

On the occasion, Sai Baba said to me the same words as the *sādhū* at Tapovan. 'Lo! There was a tree. Two persons went up that tree. One came down; the other went up' in Hindustani. I was at once reminded of the Tapovan saint whose person closely resembled Sai Baba's, though the dress was different. Sai Baba mentioned some autobiographical reminiscences of his own. He said he had been at the battle in which the Rani of Jhansi took part. He was then in the army.

On the second day he asked me again for *dakshina*. I excused myself on the ground that I had barely the railway fare for my journey with me. Then he pointed to a silver watch I had in my pocket and asked for it as *dakshina*. I gave

it but not without a momentary regret and hesitation. He received it and handed it over to some fakir by his side. Then looking at me and evidently to meet my momentary regret at losing the watch, Baba said to me 'You are not going to be worse off (on his account)' I said, 'Of course, it was nothing I had given. Then I started back, and via Kopergaon I came to Poona. There I went to a friend's (Mr.Natu's) house. I was talking of my Shirdi watch incident and inquired what it would cost to get a similar watch. Just then my friend's brother sent down his gold watch worth about Rs.60 and wanted me to accept it as a present and I accepted it. So I wasn't worse off for parting with my watch to Sai Baba

I visited Shirdi on one or two occasions. I composed then a Sanskrit poem on Sai Baba.

## XII

27th July, 1936

Balakistna Ramachandra Khairikar, Brahmin, Vydiki life, aged 70, Khairi (3 miles off Chitale) says:

When I first heard of Sai Baba, it was that he was a mad man. That was 35 years ago or thereabout. But when everybody began to talk of him and as some of the Brahmins of Shirdi (eg.Appa Kulkarni) are connected with me, I went to see him. I was a hereditary village officer. The Government dispensed with our services in 1916, Formerly people used to visit Shirdi along Chitale, Jalgaon, Rampur, Nathpatlacha, Wadi, Pimpalwadi, Shirdi route. That road not being in use is not now to be found.

I saw Baba using water instead of oil for his *panthis* (lamps).

Deshpande Master of Danderpur was often hearing Baba talk. I know nothing of what Baba said.

Once in 1908, when I went to Baba, a coin a pice I trod upon at the mosque. I picked it up and delivered it to Baba saying 'Keep this safe. This is you coin'. He returned it to me saying 'That is all right. Take this coin home. Keep it in your pooja, along with he images you worship. You will

have prosperity. I took it and worshipped it. For three years, (i.e) till 1911, I had prosperity. Formerly, I could not get even rice for a night meal. But after I started the worship, I save so much from my earnings as Kulkarni, that my wife could get gold bangles (i.e., wristlets). Then when I travelled and came under pollution I delivered my study book (*Pothi*) with the pice in it to a friend and some days later, I found the pice was lost. Since then (1911) misfortune dogs my heels. I first lost my wife in six months of losing the coin. In 1916 I lost my service. In 1917-18, I lost my mother. I am now begging for my food. I visit Shirdi on each Ramnavami.

### XIII

**27th August, 1936.**

Badave, c/o Anand Ramachandra Badave, of Nevase, Brahmin, aged 64, Estate Broker, Mothi Chowk, Ravivar Peth, Poona says:

About 30 years ago, my father-in-law Mr. Vabale then Vakil of Ahmednagar, was a great devotee of Sai Baba. I was a Badave or Poojari of Mohiniraj at Nevase. I had one son. But several children were born to me before and after that had died young. My wife, child and I went at the instance of my father-in-law (who was a friend of Nana Saheb Chandorkar) to Shirdi. My wife said nothing and none of us said anything about our grievances or prayer. My wife mentally prayed for Sai Baba's blessings that children to be born later should not be short-lived but be healthy and long-lived. Baba placed his palm on her head and said, 'Have no anxieties'. Thereafter, I had only one daughter and three sons born to me and they are alive except one son who died at the age of 17. At that visit, Baba asked me for Dakshina. When I paid something' he wanted more. This he repeated several times till my funds were practically exhausted. I wanted to give him one rupee more but somehow failed to give it. We returned and I told my wife about it. Some years later, I fell on bad days, my finances were very low and I was knocking from pillar to post getting little or nothing. Then my wife reminded me that I wished to pay Rs.1 to Sai Baba and had

omitted to do so. At once, I sent Sai Baba Rs.1 by M.O. Since then the tide has turned. I have had good days and no financial difficulties. This was about 20 years ago. Baba was alive then. I came to Poona in 1914 and I am doing business as estate broker etc. My sons are doing good business here.

#### XIV

**1st September, 1936.**

Shridhar Narayan Kharkar, aged 57, Kayasta Prabhu, Accountant, Secretariat, 37 Charni Road, Thana, Says:

My earliest period, that is infancy, was wellstocked and fed with religious ideas and ideals by the pious prudence of my grandfather. When I was thus developing the orthodox side of my religious study and practice, Mr.Appa Kulkarni, Deputy Collector, a very pious soul, showed me the picture of Sai Baba that he was devotedly attached to. That was my first contact with Baba. Very soon after that I got from Mr. Dabholkar a picture of Baba, a number of Sai Lila Masiks and a packet of Baba's udhi that came on a day. I was unwell; and on the second day, I got alright and started my worship of Baba which steadily grew thenceforward.

The beginning of my faith in Baba was marked by a remarkable dream or vision.

The picture I got from Mr. Dabholkar I took to my pooja room but when I was taking it near the picture of the Akkalkot Saint that I was already worshipping, some impulse made me withdraw the new picture. 'Hallo! This is the Moslem's picture. How could it be placed next to the holy Hindu saint?' So thinking I kept it apart, a little distance from (and not in the same group with) Akkalkot Maharaj's picture.

I had a dream that night. In the morning, I first forgot all about the dream but when I began to worship, I at once recalled the details of my night dream. In the dream, I saw a fakir robbed like Sai Baba coming towards the oti or veranda on which I and some one else were sitting. I got up to welcome that fakir. Perhaps I was going to make some individuous distinction. At any rate to prevent such a distinction

being made, the person who was next to me told me this (Sai Baba) is not different from Akkalkot' and I was directed to treat him on the same footing as Akkalkot Maharaj. Recalling the dream, I rearranged the pictures and placed Sai Baba's picture along with Akkalkot Maharaj's and worshipped him.

By Baba's kindness, devotion to Sai Baba has increased by leaps and bounds not only with me but also amongst all the members of my family. I read up all available books on Sai Baba and my wife and children (and God has given me my quiverful) all have taken to Baba worship and show such a great zeal that in case I fail to attend to arati or pooja of Baba, someone else is ready to take it up.

At first, there appeared to be some exceptions to my felicity in this respect. My mother was living away from me for many years. But, by the grace of God and Baba, she came to live with me. But at first, seeing the worship I paid to Baba's picture and my visits to Shirdi she was displeased on the ground that Baba was a Moslem. But, Baba's kindness towards me and her was most remarkable. He worked a gradual change in her feelings. As she was not for Baba, I took other members of my family with me to Shirdi but not my mother. After 2 or 3 such years, i.e. in 1933. She wished to go to Shirdi and pay here respects to Baba's shrine, and asked my wife and daughter to see that she was taken to Shirdi. I was very glad to see the change worked in her. Baba's kindness made a great change in her attitude. Extremely orthodox though she was, she dropped her orthodox scruples when devotion to Sai Baba suggested the contrary course. She was well impressed with all she saw at Shirdi. The visit to Shirdi was none too soon. Shortly after our return from Shirdi, she breathed her last at my residence at Thana. It was a great kindness on the part of Baba to have brought a change in her and given her darsan of the Samadhi just in time before she passed away. I can easily multiply instances of Baba's kindness to me and my family. But, it is needless. It is enough to say that I feel Baba is guiding us and watching over our interests and actions in everything.

I shall give only two instances to show how other members of my family are sharing the kind and merciful care that Baba bestows on his own. My second son, Govind, was

hungering and thirsting to have the joy of visiting Baba's samadhi, and Dwarakamai at Shirdi. So in 1934 for Ramnavami celebration when our family friends Mr.G.B.Datar and family were going to Shirdi my son accompanied them. When he went to Dwarkamai (i.e.) the mosque, he was alone with Baba's eyes from the portrait seem to pierce into you, wherever you may stand in the hall. My son gazed with rapture at the portrait and closed his eyes. He heard then a distinct and audible voice aalas (Have you come?) That is the parental affectionate greeting he had. He opened his eyes and found himself alone. There was no other to utter those words of welcome, but Baba. About 8 years back, my daughter was in the family way and we had taken her to our village at Khar (some 2 or 3 miles off Thana). When the delivery was to take place, there was no proper medical aid. My relations were blaming me for not providing a place at Thana for the delivery. My wife and told me that it the delivery was obstructed. The child had evidently died and could not easily come out. There was great pain and anxiety was felt by the patient and by all of us. It was midnight or rather 2 A.M. When the condition was reported to be so painful and anxious, I was helpless. Suddenly, it dawned upon me that I had a safe source in Baba's udhi. My wife took the udhi and applied it to my daughter. Within 30 minutes or one hour of the application the child came out. It was dead, but my daughter's life was saved and our anxieties were at an end. A doctor came in the morning and wondered how it had come out. He thought that ill trained people like the midwife would have thrust their hands in and created danger of septic and possible post-parturition troubles. He was surprised to learn that mere udhi without any physical interference resulted in the expulsion of the child, the placenta and everything.

All my girls take part in the service of Baba and daily perform their arati & c. A week or so before my daughter's delivery, my son informed me that Baba had just appeared in his dream and called our "Nana, Nana. (meaning myself) Where is he? Why is he afraid? Apply my udhi." Though my son had told me this, I did not recall it at the time of my daughter's serious troubles; but instinctively I resorted to the aid of Baba's udhi. Long afterwards I thought over the matter and found that in my son's dream, baba had given me a

forewarning of the impending danger and shown me the way out of it. And when I failed to realise this at the critical moment, I was made unconsciously to utilise the very way he had mentioned.

## XV

### 12th September, 1936.

Shamrao Raoji Shrotrie, Kayasth Prabhu, aged 55, record keeper, District Court, Thana says:

I visited Sai Baba at Shirdi only once. That was about 1909. When I went and bowed to Sai Baba, I sat in his presence and then a particular question cropped up in my mind. Baba told me to go to a Bai, saying that she was in the temple reading Puran. I went up and found an elderly (Brahmin) lady of about 50 years reading puran. I sat and listened. Therein what she read to me was the answer to what cropped up in my mind when I was in Baba's presence. This was Baba's way of giving me a solution.

## XVI

### 12th September, 1936.

Sadashiv Trimbuk Vdhavkar, Kayastha Prabhu, aged 68, Retired Goods Clerk of G.I.P.R. now living at Mahagiri, Thana Says:

I was a goods clerk at Dadar some 28 years ago (i.e.) about 1909. I had a distant relation, a Tamane, was a devotee of Baba. He told me to go to Shirdi and see Baba. So I went up about 1909 with my friend Tamane and engaged a tonga for going to Shirdi and returning back to Kopergaon.

When we went to Baba at the Mosque, we had left behind a couple of mangoes in the tonga for our own consumption and took the rest of the fruits which along with some tobacco and a quantity of copper coins I presented to Baba. Baba said, "Where are those two mangoes? Why do you keep them there? Bring them here." Baba knew the facts evidently by his own wonderful power. These were then brought



and presented. Baba ordered all the fruits to be cut up and distributed as prasad to all the people that were present. He then smoked away. It was about 11 a.m I felt very hungry as my usual meal time was 9 a.m, and I had no meal that morning. But, out of delicacy, I said nothing of my hunger and merely continued to sit at the Mosque. Then some one came with a packet of pedhas and placed it before Baba as a present. Baba usually touches nothing, but on this occasion, as soon as the packet came, he opened it, and took up one pedha. It was a good sized pedha and he threw it on to my lap. I was some yards off from him. I thought that it was prasad and a precious gift to be taken home and not anything that I should eat then and there. But, Baba seeing that I held it in my hand without eating said, 'It was given to you not for keeping it.' Then I was obliged to eat it up. I felt that my hunger was half appeased. Then again, Baba picked up another pedha from the packet and flung it at me. This pedha at least is to be carried home, I fancied and retained it in my hand. But Baba again repeated his remark 'it was not given to you for retention'. So I ate it up and felt my hunger wholly appeased. Baba did not throw any more pedha at me nor did he give any pedha to any of the others present. Baba evidently knew of hungry state, half appeased state and fully appeased hunger without a word from me.

Then after arati was over, the question of food for me and my friend had to be considered. It was very late, too late to start cooking. But Baba had evidently anticipated things. We learnt that he had told the retired mamlatdar (probably Balasaheb Bhate) in the morning that he would go and dine with him. So extra meals were ready at the gentleman's house. When the arati was over, Baba told him to take us two and a third Brahmin stranger to his house and feed us. We were the persons to represent Baba and we had a satisfactory meal.

At the time when Baba was sending that official to us at his place to feed us, he said to him "This youngman (Referring to me) has needless anxiety. His business is already accomplished." That gentleman came to us and reported Baba's words and asked what for we had gone to Shirdi. The fact was that I was anxious to get upadesh and hoped that Baba would give me some upadesh.

In the afternoon, the tonga man was hurrying us up to go back to Kopergaon. Some people told us that Baba did not usually permit people to get back the same day they visited him, but we had to go for two reasons. First, the cartman had to be paid his return fare even if we did not start that day. Secondly, I had got away from my office by reporting myself sick and had to present myself before the Railway Medical Officer at Dadar on the following morning. Anyhow, we told the tongawalla to wait and sat before Baba. Even there the tongawalla came. Baba looked at his face and asked him to go away saying "Where is the hurry?" Then, anyway he knew my other difficulty and so gave us leave. He told me to take udhi. I took it and we came away. His parting words to me were 'Have no anxieties. Your business is already accomplished.' It was not clear to me what business of mine he was referring to or he could refer to as already accomplished. The only business I had with him if it could be described as business was taking upadesha and it was not accomplished for he gave me none. I returned to Dadar and in 7 or 8 days, I had a dream. In that dream, my family priest who was at Indore at that time came to me to give me upadesha. When I woke in the morning, I had no intimation by letter or otherwise of the priest's visit, but, in a few days, he suddenly turned up at my office and said he would stay with me. I told him of the dream. He said he knew that and had gone to me then specially for giving me upadesha. But, he did not tell me how he happened already to be aware of my dream. Next morning, after due and proper performance of the requisite ceremonies he gave me formal upadesha a regular initiation to Siva Mantra. I am a Saivite. Thus, my business was accomplished. And as evidently the priest intended to give it to me sometime earlier, Baba's words were real statements of fact, or powerful words that forced the intended business into the mind of my priest (who lived at Indore far away from Shirdi and who had not gone to Shirdi).

[This gentleman is a devotee of Hubli Siddharud Swami and went to Shirdi only once after the above visit and that was in 1935 in grateful memory of Baba.]

## XVII

**13th September, 1936**

Dattatreya Vithal Vaidya, S/o Vithal N.Vaidya Kayastha Prabhu, aged 25, Clerk, Treasury, Thana Collectorate, Thana, says:

My father Vithal N.Vaidya is a retired Railway employee living at Karchi and has long been a devotee of Sai Baba. But, he has a dislike for expressing to other his own experiences relating to Baba. My father's first visit to Shirdi Baba was when I was very young—indeed so young that I have hardly any recollection of that visit. My sister Chabu, a small child then, had suddenly an attack of fever on the day fixed for starting to Shirdi and he had to take the children with him. Our relations, therefore, opposed his idea of starting. But, his strong faith in Baba made him stick to his first idea and he was prepared to go and did start with the sick child. By the time we reached Kalyan, the child was alright—fever had disappeared. Thus, his faith in Baba was justified and strengthened. He went and took darshan. He was anxious to return in proper time and asked Baba for leave. But Baba detained him for several hours beyond the proper time for starting in spite of his informing Baba that he must proceed at once to join duty on tomorrow. Some 4 hours or so after the proper time, Baba gave him leave. But my father thought it was useless to start then for Kopergaon station, as there would be no train available. But Baba having given leave, he was told that it was not right for him to continue at Shirdi and that he should start at once. He started and when he reached the station, he was surprised to discover that the train by which he wanted to go to Bombay was 5 hours late and had not arrived. It came soon after he went and he reached Bombay in due time.

My father fell ill at Thana in 1933-1934, severe type of pneumonia it was. Dr. Chipkar was despairing of his recovery. He had fever for 21 days and the temperature was yet high.

My father was, however, even during his illness, praying to Sai Baba. On the 21st day at 9p.m. my father had

actual vision of Baba -though none of us at his bedside could see Baba. My father cried "Baba has come and wants bread and onions". As we did not see Baba, we thought our father delirious and that really there was no reason to fetch bread and onions. Then my father was angry with us and asked us all to clear out. We left the sick room and stood outside, but quite near to hear what passed in the room. We could hear Baba talking with my father. Then we heard Baba addressing some 2 persons present there and asked them to go away. They however, protested and wanted to take away my father with them. Baba objected and asked them to clear away and forcibly struck the earth with his little staff. And evidently these two persons went away. We heard no more of their voices.

Baba left the sick room telling my father to drink plenty i.e. one lotaful of cold water. Then my father called for me and for drinking water. As the doctor had forbidden cold drink, we hesitated but at the insistence of my father, my mother who had faith in Baba gave him water. He drank 2 or 3 cups full of cold water. He perspired and the temperature was rapidly coming down a fact which we ran up at once to report to the doctor. Doctor came up at once and wondered at the sudden fall of temperature, and its being brought about by cold water being taken. He gave some injection and next morning he declared that my father was beyond danger. Thus, the crisis of my father's life was tided over by Baba's appearance and help. On some previous, critical occasions we heard our father say Baba is come and wants bread and onion.

Last year (i.e. 1935) my sister Chabu had to be married. My father was anxious about it and was inquiring for a suitable match. One match was almost settled but suddenly fell through; that made my father still more anxious. As usual, he was praying to Sai Baba. One night he had a dream. There he was told that a letter from Pandharpur side would come and following that would settle matters and that he need not be anxious. Within 15 days of the dream, one Dingre of Pandharpur wrote a letter to him proposing a marriage with one Mr.Dixit of Pandharpur. Very soon, that marriage was settled and celebrated.

## XVIII

**14th September, 1936.**

Sankar Balwant Kohojkar, B.A., Kayasth Prabhu, aged 41, clerk in Bombay Collector's Office, living at Thana, says:

My late father Balwant C.Kohojkar a retired mamlatdar visited Sai Baba in 1911. Baba gave him an affectionate parental welcome and patted him on the back. Baba said to him. "Will you live in the mutt? (i.e) at Shirdi. My father lived there for about 7 days. When the time came for leave taking. Baba told him Go anywhere. Baba is after you. Subsequently, (i.e.) till my father's death, a few months back, whatever mishap may befall, my father found that he was helped by Baba. My father went only once.

During his stay at Shirdi in 1911, Datta Jayanti occurred. About 5 p.m. or so, Baba was seated at the mosque with devotees around him. At once, he said "I am having the pangs of labour. I cannot bear it. I am about to be delivered." Evidently, he was identifying himself with Anusuya, mother of Datta who at that time had her pains of labour and was undergoing sympathetic pain.

At twilight time (i.e.) shortly after the above incident he drove out all people from the mosque and again after a little while he called all people to come unto him. Then he was in glee. This is according to the Purana the time of Datta's birth. People all went in and among them, my father directly entered the mosque: what he was on Baba's seat and in place of Baba's figure was a small child, charming three faced figure of Datta (i.e.) Datta, as an infant. That view he had just for a moment. Then instead of Datta figure, he saw at the identical spot Baba in his usual dress and form. Just imagine what his feelings must have been at that time. He vividly realised that Baba was Datta.

On the day of leaving Shirdi and after taking the parting udhi at the Masjid, my father had gone through the lanes and houses that block the view between the main road and the mosque. There, at the main road, he had a strong feeling that this view of Baba might be his last, and so he desired to see Baba once more. Just as he formed that wish

in his mind, he looked at the lendi side and there peeping through the hedge was the face of Sai Baba. What a wonder of wonders! He had left Sai Baba behind at the mosque and Baba had not accompanied or followed him. Yet, at the moment when he entertained the desire to see Baba's face for the last time Baba's face appeared at a hedge about 100 or 150 yards away from the mosque. That was the last time he saw Baba, and so Baba said "You are going. Well go". I had not accompanied my father on the above occasion, but my father has mentioned this to me and others.

I have personally little experience. As a boy, I got a small photo of Sai Baba in my pocket. Since that time I progressed well in my studies and in life. I have given that little photo to my sister. I am worshipping Baba even now'.

In 1930, I had a serious accident that threatened to cut my life short at once. I had dysentery and I mistook a bottle of phenol, while I was in half sleeping condition for water and swallowed most of it. That resulted in my passing into a deranged state and for four days, I was unconscious. The attendant Dr. Chipkar feared it might prove fatal. But, I recovered after the fourth day. Just at that time, as I was regaining consciousness, I had a vision. I saw that figure of a young athletic Moslem (bareheaded he was) beating all round (i.e.) on the wall and the floor of my sick room with his staff. At once, I concluded that it was my patron saint Sai Baba that had come and saved my life.

In 1934, I felt a strong impulse that I should at once proceed to Shirdi and have a darshan of Samadhi and Dwaraka Mai. When I went into the Dwarka Mai, I felt thrilled by a current passing through my body (just like an electric current) at the sight of Baba's portrait. At first, I could not keep looking at that portrait. As I felt it, I was full of the feelings "God is here".

## XIX

15th September, 1936.

Ramachandra Ramakrishna Samant, ESQ., B.A., Brahmin, Landlord, 45, Turner Road, Bandra says:

I visited Sai baba thrice during my life time. The first time was at Guru Poornima of 1912 and was in the company of my father-in-law, Annasaheb Dabholkar and my wife. I had not then become a believer in Sai Baba but I went at the insistence of my father-in-law. He had owed to take his daughter and son-in-law to Sai Baba. So I had to go. On my parental side there was no connection with Sai Baba; but there was intense religious fervour. My great grandfather "Bhagat" Lakshman Arjun Samant was a very devout and regular pilgrim of Pandharpur Sree Vithoba. He is ochre coloured Chhati, i.e. sash, his clothes and vessels etc, which he regularly carried at each Ashadi Kartikai are still preserved as heirlooms and I took the ancestral sash to Pandhari, for dipping it into the Chandrabhaga. My grandfather, a bhakta of Vithal was deeply devoted to Shankar also. Every afternoon, he carried on his meditation with concentration and japa of Shankar with Namavali, and I, his grandson, was his pet. Yet, I was not allowed to disturb his prayers. At night, he recited Haripatha and at dawn he had Bhajan. At his death at the age of 59, there was a very memorable scene. He grew virakta and said 'My close of life has approached vatvel ali ubha pandurang vaikunto Sri Ranga bholavile, i.e. He (referring to Shri Pandurang sitting on a box in white dress) had come to take him to Vaikuntha and that the heavenly visitor had given him one ghatika (i.e.) 24 minutes to take leave. Then he called his sons, daughters, etc. one after another. The ladies (i.e.) his daughters, etc., he did not call by their usual names. One he called Ganga, another he called Bhagirathi. He called them by the names of holy *tirthas* and bade them good-bye. He called my weeping father and asked him to take courage.

Bhavache bhaye kaya mithos landy?

Dhareman Dhairy dhakisi sandi

To me, he gave blessings saying he would protect me as soon as I should think of him and that he was always before and behind me. The words he uttered were words quoted appositely from Tukaram, Ramdas, etc., and not his own words. This was in 1899.

After such talks in highly spiritual view, he peacefully passed away, it is believed, to Vaikuntha. My father was not quite so advanced. He visited Pandharpur and told me that to keep up the family traditions, every member of our family should go to Pandharpur at least once in his lifetime. When he died, he was conscious up to the last moment and as death was approaching, he said pointing to the south "malanyayala ale aheth meyeto" (i.e.) They have come to take me. I am leaving (1911).

I sucked in these holy and purifying ideas and ideals in my early years; but the education I went through tended in quite the opposite direction and was quite powerful enough to deaden and stifle the feelings and sentiments of earlier years. At the time of my marriage (June 1911), I was just beginning to suffer in health (from albuminuria hereditary) and I was on diet (i.e.) at night I would take no solid meal. I had the beginnings of seeds of faith of Sai Baba, having heard grand accounts of his powers. But, my spiritual numbness still continued. I was just prevented from descending to scoffing. I simply ran with the current, or rather went through all that my father-in-law and others went through, merely out of a desire to keep in conformity with my surroundings. Others went and bowed to Baba and I bowed. Baba clearly perceived my mentality and ultimate possibilities and remarked about me in reference to Mr. Madhavarao's bidding me to bow to Baba at that time tyala paya padayala net lagato (i.e.) He requires pressure to be brought to bow at the (Guru's) feet. But that gentle pressure was being very slowly applied. I was also by his kindness made the recipient of favours, the effect of which would also be to increase my faith in him. Baba was informed about my trouble (albuminuria) and my getting weaker on account of inability to take the food that others took in usual quantity and at the the usual times. Baba said that I would get alright. Perhaps, the full words were



The words of Baba came true. I was observing diet and taking medicines now and then for a short time as a precaution and had my regular or periodical urine-examination. Thereafter, the trouble stopped and I resumed my normal food eating.

On 5-6-1913, my first child, a daughter was born (i.e.) about 11 months after my first visit to Baba. It was in 1913 I was appointed to be Chairman of the temple committee to look after Tungareshwar Devasthan at Bassein. At the Guru Poornima of 1915 was my second visit to Baba, as before in company with my wife and father-in-law. There was nothing notable at the visit itself to record. But something that took place in February 1915 may be recorded to show how Sai Bhakti and Sai's protection were going on, at least subconsciously.

In that month on a particular day, I was trying to get up at bedstead; during my convalescence, at my house at Arnala, I suddenly had a fit and fell down. My wife feared that consequences might be serious, and others also were soon drawn to the place. But at that time I had something like a vision. I saw some 8 or 10 dark beings with spears and shields round me accounted in the accepted Yamadoot fashion and I said to myself "What is all this? Why are they beating me?" I did not feel any pain but still I had the feeling that I was being beaten. Simultaneously, there was light and I saw a hand moving on and sweeping aside all those dark beings who should respectfully away from it and there was a portion of a white kaphani (gown) below that hand. Then I woke to full consciousness and picked myself up just as a crowd of persons was gathering round me. I had not sustained any injuries personally by the fall. The only damage done by the fall was that my spectacles fell down and broke. I perceived a peculiar odour at the time of my vision. Of course my relations believed that I was saved by Baba and now I recognise that the hand seen by me was Sai Baba's. This strong faith I had not in 1915 but it came to me in 1927 after seeing how Narayan Maharaj's power worked.

In October, 1918 just a week or ten days before Sai baba passed away, we went up and took his darshan. I had taken two little sons along with other members of the family

and while there they had diarrhoea. In other places, one would make them fast or give them light liquid nutrition; but here at Shirdi, Baba was asked about them, and he said "Feed them on sweetened semolina (boiled with ghee). They ate that and got alright in a week. I know personally that my father-in-law, when ill, was, by Baba's order, fed on food which ordinary rules of prudence would avoid in cases of illness. But obedience to Baba's orders did not result in any harm.

It was in 1918 that Baba first asked me for dakshina and that several times I gave him such sum as he asked for. He did not compel me thereby to borrow for that purpose a course which I would not like at the place. He stopped asking me before my pocket money was exhausted. Another fact I noticed about these demands was that whenever he asked me for money, I was then having in my mind feelings of distrust in spirituality. I did not then pause to reflect, if the figures mentioned in his demand (viz) 25, 15, 10 had any allegorical meaning or were allusions. On some occasions he told me, "Go and sit in the Wada". I literally carried out his bidding by going to Mr. Buty's building where we stayed and sat by my father-in-law. Long afterwards, I was told that the words meant "Go and listen to the purana that is being read in the Wada". I will narrate next when my faith in Sai Baba came up to its present pitch of belief that Sai Baba is both man and

God and that divine powers and divine nature were part and parcel of Sai Baba.

One of my sons began to be seriously ill in August 1926. It had a very protracted course and during its course diverse diagnosis were put forward and diverse treatments adopted by eminent doctors. But, after all efforts, there was no improvement. Things seemed to point in October 1927 that it was a hopeless case. I had given up hope. Then my sister-in-law said that we should take the child to Narayan Maharaj of Khedgaonpet. That was done, Maharaj said "He will get alright, take this tirtha". That was the turning point. The same doctor with altered treatment continued; but the child began to improve and in 6 months' time all danger was passed. Later, he picked up more health and strength and that boy is alright. That turn that came with the words of Maharaj convinced me that it is absurd to put satpurush like

Sai and Narayan Maharaj on the same level with other human beings, whose words had no power, and that the former were justly placed on a rough pedestal of their own that may be described as the "human and divine". "Thou art human and divine"- In Memoriam (Tennyson).

From 1930, I got more phenomena about saints. In that Tungareshwar temple, there was a saint Naga Bua. He was ganja smoker. In 1930 he passed away at Tungareshwar. That very night at 11-30 p.m., I was half dozing in my room at Bandra when suddenly I was getting choked as it were, with the smell of smoke that entered my nose, throat, etc. I got up and finding only my wife in the room asked her "Are you smoking?" Of course she never did. She asked me "What is it you are saying?" I felt the force of her remark, but I was still feeling the smoke strong in my nose and wondered how that smoke had got into my room. But she did not smell it.

Next morning as I was motoring in a village, accidentally, the then chairman of that temple committee turned up and stopped my car and told me that about 2 a.m. during that night, the Naga Bua had died and asked me what arrangements should be made for disposal of the remains. So about the time of his departure that saint had gone over to my room. When my friend told me of the death, I recognised the smoke and smell I had in my room as that of Naga Bua.

In 1918, when Sai Baba came in my dream and swept away the dark beings, I perceived a peculiar odour, which I have learned to identify with Sai Baba.

Baba had spoken a little regarding my past births etc. To Nana Saheb Nimonkar in my presence although I could not distinctly hear it; but the latter died before I could ask him as to details.

## XX

**16th September, 1936.**

Bapu Rao N.Chandorkar, S/o Nana Saheb Chandorkar, Brahmin, aged 40, Landholder, Gograswadi, Dombivli, (near Kalyan) G.I.P. says:

I was taken as a little boy to Sai Baba by my father. Mahalsapathi worshipped Baba applying gandha (i.e.) sandal to feet, head etc. None applied sandal paste to Baba's forehead. I was the first, who, as a child of 4, innocently applied it to his forehead just as we apply it to all the Gods we worship. After that time, others were allowed to do so. This was in 1900. My father told me that Baba explained the Gita to him in 1900-1902, in the style of the ordinary learned pandits expression, and without the use of mystifying parables or symbology etc. After 1902, Baba began use of mystifying parables or symbology etc. Then my father went on transfer to Jamnere. My father said that Baba knew Sanskrit and that he had explained that stanza etc tadvidvi. very well. My father told me that Baba had adwaitamata. But, what adwaitic idea he explained or put forward was not stated to me. We were all concerned with Baba's chamatkaras prophecies, goshties (i.e.) moral talks etc. and we did not mind about philosophy at all. My father said that after 1913, the crowds that flocked to Baba were too heavy and there was no more peace for Baba, and that Baba once said with tears. "No one cares to take from me what I am prepared to give abundantly. But they want from me what I am unable to give".

Baba once told my father about chamatkar something very interesting. It was about 1903-1904. My elder sister Minathai, had been helped at delivery by Baba with udhi, sent through a Gosavi. That child, however, died very young. My sister also as widowed at that very early age and had no other issue. This cast a gloom over all of us. My father and all of us went to Shirdi. My father went and sat before Baba glum-in sullen silence. Usually whenever he went, Baba would question him and he would talk and all would be cheerful. Now, on this occasion there was a sad sullen begin-

ning. This continued for some minutes. Then Baba broke the ice.

**Baba:**

Why are you so silent?

**C:**

(i.e. my father)- Baba! You know everything. While we are under your care these calamities have befallen us,- bereaved of child, and son-in-law etc.

**Baba:**

If you care for child (or son-in-law) and come to me for that, you are mistaken. You need not come to me for these. These are not in my power. These i.e. (birth of child and death of relatives) are dependent on poorva karma. Even Parameswar, great God who has created the world, cannot alter these.\*

Do you think he can tell the Sun or the Moon, 'Rise some two yards farther away from your usual or appointed place.' No, He cannot and will not do that. That would produce disorder and chaos.

**C:**

If that is so, how is it that you tell some one "You will have a son" and he gets a son, and you tell another "You will get appointment" and he gets it? Are these not chamatkaras of yours?

**Baba:**

No, Nana. I do not do any chamatkaras. You have your village astrologers. They work 2 or 4 days ahead and give out their prediction. Some of them come true. I look further ahead. What I say happens. My art also is a sort of astrology. But, you people do not understand this. To you, my words look like chamatkaras, because you do not know the future. So, you regard events as proofs of my miracle-working power and you turn your reverence on to me. I, in my turn, turn your Bhava reverence on to God and see that you are really benefited.

Baba spoke some numerous goshties but I do not remember them now. In 1913-1914, my father was unwell and on long leave. So, he went and stayed at Shirdi, My mother also was there and when they were by baba's side and I was worshipping him, he (Baba) said:

me aata jayena bapuche peta janma gheyen

voveli nanardha man (ghat)aashi aashi halat asel !!

(and moved his hand like the shaky neck of an old man)

(i.e.) "I will go away now. I will take birth as the child of Bapu. At that time, Nana's head (or wrist) will be shaking thus and thus".

My father construed this to mean that he (my father) would not die till a son was born to me. Unfortunately he died in 1921. During the fatal illness, I remembered this prophecy and hoped my father would survive, as I had not even got married and had no son, of course. But Fate willed it otherwise and my father died in 1921. I got married in 1922. my father's head was never shaky.\*

All mantras that Baba spoke or recited were Arabic or Persian etc. and not Sanskrit, so far as I know. Kondaji and Baba recited fatias. When 'sera' was placed, on the niche (caaba), when brought by people, Baba and Kondaji placed it repeating something in Arabic, Persian or some such (to me unknown) language. My father never said that Baba spoke out or spoke of mahavakyas. It was about 1908, my father was working at Pandharpur. We i.e., I and he went to Shirdi, Baba had asked him to prepare for naivedya. That was offered to Baba. My father asked Baba to go down to his quarters to eat.

Baba: Go, I will come.

My father knew that Baba was not intending to come in his physical body and so returned disappointed. Madhava Rao Deshpande was present at the talk with Baba. Baba told him after my father left the mosque in that mood, "Tell Nana,

that he has been so long with me and yet not grasped the fact that Baba is in every ant and every fly etc. Baba said he was in all creatures. That is the highest truth I have heard from him directly or indirectly. I do not remember if any pantheistic utterance came from him. I have not heard if he spoke long sermons on Vedantic lines. He generally spoke on common matters, (e.g) 'Give alms. Do good. Speak the truth' etc. He told me when I was a boy, 'Hearken to the words of your parents. Help your mother in her tasks. Speak the truth and truth alone.' Never a word did he talk to me about mantras or about God.

I have firm faith in him as my protector. All my life is supported and maintained by him. I cannot give instances but I feel that he is guiding me and guarding me and protecting my interests and looking after my welfare.

## XXI

**17th September, 1936.**

Chandrabai, aged 66, wife of late Ramachandra Borker, Ville Parle, says:

I am a worshipper of Sai Baba for the last 44 years of so. I went to see him at Shirdi 20 years before he expired. You see here (in this bungalow) he is the God that I worship. I still retain a good quantity of the udhi which he gave me each day with his own hand in small quantities and this I have carefully preserve as it has great virtue and potency. I have also this sacred tayath enclosing Baba's tooth, which he gave me as a memento.

I have had deep devotion to and powerful response to my devotion from Sai baba. When I went to him about 1898 (?), the present masjid had not been built, nor the wada of Sathe which came after rebuilding of the masjid. Baba was then sitting under the neem tree which is now in Sathe's Wada. I saw Baba filling his panthis, (i.e.) lamps with water, instead of oil, after drinking away the little remnant of oil mixed with some water. I saw also his lying on a plank in the Masjid hung up from the ceiling with strings made of slender shreds of cloth. There were lamps on the plank, whereon he

lay. No 'bigwigs' were coming then. Whenever I went there, I put up in the house of some villagers.

Baba's kindness to me was very great. (Even as she referred to instances, she was overcome repeatedly with emotion, shed tears and had frequent breaks in her narration, being unable to continue it by reason of her feelings). My husband Mr. Borkar never went and saw Baba: but even to him, Baba showed great kindness. In or about 1909 my husband, who was an engineer, was engaged for the construction or repair of a bridge at Pandharpur. His residence was, therefore, at Pandharpur. When he was there, I had gone to Baba at Shirdi and was serving him. One day Baba told me, you had better go to Pandharpur and I will go with you and added that there was no difficulty for him to travel and that I should start expeditiously. So I started. I did not know what had happened there. When I reached that place, I found that my husband was not there, that he had resigned his work there and gone away to Bombay. That information I got there for the first time and I was in great straits and sorrow. I had just a few rupees with me and had taken two companions with me. I had just money enough to take us back up to Kurdwadi. We went there. I had got thoroughly moody and was brooding over the situation. Suddenly a Fakir appeared before me, and asked me what I was brooding over. I evaded replying to him. He told me that my husband was at Dhond and that I should go at once with my two companions to Dhond. But, where was the railway fare to come from, I enquired. Then, he immediately delivered 3 tickets for Dhond and went away. I took the tickets and with my companions boarded the train for Dhond. Meanwhile, my husband was at Dhond drinking tea and sinking into half dozed condition or a reverie. A Fakir appeared before him and said, "How is it you are neglecting my mother? She is coming down by the train in carriage. No, such and such" and gave him the number of my carriage.

He was startled and got up saying 'Who is this that is taking me to ask?' and looked up. But the Fakir disappeared. When the train arrived, I stepped down and my husband was there to receive me and take me to his quarters. My husband told me of the Fakir's appearance before him and wanted to see a photo of Sai Baba whom I was worshipping. I showed



him the photo and he recognised therein the Fakir who came to him.

On a Guru Poornima day before Upasani Maharaj, who is my Gurubandhu, left Shirdi for Kharagpur, Sai Baba asked me to take Pooja Dravya and Naivedya and worship Maharaj. I went and worshipped him, telling him that it was Baba's order and Maharaj did not prevent me from doing that worship. But, after that day, I never again worshipped Maharaj. My attitude towards him is what I should have towards a Gurubandhu. I do not hate him as so many Shirdi people do. Sai Baba has often said that we should not harbour feelings of hatred against any, nor entertain feelings of envy, rivalry or opposition or a combative disposition towards others and that if others hated us, we should simply take to Namjapa and avoid them. But, my attitude towards, Upasani Maharaj has been misunderstood by him and others. Two years ago, I went to Sakori to help in establishing a proper arrangement about recent changes in the Panchakanya establishment of his. But, apprehending my attitude to be hostile, he never gave me the chance of a free private talk with him and I returned.

Sai Baba's kindness towards me and mine was manifested even in 1918 before his expiry and even afterwards.

Some three months before Dussehra of 1918, he was thoughtful of my welfare after he should leave the body. He told me 'Bai, (that is how he addressed me) you need not hereafter trouble to come and see me here. I am with you wherever you are'. (This lady melts into tears as she narrates this). So kind he was and his words are ever true. I went away then. Just at the Dusserah following, when I was at Panchgani, I get Mr.H.S.Dixit's message that Baba was often thinking of me and that Baba was not likely to survive even for a short time. I went to Shirdi in time to see him pass away. I gave him some water at the last moments, and Bayyaji did the same. Baba leaned back on Bayyaji and expired.

After this, I visited Shirdi once in 1919, and once in 1933. But Baba, as he promised, has ever been with me and helping me wherever I remain. I have composed some verses and communicated them and my experience to the Sai Lila Masik.

In 1921, my husband fell down from a carriage and his leg broke, I took him up and applied udhi and paste of Biba nut Jongla (ata?) And Thaqdipala. In three month's time he got alright. In 1921, I also got a child. That was also Baba's grace. In 1918, when I was aged 48 and had not conceived at all, I naturally yearned to have a child, though lay-people and doctors alike would declare conception there after out of the question.

But Baba knew my desire and in 1918-

Baba: Bai, What is your heart's wish?

I: Baba, you know everything. What is there for me to tell You?

Three years thereafter, my menses stopped and after some months, Dr.Purandhare diagnosed my condition as one of internal tumour and proposed to remove it by operation. I protested and said that I would bide my ten month's time and then decide. He opined that in my fifty-first year, after long continued absence of conception, there was no chance of my having any child. But Sai's grace made the impossible possible and a son was born to me on Dhanathrayodashi day (i.e.) 3 years and 2 days after Baba attained Maha Samadhi. And for that delivery, which took place at Chembur, I had neither doctor, nor nurse, nor any medicine. I attended to my regular duties during the day preceding delivery and at night had an easy and safe delivery. All that time and for 9 months previous, I had numerous complications. My legs etc. were swollen. I had carried on a fast for months taking hardly any food, but more often water and Udhi.

Baba's grace was shown again at the time of my husband's demise. Two months before that event, Baba was preparing my mind to face that calamity. He appeared in a dream and said to me, 'Have no fears. I will take away Sri Ram'. (My husband's name was Ramachandra). I said, 'Baba, take me away first'. Then Baba replied that there was much work for me to do and I should nerve myself to survive my husband and do the duty allotted to me. I communicated this dream to my husband. He made light of it, saying it was only a dream. That was about two months before the close of Chaturmasya. Sometime later, he developed serious kidney

trouble and hiccough supervened. The end was perceptibly drawing near. Then he said to me, that he felt his end was near but that he wished earnestly that he should die after Chaturmasya was over. But at or immediately after he was saying this, symptoms of the close of life were being manifested. His limbs got rigid and he passed into unconsciousness. I prayed to Baba to spare him at least for the remaining days of the Chaturmasya. The next day, he regained consciousness and limbs lost their rigidity. My husband was more cheerful. Then the 7 days or so of Chaturmasya lapsed, Kartik Poornima (1934) came and also pratipada. That day at midnight, he took tea and then told me to go on with arati (of Baba) and to utter Vishnu Sahasranam loudly. I did as directed. This was going on till morning when the doctor came. They were talking hopefully. But I knew that he would pass away by noon or in the afternoon. I gave him Ganges water to drink. He drank and a little later he was saying 'Sri Ram, Sri Ram'. A chokra came and called him 'Baba'. He got up saying, 'Oh' and as he said 'Sri Ram, Sri Ram' he passed away. I was by his side praying to Baba and Sri Krishna that he may be taken to the divine feet. He thus passed away with full smaran of God and Baba. I saw the grace of Baba in securing for him such a good end.

After he passed away, I had a look after my son and this building etc. Some relations were giving me endless trouble and threatened suit etc. So, I had to get Rs.14,000 to pay it to them to secure this house, etc. from further troubles. Then some evil-minded persons thrust into this house lime fruit charmed, i.e. filled with black magic, so as to do harm to us and to prevent anyone becoming out tenant in this house. Sai Baba appeared to me in a dream and told me of this. I then sent some one to go to Goa to our family deity Devi and there they secured her intervention to break the black magic and spell of our enemies.

## XXII

**19th September, 1936.**

Balwant Hari Karnik, aged 54, employee in Bombay Customs Department, Ghodbunder Road, Bandra, says:

I am a worshipper of Sai Baba, I attend to domestic worship of Baba and I regularly visit Shirdi every year.

My faith began with listening to Das Ganu's Kirtans about Sai Baba. I went to Sai Baba first in 1911. His eyes so powerfully impressed me with faith in him-though I had no talk with him, that I resolved to visit him every year. My parents visited him soon after I did. After that, we had regular family worship of Sai Baba.

I have no experience to report about Sai Baba. I almost always went to him without special reasons or requests to make. In 1918, Guru Poornima, it occurred to me that I might ask him about my spiritual welfare. But, he was in a very unfavourable mood and so I was going away dissatisfied. But, as I was getting into my tonga, Nana Wali came to me, embraced me and said: "alama tera accha karega"

In 1928, my wife who had seen Sai Baba and developed Sai Bhakti, passed away. Before the fatal hour, she was unconscious for 6 to 7 days and was suffering from postparturition troubles for 9 months. I took Baba's photo and placed it before her. Just before dying, she got conscious, folded her hands and made namaskar to Baba's picture and to me and told her elder sons to attend to the younger ones and passed away. This was very great grace of Baba to ensure her peace and a sadgati. (anayasen maran)

I use the terms sadhu, sant and sat purusha as having the same meaning.

Baba took from me a dakshina of Rs.10 at my first visit. That left me without money for the return journey. But, just at the critical moment, my friend Mr.Toser (now Swami Narayanashram of Wai) turned up and lent me the necessary sum.

Once, I and my wife wanted to go to Pandharpur and other holy places and so took Rs.100 with us. But first, we

went to Baba at Shirdi. There, on two days, he took away as dakshina, the entire amount and we had to give up all idea of pilgrimage to other places. Evidently, Baba wanted us to feel that Shirdi was pandharpur and all other holy places put together. 'At the feet of the Sat Purusha are all holy tirthas'. Then after all our money had been taken, Baba gave us leave to go. Then I told my friends of Shirdi that I could not go as I had no fund. They said that after Baba gave leave, it was wrong to stay on. Then suddenly, Mr. Toser came and got for me a loan from some one, the amount required. My feeling in paying dakshina to Baba was that as he was feeding and helping so many fakirs, poor people etc., money given to him was good charity.

One effect of my contact with Baba is that I got premonition of coming evils and courage to face them when they come.

### XXIII

#### 25th September, 1936.

Vinayak Appaji Vaidya, Kayastha, aged 45, clerk, Bombay Port Trust Chief Accountant's Office, Parasuram Buildings, Versova Road, Andheri says:

I listened to Das Ganu's Kirtan and so went to Shirdi for Baba's darshan in 1912 during Easter. Later visits were after Baba passed away since 1923, I go there every year especially for Ramnavami.

In 1933, I stayed at Shirdi for 20 days. I have given an account of my experience in Sai Lila Masik, about visions I had and the use of udhi.

In 1927, my wife suffered from consumption. She suffered 8 months and there appeared to be no hope of her recovery. I took her to Shirdi. In 4 days, her fever stopped. I returned to Andheri at once. Ten days later, fever started again. That is, there was a relapse. I thought that her case was hopeless and that I should only take her to a village. But, Baba came to her in a dream and said that she would be alright. In fifteen days' time, the fever stopped. Thereafter

her weight began to increase. She recovered completely and has begotten 4 children thereafter. She is in good health even now.

In 1923, Baba appeared in a dream to my wife and told her that a case would be brought against me and that she should tell me not to fear. A case soon after was brought against me. But it ended in my favour.

Once on a Thursday in June, Baba appeared before my wife and wanted a patka (a towel to tie round the head) She had none. So she gave him some rice and dhal. He received that and disappeared. My wife has not seen Baba. But from her description of the visitor, I infer that it must be Baba. I am sure Baba is behind me, in everything. Every time difficulties come, I get over them with his help. In 1933, he appeared to me in a dream. I gave him Rs.1 then. He returned it to me and said, "Take as much as you want". In one month of that, I got promotion unexpectedly.

Ten years ago, my brother's daughter, aged 3, had fever for several days. Doctor's treatment availed nothing. It was at 105. The end was thought to be nearing. I gave her Baba's udhi. In 3 or 4 days' time she got alright. She is healthy and vigorous even now.

## XXIV

**27th September, 1936.**

Mr. B.V.Dev, Retired Mamlatdar, Station Road, Thana, says:

You wish to know if Sai Baba spoke anything about or advanced any person to Adwaita Avesta. I doubt if anyone, who went to him was an Adhikari for such a course. There were Nana Saheb, H.S.Dixit. Dabholkar and Mahaslapathy with him. Perhaps, these were in the front rank of his devotees. Each had his merit of characteristic. Mahaslapathy were very meek, obedient, pious and firmly adhering to 'Holy Poverty' and Baba kept him to it. Dixit was blindly obeying Baba and had firm faith in him and was made to study Eknath to promote his spiritual condition. In these matters, he was but a beginner. Mahaslapathy had neither learning

nor culture. Nana Saheb Chandorkar knew Sanskrit and he was a student of the Gita. I retired in 1911 and went to Baba. I tried to do Pada Pooja at the bidding of Dixit. Baba stopped me. 'You need not worship. You have given me Dakshina. That is enough'.

My questioning Balakram, Baba's anger and Baba's giving me order to read Jnaneshwari, are all set out in Dabholkar's Satcharitra.

Baba took from me one after another four sovereigns. Then he said 'I have received one'. I said 'Baba, I have given you 4'.

B: I did not deny it. But when you have given 4, Baba received one only.

I: I do not understand it.

B: You will come to understand it.

Later, when I was touring along, a young Fakir came to my compartment and asked me for something. I gave him once pice. He said he wanted 4. I gave him a four-anna piece. He then said he had got one. Again I met an old hermit, he wanted something. I gave him one coin. He wanted 4.

So I understand Baba, as appearing in all these forms to teach me that though I gave him four (i.e., Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankar etc.) He receives but one, the soul or jiva.

I tried to learn Asanas from a Hatayogi. Baba appeared in my dream and tried to dissuade me. I agreed to give it up. Then he showed me how to sit in Sukhasana and get on.

### **27th September, 1936.**

Chandorkar was a good student of Vedanta. He had read Gita with commentaries and prided himself on his knowledge of all that. He fancied that Baba knew nothing of all this or Sanskrit. So, Baba, one day, pricked the bubble. These were days before crowds flocked to Baba, when Baba had solitar talks at the mosque with such devotees. Nana was sitting near Baba.

Baba: Nana, what are you mumbling to yourself?

Nana: I am reciting a sloka in Sanskrit.

B: What sloka?

N: From Bhagvat Gita.

B: Utter it audibly.

(Nana then recited B.G.IV, 34, tadvidvi etc)

B: Nana, do you understand it?

N: Yes.

B: If you do, then tell me.

N: It means this: 'Making Sashtanga Namaskar (i.e.) prostration, questioning the guru, serving him, learn what this jnana is. Then those jnanis that have attained to real knowledge of the Sat Vastu (Brahman) will give you 'upadesh of jnana'.

B: Nana, I do not want this sort of collected purport of the whole stanza. Give me each word, its grammatical force and meaning.

Then Nana explained it word by word.

B: Nana, is it enough to make prostrations merely?

N: I do not know any other meaning for the word pranipata than "making prostration".

B: What is pari prasna?

N: Asking questions.

B: What does prasna mean?

N: The same.

B: If pari prasna means the same as prasna (question), why did Vyasa add the prefix pari? Was Vyasa off his head?

N: I do not know of any other meaning for the word pari prasna.

B: Seva. What sort of seva is meant?

N: Just what we are doing always.

B: Is it enough to render such service?

N: I do not know what more is signified by that word seva.

B: In the next phrase, upadesyant te Jnan can you so read the phrase as to read any other word in lieu of gnan?

N: yes,

B: What word?



N: Agnanam

B: Taking that word (instead of 'Gnana') is any meaning made out of the verse.

N: No, Shamkara Bhashya gives no such construction.

B: Never mind. If he does not, is there any objection to using the word 'Agnanam' if it gives a better sense.

N: No. But I do not understand how to construe the stanza by placing 'agnanam' in it.

B: Why does Krishna refer Arjuna to jnanis or tatwadarsis to do his prostration, interrogation and service? Was not Krishna a tatwadarsis- infact, jnana itself?

N: Yes. He was. But, I cannot make out why he referred Arjun to jnanis.

B: Have you not understood this?

Nana was humiliated. His pride was knocked on the head. Then Baba began to explain.

(1) It is not enough merely to prostrate before Jnanis. We must make Sarvaswa Saranagati to the Sadguru.

(2) Mere questioning is not enough. The question must not be with any improper motive or attitude or to trap the Guru and catch at mistakes in the answer or out of idle curiosity. It must be serious, and with a view to achieve moksha or spiritual progress.

(3) Seva is not rendering service retaining still the feeling that one is free to offer or refuse service. One must feel that he is not the master of the body, that the body is the guru's and exists merely to render service to him.

If this is done, the sadguru will show you what the jnana referred to in the previous stanzas.

Nana did not understand what is meant by saying that a guru teaches ajnana.

Baba: How is Jnana Upadesha (i.e.) imparting of realization to be effected? Destroying ignorance is jnana. 87th

verse on 66 ch.XVIII in Jnaneshwari says 'Removal of ignorance is like this, O Arjun. If dream and sleep disappear, you are yourself. It is like that'. See also V.83 of Jnaneshwari on B.G. V. 16, where he says: 'Is there anything different or independent in jnan besides the destruction of ignorance? Expelling darkness means light. Destroying duality (dwaita) means non-duality (adwaita). Whenever we speak of destroying dwaita, we speak of destroying darkness, we talk of light. If we have to realize the adwaita state, the feeling of dwaita in ourselves has to be removed. That is the realization of the adwaitic state. Who can speak of adwaita while remaining in dwaita? If one did, unless one gets into that state how can one know it and realize it?

(Again) the sishya, like the Sadguru is really the embodiment of Jnan. The difference between the two lies in the attitude, high realization, marvellous superhuman Sattha (beingness) and unrivalled capacity and Iswarya Yoga (i.e.) divine powers. The Sadguru is Nirguna Satchit Ananda. He has indeed taken human form to elevate mankind and raise the world. But his real Nirguna nature is not destroyed thereby, even a bit. His beingness (or reality), divine power, and wisdom remain undiminished. The disciple also is in fact of the same swarupa. But, it is overlaid by the effects of the Samskaras of innumerable births in the shape of ignorance which hides from his view that he is Suddha Chaitanya, see B.G.Ch.15 Asanenavritta Jnan tenamujati jatav.

As stated therein, he gets the impression. 'I am jiva, a creature, humble and poor'. The guru has to root out these offshoots of ignorance and has to give upadesha or instruction. To the disciple held spell-bound for endless generations by the ideas of his being a creature, humble and poor the guru imparts in hundreds of births the teaching 'You are God, you are mighty and opulent'. Then, he realizes a bit that he is God really. The perpetual delusion under which the disciple has been labouring, that he is the body, that he is a

creature (jiva) or ego, that God (paramatma) and the world are different from him, is an error inherited from innumerable past births. From action based on it, he has derived his joy, sorrows and mixtures of both. To remove this delusion, this error, this root ignorance, he must start the inquiry. How did the ignorance arise? Where is it? And to show him this is called the guru's upadesha. The following are instances of ajnana:

1. I am a jiva- creature.
2. Body is the soul (I am the body).
3. God, world and jiva are different.
4. I am not God.
5. Not knowing that body is not the soul.
6. Not knowing that God, world and jiva are one.

Unless these errors are exposed to his view, the disciple cannot learn what is God jiva, world, body, how they are interrelated and whether they are different from each other or are one and the same. To teach him these and destroy his ignorance, is this instruction in jnana or ajnana. Why should jnan be imparted to the jiva (who is) a Jnanamurthi? Upadesha is merely to show him his error and destroy his ignorance.

Baba added: (1) Pranipata implies surrender. (2) Surrender must be of body, mind and wealth: (3) Why should Krishna refer Arjun to other jnanis?

Sadbhakta takes everything to be Vasudev B.G.VII, 19, (i.e. any guru will be Krishna to the devotee) and guru takes disciple to be Vasudev and Krishna treats both as his prana and atma (B.G.XII, 7). As Sri Krishna knows that there are such Bhaktas and Gurus, he refers Arjun to them so that their greatness may increase and be known.

**13th December, 1936.**

On the question as to how far I can give instances of

Baba's acting like Jesus Christ in curing leprosy (congenital or acquired) blindness, deafness, palsy, devil possession, effects of sorcery and black magic and purifying vile halots and other sinners, I know of clear particulars. But, as to his reproving vice, there are numerous instances. In my own case, he reproved lobha or love of wealth. I shall give the incident in full.

After the close of my full period of service, I got an extension of 3 months and after that was over, I naturally desired to have an extension of one year, and the Collector mooted the question and I mentioned my wish to continue for one year. The matter was thus practically settled and I had one year's extension. At that time, I had a dream. Therein I saw Sai Baba seated with some body. Before him I prostrated.

Baba: Do you know what these books are?

I: No.

B: They are your accounts. I am looking into your accounts.

I: My account, Baba?

B: yes, Here are these. Look here. Dies 17 come after 16 or 16 after 17?

I: How can that be, Baba?

B: See, is it not so? Here is your account.

He threw the account book open before me. I read it and found it was my own account. 'Yes Baba, here 16 comes after my 17. How is that?' Then I thought over the meaning of my dream. I concluded.

## XXV

### 18th September, 1936.

Shama Rao Jayker, aged 70, painter, Ville Parle, says:

I was at Shirdi in 1916-17 and even earlier, I went and stayed with others. But, when they left Shirdi, I continued to stay. When I was with others I was getting money and

so Baba asked me for dakshina and I paid. After others left I had no money. Baba did not then ask me for dakshina. Baba knew of my condition without being told.

When I was a boy of 16, a Brahmachari gave me Siva Mantra, (i.e.) initiated me into it. Later, a sanyasi gave me a Sakti Mantra to add to it and form its compliment. When I went to Baba, I had thus my initiation and my *mantra*. His advice to every one is to keep to what he has already his guru, his mantra and his course jo karita aale techa karabut Baba gave us a lot of fine ethical teaching (e.g.): Be pure and truthful. Treat all people properly’.

I knew some of the people at Shirdi. I never went to Radhakrishna Ayi, as there was no need for me to do. I knew Nana Wali. He was dangerous man. Sai Baba warned me not to move with him. First, I had move with Nana Wali. Dr.Pillai also had done so. But once he heat Dr.Pillai, and we left Nana. He was not worshipping Baba, but treated him with some consideration, Baba would beat him and warn him not to do mischief.

During the eight months of my stay at Shirdi, I heard a lot of *goshitis* (i.e.) talks of Baba. But, I do not remember any now. Baba, so far as I know, did not give any *advaitic* teaching to any. People went to him for the most part for plain matter-of-fact requests (e.g.) health, wealth etc., and he dealt with them.

Baba is looking after me and I am content. I lost two sons. But, he keeps us alright. It is not for money that we should go to him-though he gives us money also, when he thinks fit. He used to say that the walls of his Masjid were really gold. He wanted people to come and take away car-loads of that wealth; and his regret was that none came to take it away.

### 17th October, 1936.

I went to Baba for the first time, as Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan wanted me to give him a lifelike oil painting of Baba. So I had to go and actually see Baba. I went and had a good look at him. He also was looking at me. Then Baba’s

leave had to be obtained before an oil painting could be made of him. So Shama (i.e.) Madhav Rao Deshpande went and asked him for permission. Then Baba replied, "Why should I, a poor fakir, have an oil painting of me? You, Shama, you may get a portrait of yourself". Ultimately, Madhav Rao came and told me that Baba's leave for the painting had been obtained from Baba. Instead of painting one picture, as ordered. I painted three. Then, Rao Bahadur M.V.Pradhan took two and the third was taken to Baba, touched by him and handed over to H.S.Dixit. There, in his bungalow, it is still kept and worshipped.

One more big-sized picture I painted of Baba. That was left unused for some years and is now kept in the Mosque, and serving to assist or augment the devotion of numerous people who go and look at it.

Baba has been very kind to me. But, I have been guilty of neglecting Baba and all things. I have been so peculiarly indifferent in my temperament, I cannot carry things through. Baba knows this well enough. Once, I was wishing to worship silver *padukas* of Baba, after receiving them from his own hands. So I got a small silver pair of padukas prepared and took them to Baba. He looked at them and me. He received them. But, instead of giving them to me, he sloped his palms (on which the padukas were placed) downwards and they fell down. I picked them up and hoped to worship them. But, that very evening, I gave out my clothing for wash with the silver padukas inside a shirt-pocket. They were lost to me and I never got them back. Baba knew how I would lose things and so did not give the padukas into my hands, to worship-but allowed them to slip off his hands, showing evidently how they were going soon to slip off mine.

On one occasion, I had lent Rs. 4,000 to a very rich Moslem *purda* lady without issue. It was essential for me to recover the sum as I have a large family of 8 sons to support. But, the lady never sent me the money. I went to Baba, hoping to have his sympathy and aid for recovering the money. But, Baba said to me then 'apalyala te haramache nako' (i.e.) Let us have nothing to do with such evil or ill-fated wealth'. I did not get back my money. Two or three years later, I was told she had lost all her wealth.

Ever since I went to Baba, his photo or picture is always with me: where ever I may go to live, Baba has been protecting us (i.e.) me and my family in remarkable ways of which I shall mention only a few instances.

In 1916, we were living at Gajanan Rao's house at Mugabat, a part of Bombay. Baba's picture was kept in a room there. One night at about 2 a.m. thieves were trying to break into that house, beginning with the very room in which Baba's picture was kept. They had succeeded in pulling out by mere strength, 1 or 2 iron bars from the window of that room. Entry into the house thereafter would naturally have followed and the whole house would have been pillaged and robbed. But a barber was sleeping in the verandah in a totally different part of the house. It was usual for him to get up at 4 a.m. and to go round the house for answering calls of nature. On this occasion most strangely and without nay traceable reason, the man got up at 2 a.m and went round the house for his necessary purpose. The thieves seeing him began to run. He saw them and shouted out 'Thieves, Thieves' and every one got up. We found we had got up just in time to prevent the robbers entering inside the house. Every one concluded that Baba took care of the house and took care to nip out the intended robbery when it began in his own room.

In 1917, we were living at Poona in a dilapidated house, the ceiling and walls of which were crumbling. To prevent the falling of dust from the ceiling, cloth had been struck up under the ceiling. One night, in such a room, there was a picture of Baba with a kerosene lamp burning in front of it, and my one-year old child also sleeping close by. At dead of night, there was a sudden thud, The ceiling cloth had fallen, Loose bricks from some of the walls had fallen on the cloth and the debris came with the cloth on to the floor. As the ceiling cloth covered the whole ceiling, it might be expected to fall with the bricks on it, on the child and the lamp if not on Baba's picture. But Baba's providence willed it otherwise. The debris and the cloth fell within a foot of the child and the lamp and did not touch either the child or the lamp. If they had fallen on the child, it would have been crushed; if on the lamp, there would have been a choking fire on the child and other parts of the house might have been endangered. In 1917, we went and stayed for 10 months at Shirdi.

We put up at Baba Bhav's (i.e.) Sharadabai's house. A snake was living in a hole in the small portion in which we lived and we were in danger. One night, my son and others saw the reptile emerge from its hole and made short work of it.

In 1923, my son Surendra, then aged ten, had typhoid. In the course of his illness, he cried out one day, that gas was rising upward from his belly and pressing hard evidently against the diaphragm and heart etc. And he shouted 'Save me, Save me'. He had become extremely weak from the typhoid and I feared even to touch him-much more to press typhoid and I feared even to touch him-much more to press or massage him. I merely cried in a very loud voice 'Baba'. The upward pressure at once abated.

Baba's help to me spiritually consisted of direct oral advice or symbology in matters of dakshina etc. Once he told me "Jaise karale tai sa Bhogel" 'As you sow so you will reap'. On another occasion, he said looking at me, 'guru seva karove' (i.e.), 'We must serve the guru'. He did not, however, give me any mantropadesa. I had already in my twentieth year received that from a guru, and had uttered it for the prescribed period of 12 years and more. Baba's teachings were mostly on moral questions and conduct. He once said amidst a group of listeners Aapala aapan hovun paha jnala tyala vicharnayat kaya artha aahe 'we must see (things) for ourselves. What good is there is going about inquiring of his man and that man for his views and experiences? At the time this was Sai, there was a man amongst us who was going about asking people. 'Is Baba a siddha? Is he an avatar purusha etc.'. Baba evidently deprecated such inquiries when the inquirer had the opportunity of directly facing Baba, getting into contact with him and then deciding on every question for himself with more certainty than could be obtained from reports of others' experiences and views.

Once even about H.S.Dixit who was noted for his obedience to Baba. Baba made a remark. Baba called Dixit, asked him for dakshina of Rs. 30 when he had no money and sent him to Baba Saheb Jog to get the money. Even before H.S.Dixit left the compound of the Masjid, Baba referring to him said "He is unsteady". At that time Dixit had still his former habit of making inquiries and investigations about Baba instead of directly contacting Baba on every matter and



taking his decision upon the results of such contact. This was, of course, sometime prior to Baba's Samadhi. Things changed later on undoubtedly.

Baba strengthened my faith in him by showing me his *antarjnana* (i.e.) knowledge of every fact without being told of it or having direct sensual experience of it. Once I sat before him with only Rs.3 in my pocket. That was all the sum I had for my household experience. Baba was seated along with Kaka Dixit, Nana Saheb Nimonkar at the time and he had asked me. mala char dhave. I doubt if he said *Rupaya*. But, I took it that he wanted Rs.4 dakshina and took out my Rs.3 and placed it before him. Kaka looked at me suggestively as much to say "why give only 3 when 4 was asked for?" Baba at once answered "Where are 4? There were only 3" Baba knew the exact state of my pocket. As he knew also my straitened circumstances, the demand for 4 seemed to indicate his desire that I should develop resignation to fate, to face utter absence of pecuniary resources-with confidence on him, of course to remedy matters, when he thought fit, and to part with the last pie cheerfully when ordered by him to do it.

Here is another instance of his order depriving me of the last pie in my possession and leaving me absolutely helpless to meet domestic responsibilities coupled with his exhibition of his *antarjnana*. It was a day in Ashad 1917. I sat in the Sabha *Mantap* some 20 feet away from the main mosque where Baba sat. One Varde was talking with him. Varde told him that he wished to perform there and wanted permission. Baba accorded permission. Then Varde said he had no funds to perform it. Then Baba pointing to his finger to me said to Varde "Go and ask him". Varde came to me and reported that Baba had asked him to ask me for money for the expenses of Satyanarayana Pooja to be done there. Varde I knew barely as a devotee of Baba and was hardly anything more than an acquaintance. But, when he said Baba told him to get money from me. I at once agreed and asked him how much he required. Fancy what his reply was, He just asked for Rs.2.50. That was the exact sum that I had in my pocket and constituted my entire resources. This thought of asking for the entire amount with me must have been Baba's lila. I gave him the 2.50 at once. Then, Varde set about getting the necessary materials and made all the requi-

site arrangements. He brought small plantain plants and set them on both sides of Baba, to make a *chappar* or *pandal* and tried to use Baba himself for the God Lakshmi Narayana or Satya Narayana that has to be worshipped at this pooja. Baba objected and asked him to have his usual images or pictures and place his plants round them. But, Varde and other devotees went on insisting that Baba should himself as the Satya Narayana and Baba ultimately yielded.

Then, Satya Narayana *Pothi* was being read in the mantap below, while I sat with 1 or 2 by Baba's side in the mosque itself. My mind was very soon at war with itself and I was much perplexed. I love to hear Satya Narayan Pothi. But, Baba's own personality and neighbourhood that was a great fact and I could not decide which I should prefer. Again, I was hearing Pothi sitting up above the level where the reader of the Pothi sat. To sit on a higher level is improper for the hearer. So what should I do? I was greatly perplexed in my mind. Baba evidently read the conflict in my mind and told me suddenly "Go down and sit there" (i.e.) in the lower level, close to the Pothi reader. Baba made the election for me when I was unable to make it for myself.

Baba once showed us how concerned he was to save poor dumb creatures from unnecessary molestation; how powerful he was to cure serious ailments of such creatures and what a refuge or sanctuary he was to all creatures. I was on the veranda of Dixit Wada at Shirdi, one day. I saw a strange sight. Big dogs were running away from and being chased by a small white dog. It was clear that the small dog was rabid and that the bigger dogs were afraid of its bite. The villagers then took sticks in their hands and pursued the small dog with a view to smash it to death. When this chase was going on, I had moved on to the Mosque. The chasing party came up there. Suddenly, the small white dog ran up the steps of the Mosque and stood behind Baba. It seemed to feel that Baba was its sanctuary and that its assailants dared not attack it there. This indeed proved to be the fact. The men stood at a distance and waited for the dog to come out. Meanwhile, Baba abused them vigorously for their heartless cruelty to a poor dumb creature. They explained that the dog was mad that it should be killed. He abused them the more and asked them to get away. Myself and Dr.Pillai were

at the Mosque, fairly near Baba and the dog, and we were assured that the dog was mad and felt the we were in dangerous proximity to it. But ultimately the men went away and the dog was saved. I said then to Pillai that Baba had evidently out of consideration, cured the dog and saved its life. Baba, of course, knew the exact situation in respect of the dog, its rabid state, its possibilities of cure, and the way to save it.

## XXVI

**18th October, 1936.**

Balakrishna Waman Vaidya, C/o C.K.Prabhu, aged 58, retired Railway servant. (G.I.P) Bandra, says:

In 1910-1911, was my first visit to Shirdi, I had then taken my entire family and we stayed 4 or 5 days. Baba was kind to us all and gave us his blessings. Even prior to starting, his grace was evident. I applied for leave to G.I.P. Rly authorities and for passes. But, urgent work appeared to require my continued stay and to be an obstacle to leave being granted. But, my head clerk was a "Sai Bhaktha" and he passed on my application and leave was granted. Baba's grace helped us on the journey also. It was night (or nearly nightfall) when we reached Kopergaon. The road to Shirdi was unsafe; robbers might attack us. So the *tonga* man whom we sought to engage told us to wait till tomorrow. I told him that Baba would protect us and asked him to start. Then other passengers who were there said they would also start with our tonga. Thus, we had some company or protection even at the outset. But, as our tonga went on, we found several carts coming towards Kopergaon and others going in the same direction as ourselves. Baba's aid was thus clear. No highway man could or did trouble us.

When we reached Shirdi, it was 1 a.m and we got into Sath's Wada. I insisted on my family joining me at once in taking *faral* (i.e.) a light meal, as the day following was a *Sankashti Chaturti* a fasting day, and we then retired to rest after the *faral*. Early morning, Baba got up and took the resident devotees or some of them to task for not providing us

with a meal as soon as we arrived, said He: (i.e.) **“My children arrived. None (of you) looked after them. You gave them nothing to eat, and made them fast”**. (In one sense, this was true as persons who eat only *faral* and not a regular meal are considered as fasting or *upavas*). Baba, with these angry words, drove from his proximity those devotees who were there. This showed us the intense paternal love he had for us and his watching over our interests. The expelled devotees came to us and reported Baba’s words and action; and they begged us to tell Baba that we had taken our light meal on arrival, and had been well treated. So we reported to Baba as soon as we went to him, (i.e.) at *darshan*. Baba blessed me as soon as he saw me and said (i.e.) **‘Good will befall you’** and he blessed us all similarly. Later, when we had prepared food at our wada, Baba came round and begged for food and my wife promptly gave him these articles, (i.e.) bread and vegetables.

One day, we prepared special *naivedya* for Baba and we were late in getting ready. Others had taken their *naivedya* to Baba. Baba waited for ours and kept them waiting, saying (i.e.) “wait”. Then when I took mine, he bade me place mine nearest to him, and he gave us *prasad* and blessings.

Look at his kindness and care for us. When we were starting I begged leave to go with my family to Nasik. Baba forbade it saying:

**‘Go, Go, Go to Nasik. What for should you go to Nasik? There is plague there. Do not go there, go back home just as you have come (i.e.) the way you came, taking your little ones with you.’**

During one of these 3 or 4 days of our stay at Shirdi, I was talking with Madhavrao Deshpande and expressed my desire to take a photo of Baba, touched by him and given to me, for the purpose of worshipping it at home. Baba, who was near, insisted on my going and fetching a photo at once. I brought it; he touched it and gave it to me. I am worshipping

it daily even now. I never take food without first worshipping him in that photo.

Baba guided and guarded us on our way back. When we took leave, he said **'You had better go now'**. We took a *tonga* and arrived in time at Kopergaon just to miss our intended train as it left the platform as we reached the station. This looked bad augury and we spent the night there for some hours and took the early down train for Manmad. Fancy our grateful surprise when we learnt that the previous train to Bombay which we intended to board, had an accident with the result that one carriage in it was smashed. Baba's all-watchful eye and kind care for 'his children' had saved us from possible harm in that accident.

One incident at Shirdi during this visit is curious. One of Baba's devotees came to me and said, 'Give me some money and I will give you *bandar* (i.e. a sacred power applied to the forehead as a blessing). I was resenting this demand and said 'No'. The man was going away. Suddenly, my mind changed, and I recalled him. 'I will give you some coins, give me *bandar*', I said. But, he declined saying that he had no such orders from Baba. Then, I went to Baba and reported what happened. Baba said 'Alright'.

My next visit was in 1912. This time no member of my family accompanied me. Two office friends were my fellow pilgrims then. My idea was to tell Baba, on this occasion, about my misfortunes, troubles and miseries. But, Baba anticipated me and said: **'Be quiet. Don't fear.'** I replied that I had no fear as he was protecting me. We had all taken only a day's leave and so I begged leave of Baba to go away. But Baba did not give me leave. I knew Baba would somehow save me from trouble and so I stayed on. But, my friends expressed their fears to me of being cashiered for staying away without leave. But seeing that I stayed, they also decided to cast in their lots with me and remained with me. Baba prevented us from going back for 2 or 3 days more. Then he permitted us to go. When we returned we applied for extension of leave and got it without any trouble. This was Baba's lila or power.

The second visit was my last visit to Shirdi. In 1916, I made Bandra my residence. Then, say in 1917 or 1918, a

saint came before our lodgings and asked for a pice. My son gave him one pice and said: 'I know who you are'. As he felt sure it was Sai Baba though in an unrecognizable form. Then Baba said, Sri Sai Baba aahe gageyakaru navane As he said this at the verandah, I bowed at his feet and asked him to walk into the house, and he came inside, whereupon I again bowed at his feet. He asked me thuja samadhan barale (i.e.) 'Are you satisfied?' I replied 'yes'. Then he demanded sidha (i.e.) materials (e.g) wheat flour to prepare food. I gave him. He blessed me and went away telling me: 'I am here with you always. You need not come to Shirdi.' This was about in 1917-18. I never went thereafter to Shirdi.

We have had many misfortunes and troubles all these years. But, Sai Baba is at my back and I have faced them all courageously and cheerfully.

## XXVII

**1st December, 1936.**

Ramgiri Bua (styled by Sai Baba Babugir), disciple of Gangagir of Sada (4 miles off Shirdi), age 76, Shirdi, says:

As a young boy, I studied in the school at Shirdi. (This house in which I have been and am residing is the house of my mother's grand-mother). I was a student when Sai Baba came first to Shirdi. He was then accompanied by one Patel of Dhupkheda, who came to settle the marriage of a girl with Hamid, the son of Aminbhai of Shirdi. Baba appeared to be 25 or 30 years old, at that time. He stayed then as a guest of Aminbai. In a very short time (i.e.) after a few days, Baba and Patel went back. Two months latter, he returned to Shirdi. He returned alone and since that date made Shirdi his permanent residence.

That Dhupkheda Patel was giving an account of his missing horse and how Baba helped him in tracing it. I heard the account myself. This is the account- Patel went about in search of his missing animal, and then he came across Sai baba. Baba asked him what he was searching for? 'My horse' was Patel's reply. Then Baba, pointing in one direction, said 'See there, near the streamlet, is your horse'. Patel went as

directed and found his horse. Patel told us that he found Baba with a dhuni or fire in front of him. Ramagir Bua does not recollect if there was any other miracle except the tracing of the lost horse.

When Baba came, he had long hair flowing down to his buttocks. He wore a green kupni, a skull cap next his hair and over it a Bagawi (i.e. ochre-coloured) topi with a chilm and match-box. He did not wrestle. He got his bread by begging. Yamunabai's mother-in-law (i.e. the Teli Narayan's wife), next door to the Mosque give him half a roti. He was giving medicines to people.

Moidinbhai's son-in-law was mantrika (i.e. a magician) living at Belapur. That man came to Shirdi. Baba and he had a quarrel. Then Baba left the village and lived in the jungles 1 or 2 miles away from Shirdi. He frequently starved there. If people went to him he would beat them.

Gangagir Bua of Vanjargaon came to Shirdi. He spoke to Nana Saheb Dingle of Nimgaon and to other in high praise of Sai Baba, and said "This (Baba) is a Chintamani". Therefore, Nana Saheb Dingle went to Sai Baba and bowed at his feet, while he was seated at the foot of a Babul tree. Later on, Baba came to Shirdi and was living at the foot of a Margosa tree. Once, Baba himself spoke of that tree, that under it (i.e. its shade) was a tomb. Baba was living under that tree for 4 or 5 years. From the neem tree foot, he moved to the Mosque and made that his residence ever afterwards. Baba lived about 50 years here (i.e.) after his arrival.

Baba did not do any wrestling. But Gangagir was first a wrestler, and he wrestled with Dondalgaon Patel, a Mahratta. In that engagement, he came off second best. He then gave up wrestling and became a Bua (i.e.) an ascetic. This was approximately about the time of Baba's first arrival at Shirdi. Baba and Gangir recognized each other.

I was throughout my life a wanderer. But every now and then I would return to Shirdi. So I know much of what I said above by hearing from others and verifying myself. I know a few remarkable facts about Baba. When Baba got inflammation of his eyes, and they were looking red, he pounded pepper into paste and applied that pepper poultice over his eyelids and he was cured.

Once a Moslem boy, who was up on neem tree behind the Mosque, fell down and died. At that very instant, Baba from within the Mosque was sounding a note of distress and cried out: mulla jore marila and blowing Shankha vadyam (i.e.) on the back of his palm. The Margosa tree is not visible from inside the Mosque. As he spoke these words, the boy fell down and died. I was seated at no great distance and I heard his words and went up to see the fallen boy and the people crowding there.

I knew the fire in the village stacks. Baba asked Bagchand Marvadi to run up there as a stack had caught fire. It was his stack that was on fire. Baba came up and made some signs. The fire cooled down.

One day, Baba called me to him and gave me a packet of udhi and a copy of Baba's arati. I had to go to Khandesh at the time. Baba directed me to go to Jamnare (which is 36 miles off by cart route from the station Bhusaval) and told me to deliver the udhi and arati to Nana Saheb Chandorkar, Deputy collector at Jamner. I said to baba that all I had was Rs.2 and asked how that could take me by train from Kopergaon to Jalgaon and next by cart from Jalgaon to Jamner. Baba said 'God will give'. That was a Friday and I started at once. I reached Manmad at 7.30 p.m. and Jalgaon at 2.45 a.m. At that station, plague regulations were enforced and I had much trouble. I was to discover what I should do to get to Jamner. At about 3 a.m. a peon in boots, turban well equipped with other details of good dress, came to me and took me to a tonga and drove me on. I was in terror. On the way at Baghoor, I took refreshments. We reached Jamner early morning and by the time, I attended my call of nature, the tonga and its driver disappeared.

## XXVIII

**1st December, 1936.**

S.A.Patnakar, Kayastha, 42, Artist (cinema), Dadar, Bombay, says:

I was first told of Sai Baba by my friend Mr. Samant. I learnt about his greatness and goodness and began the wor-



ship of his photo which I hung up on a wall in my house. Once my child had fever for many days. One night at 2 or 3 a.m. a fakir was touching the child. I came near and made namaskar with my folded palms. He waved his hands at me bidding me not to approach him and said: "The child will be alright". On a later occasion, two children were unwell. Then noticing that the temperature of one child was continuing high for days. I looked at Baba's picture and prayed that he should save the child. I took the thermometer in my hand and placed it on the photo and said 'If you are looking after us, how is it that these children are suffering? I shall place the thermometer on the child and take the temperature. "If it has come down, I shall have faith in you and I shall bring the child to you for Ramanavami. If not, how can I have faith?" So saying I removed the thermometer from the picture and applied it to the child. Judge my surprise when I found that the Child's temperature was normal!

## XXIX

**6th December, 1936.**

Raghuji Ganpat Schinde Patel, age 65, Land Owner and retired Revenue Patel, Shirdi, says:

As soon as Baba came to Shirdi, one Amanbhai, a moslem, gave him food. That amanbhai was visiting occasionally my Mavsi's house. Her son Ganpant Hari Kanade, aged 35, had leprosy and fever. Amanbhai told her that a holy man had come to his house and could treat her son. Then Baba came in and saw the patient and administered medicine. That medicine was made out of cobra poison. Baba asked Ganpat courageously to catch a cobra, as the cobra would not sting a leper. Ganpat caught a cobra and it did not sting him. Out of its poison, medicine was prepared and give to Ganpat. He began to improve in a few days. But he did not observe the medical injection to avoid sex pleasures. So Baba stopped giving the further treatment. The disease developed and Ganpat died.

Baba came to this very house to treat my younger brother Baguji, who was suffering from fever - at a very

critical period when death was imminent. Baba gave him some medicine and further had him branded with red-hot irons (one on each temple and one on the back), Baguji recovered his health (i.e) escaped death and fever. Baguji had leprosy. That was arrested by Baba's grace but not cured. Baguji served Baba personally. I also served Baba personally.

There has been faction at Shirdi I belonged to one of the factions. The hatred between the factions did not affect Baba. He was not hated by either faction. One Birjichand's wife was carried naked and brought here, and there was a case against me and others, before the Kopergaon Magistrate Appa Saheb. When the case was under trial, one day Baba was requested by H.S.Dixit that Baba should see that I was not acquitted. 'No, that cannot be done' said Baba. 'Who am I to do it?'

At the trial, all of us accused except one were convicted and given terms of four months imprisonment. From Kopergaon lockup, we were taken to the Ahmednagar jail and kept there. I then prayed to Baba for release. The third night Baba came, in my dream, into the jail and said 'Do not be afraid. I will get you all acquitted.' I wept at that time in my sleep. The jailor or sepoy rather came and woke me. Next morning, Mr.Dhumal came and that day we were all acquitted. For expenses of the trial, I contributed Rs.70 by sale of a buffalo. Once, I was splitting a log for fuel. Baba stopped me saying that I would split dry wood and not green. I gave up further splitting.

### XXX

**7th December, 1936.**

Sagun Meru Naik, Mahrath, age 47, Teashop Shirdi, says:

I belong to the village Borri (Boori) Marmagoa, Poona Taluk. I was grazing cattle there. I went thence on my travels for years visiting and residing at Belgaum. I stayed at Narsowadi with Tembe Maharaj for 2 years: next with Ajunkar Maharaj. Next Gangapur I visited. I was ill and I

stayed with Siddharood Maharaj of Bubli. Next after going to Rameshwar, Pandharpur etc., I came here (1911-12). Baba remarked you have come from a “Mota Darbar” in allusion to my stay with Siddharood Maharaj. Baba gave me advice for 5 months after my arrival. When I asked him for leave to go away, he said

“stay here doing something. God will give you (Barakath) blessing.” I obeyed and have made Shirdi my home and last abode. From that time, I am running this teashop and refreshment stall and sale of sundries (i.e.) Baba’s pictures, arati books and devotional goods. I am prospering ever since I began that life here. I begged Baba that he should protect me and he said he would. I was doing petty services (i.e.) replenishing the Masjid lamps with oil.

I have had ample evidence of Baba’s powers when I came to Shirdi in 1911-12. I came from Hyderabad accompanying a Vysia Sowcar of that state, who as a Sai bhakta, was paying his devout visit to Baba. That man brought with him his paralysed daughter. She could not stand on her legs or walk. She had to skip on the ground using her hands in place of the powerless legs. She had to be carried into Baba’s presence at first. But, on the third day of her arrival, she began to use her legs a little. On the eighth day, she was able to walk. The cure was most marvellous and due entirely to Baba’s grace. Another case of paralysis cured by Baba’s grace was that of Mr. Ghaisas. Mr. Ghaisas was formerly in G.I.P Railway service. His wife came here and was cured of her paralysis in a few days.

In 1914, I had a dream wherein Baba appeared and said ‘Bring me soft boiled rice’. Then for two years, I took boiled rice to Baba without any ghee in it. Then he told me to put some ghee into the food before taking it to him. Since then, and up-to-date, I have been carrying boiled rice with a little of ghee and first offering it to the God of Fire at Baba’s dhuni (at the Mosque). I place part of it in a pot (Kolumba) for the use of Baba and throw the remainder to the dogs. For 5 or 6 years when huge crowds were daily flocking to Baba, I ran a busy hotel here, and engaged some Brahmin cooks to cook and serve food. In October 1919 when the crowd had fallen doff, I closed down the hotel.

I know Upasani Maharaj. He had arrived here at Shirdi shortly before me. After I came he was living at Mr.H.S.Dixit's wada and being fed for 5 or 6 months at Mr.Dixit's expense. This was when Mr.G.S.Khaparde was here. Madhav Rao Deshpande (H.S.Dixit's agent) and U.Maharaj then had a quarrel and the latter removed to Khandoba temple to live there.

In the middle of 1912, the marble stone paduka of Sri Sai Baba was installed at the foot of Baba's favourite margosa tree in he Sathe Wada. Bhai Alibagkar, a Mahratti vendor of Udhbattis started the idea. Practically the whole of the expenses were borne by Ram Rao Khotare of Bombay. Baba Ali was too poor to pay for this Baba himself gave Rs.25 as his contribution. Four Brahmins, representing the four Vedas, were brought from Kopergaon for performing the ceremony. Amongst the local people Balasaheb Bhate, Bapu Sahib Jog, Dada Kelkar and Upasani Maharaj took a leading part, and helped in the installation.

Some time later, one Martand, a mad Brahmin was living here, depending upon the bounteous supplies of food that Baba was throwing to all comers. There were hundreds of men living at Shirdi depending on Baba's doles of food for their sustenance. This man, one day, went to the Neem tree and with a huge stone broke the paduka into two. He went into the temple of Mahadeo and Parvati (where the images had been installed at Tatyapa Patel's instance) and broke those two images also. Baba was asked if a new paduka was to be ordered and to be installed in place of the broken one. Baba did not approve of that idea but said taht mere anna santi would suffice. We fed 200 or 300 people soon after that. Two hundred or more were everyday waiting to be fed at Shirdi in those days.

## XXXI

**9th December, 1936**

Laxman Kacheswar Jakadi (alias) Nanumama or NanuBhatt Poojari, Brahmin, Yajurvedi, a aged 40, Shirdi says:

I have been doing Baba's pooja and arati of Sai Baba all these years. I began it even in Baba's life time as assistant to Bapu Saheb Jog. It was in 1914 I came here. My sister's husband Bapaji was here. I had occasionally visited him first. One night while I was at Sangamnere, Sai Baba appeared to me in my dream and said 'Boy, are you sleeping? Do not stop here. Come to Shirdi. There is plenty of fun at Shirdi'. In the morning, Bapajis' father had come to our village and he invited me to go over to Shirdi to assist him. I went over to Shirdi and for a short time, I stayed with him. I worked for my bread by touring into villages round about Shirdi with my Bikshuki service, and helping Bapuji in Sai Baba worship at the Mandir. After some years (say 1 or 2) of free (i.e.) unpaid voluntary pooja of Baba I was appointed by the S.Committee as the permanent poojari.

## XXXII

**6th December, 1936.**

Laxman Bhatt Joshi, Shirdi says:

As I was quite a boy when I was with Sai Baba, my thoughts were not serious and I cannot repeat the talks he gave. I would run about doing miscellaneous work at the Mosque and do odd jobs for Radhakrishna Ayi. Madhav Fasli did the same. We would sleep with Baba at the chavadi. We were allowed to be with him when none else were allowed. 'Bhai, carry that log of fuel here,' 'Bhai, bring that tub of water' etc., Baba would tell us. I would be feasted on the perpetual flow of edibles that would be presented to and distributed by Baba. He would have basketful for fruits often times and we would occasionally purloin some. Baba would occasionally catch us and say humorously 'do not take too much'. Often he would abuse me. Once or twice he beat me

with his hands. He would occasionally send for me. At night at the chavadi, he occasionally asked me to sing. 'Sing Ganu's songs or Tukaram's. What does Ganu say?' He would say. I would joke with him by singing songs in his praise light-heartedly Raham najara karo abomore Sai etc. He liked both tune and subject matter of the songs. I have heardly any command of music. Baba would occasionally himself get into an elation of spirits and then (when none else was present) at dead of night would sing songs himself. Kabir's songs, etc. I do not remember anything now of what he sang.

Baba's cures I have mostly forgotten. Leprosy was moderated or lessened by him in the case of one Dagdubai. The progress of disease was arrested. That was all. It was not cured. But after he attained Samadhi, say about 1922, there was the wife of Dr. Rane, a Marathi lady, from Bombay. She and her husband would come here and stay four or five months or even one year. She would bathe in Baba's abishek tirtha and apply udhi all over her sores. She would even get a bucketful of tirtha carried to Bombay for the purpose. In two years or so she got thoroughly cured. Formerly she had spots all over the body of the size of a pulse- discoloration of the skin etc. Later, the skin became quite ordinary and she was free from disease. Dr. Rane has not been seen here for some years.

As of consumptions, a Gujarathi girl of ten years came here and had to be carried to Baba at first. In some short time, she began to walk and greatly improved during Baba's lifetime.

As for cursing the blind, I remember no cases, the crowd of visitors was very great in Baba's days, one room in the village would fetch Rs.4 per mensam. Now none will pay that for the house itself. In such large crowds, I never cared to inquire into details of name, caste etc., and the extent of benefit of each. As for Baba's averting premature death, Akala marana\* I remember no case.

Some people easily imagine experiences and communicate them to magnify their importance-even here, we have to discount such utterances.

### XXXIII

**13th December, 1936.**

Ganesh Ragunath Teli, Honorary Magistrate, Bombay Road, Thana says:

I went to Sai Baba in 1914 or 1915. Baba asked me for dakshina and said: 'Give me 1 rupee 2 annas and six pice'. That was the exact sum that I had in my pocket and, of course, his asking for that sum was based on his mysterious knowledge of that fact. I gave him the sum. Then there was a nurse, Chandrabai with me. Baba asked her for Rs 6-7-0. That again was the exact sum that was with her. She gave him that sum. We begged leave the same day to go. Baba told her "Why not stay some time?" She pleaded previous engagements elsewhere and we left Shirdi, that very night. That very night or rather early in the morning before she reached home, thieves had broken into her house, carried away Rs.500 worth of property and caused other damage. I have no other experience. I went merely to have darshan of Sai Baba. Baba has given me faith in Him. That is enough. Within a year of my return, my son Nanu was born.

### XXXIV

**14th December, 1936.**

Ramachandra Vasudev Ghaisas, Brahmin, Konkanastha, aged 58, pensioned Postal Servant, R.M.S. Record clerk, Selection Grade, May Mansions, Gokhale Road, North Dadar, says:

I did not see Sai Baba. I knew Kaka Saheb Dixit. I was working in the R.M.S. Department at Manmad. Then Kaka Saheb Dixit was coming to my neighbourhood. He told me of Sai Baba. He said Baba called him to Shirdi and hence he was going to Shirdi. I asked "Baba is not alive. How does

he call you?” Then he said “You will come to know”, and he gave me a photo of Baba. Some months elapsed. My wife fell ill. This was about 13 years back. Her condition appeared hopeless. It was post-parturition trouble. I prayed to Baba on her account and wanted to know if she would live. One or two days afterwards, I had a dream. In that I and a Moslem named Shaik Kabula were in a boat in the ‘Kadi’ or creek of the sea at Kalyan. Some one got into paddle our boat to ferry us across. The creek was in high tide. We were propelled up the current first. But, whereas we had to reach our landing place in the opposite shore, we were stranded in some muddy place lower down. That was because our propelling man had disappeared; we were two in the boat and neither of us knew how to propel the boat. So, we get to a much lower muddy place. However, we reached our shore. This was my dream. I inferred from it that my wife would survive, though after much trouble and lapse of time. From that date, she began to recover. Our doctor declared that the crisis had been passed and that she was safe, though recovery would be slow. I mentioned the dream to Kaka Sahib. Then he said that I would thereby understand Baba’s statement “My Samadhi will speak” (i.e.) “Baba though apparently dead is really alive.”

I was very uneasy in my mind at not getting a decently high position or higher grade (called selection grade) in my department. At that time, I got a dream. In the dream, I was talking with some one else on financial matters. Suddenly, some one appeared and told my companion “Why do you not grant him what he (i.e., myself) wants? Let him prepare Vanki (i.e.) upper armlets of ladies”. He disappeared after my companion said to the 3rd person, “yes, that will be done.” That was the dream. This like other dreams and experiences of mine, I communicated to Kaka Saheb. The 3rd person was obviously Baba. The reason why 3 armlets were to be prepared, while only pairs are worn, I did not first understand. But, Kaka Saheb explained it, saying that the 3rd person was Baba- a Datta Avatar having 3 bodies in one. So 3 vankies were wanted. I accordingly got 3 silver vankies prepared and I placed them in my box of pooja, after making prana pratishta. The fourth day thereafter, I was given the selection grade.



I had doubts what spiritual reading I should go in for. Baba then appeared in my dream and said “Give me biksha of 53”. I thought that as I am poor, I should set apart 53 coins (of quarter anna) from my pay as soon as I get it. I did so for four months and was spending from those funds. Then I consulted Dabholkar about the dream. He showed me that the dream referred to the old standard Guru Charitra with 53 chapters. I then began to read that as my pothi.

Once I started the idea of having a Saptha (i.e.) a 7 days reading Baba’s Guru Charitra and ordered for Dabholkar’s book. After getting it, I had a dream of thieves entering my house. That showed me that Baba wanted me to keep on the old traditional pothi (i.e.) the standard Guru Charitra and not introduce an innovation. So, I gave up the idea of reading Dabholkar’s Satcharitra for the Saptha but kept up the old orthodox Pothi.

Some two years and half back, my wife had a serious attack of paralysis. Her life appeared to be in danger. But, she is a staunch devotee of Baba. She got a vision and in it saw Baba was sitting at the doorway or entrance of her room and telling her “I am here to guard you. I will not allow even Yamadhutas to enter”. She saw also (in that vision) some men bringing bamboos, a mud pot etc., and preparing a bier to carry her corpse. But, Baba asked them to clear off and go to the opposite place; and when they did not mind his words he kicked them away and broke their bamboos and mudpot. This was the vision and my wife was saved. This same night, a person in the opposite chawl (Rangari’s chawl opposite to our chawl (i.e.) Ghamat terrace or Ghamat Chawl) died. My wife’s life was saved and she recovered.

Mr.Dixit called me Bhau Saheb. There is published in the S.L.Masik an incident in which a devotee was given help by Baba, through me. I used to help devotees of Baba. I used to help devotees of Baba, in getting their bus or train to and from Shirdi. When I went to Shirdi, this devotee also recognized me and called me “Bhau Saheb”.

## XXXV

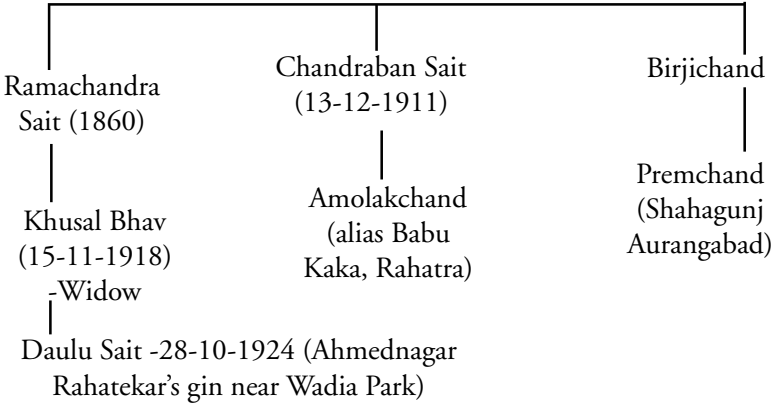
**8th March, 1938.**

Amolchand Chandrabhan Sait, Sowcar, Age 35, Rahata, says:

I have seen Baba coming to my house and my cousin Khusal Bhav's (which is next to my house). He visited us even 3 days before his Mahasamadhi. He looked healthy then. He used to take light refreshment in our houses and stay there 15 to 30 minutes and then go away. My elder cousin Kushal Bhav, who died on 5-11-'18 has told, me that Sai Baba lived in a chavadi (now in ruins) at Rahata for some months or so, that previously Sai Baba lived with a Moslem saint some Ali (Akbar Ali perhaps) whose portrait is still kept in our gin (i.e.) "Rahatekar's gin" near Wadia Park at Ahmednagar and that Dalu sait had seen Baba with the Saint at Ahmednagar and that Baba came from Ahmednagar to live at Rahata and then went to live at Shirdi.

My father Chandrabhan Sait died on 13-12-1911. His elder brother was Ramchandra Sait, who died in 1860. Ramachandra's son is Khusal Bhav. He has only a widow left now (and so on) and she lives at Ahmednagar. My father's younger brother was Brijichand, whose son Premchand (Premchand Brijichand Rahatekar) is a sowcar, aged 60, living at Shahgunj at Aurangabad. He knows about Baba. I have photos of my father and of Khusal Bhav. Khusal Bhav was 47 years older than myself and died at the age of 62. Daula Sait saw Sai Baba at Ahmednagar with Ali (Akbar Ali).

## RAHATEKAR



Akbar ali (?) was living at Bara Imam Kotla near King Gate at Ahmednagar.

## XXXVI

Sri Nageshwar Atmaram Samant, Police Sub-inspector, Bombay, says:

About 1926, I came with my wife and eldest son Manohar, then 2 years old to Shirdi. After Punyatithi, I went to Poona to see Baba Jan. I kept Rs.2 in my inside pocket when nearing Poona and had no other change. I thought Rs.2 sufficient to go from Poona station to Lashkar to see Baba Jan. I engaged a Victoria (to and fro) for Rs. 1-8-0. When I went to Baba, I bought a flower garland for 4 or 6 annas and I paid for fakirs, tea and bread 1-40. After I returned to the station, I paid the victoria man 1-8-0 and got into the train. I put my hand into my pocket casually and I found Rs.2 though I spent more than Rs. 3. I had some notes in other pockets which I did not change. I wondered how the 2 Rs. multiplied so far. I did not think about the phenomenon when paying for the fakir's tea, flowers and Victoria hire. This is the first time I took out a specified sum and set it apart for expenditure.

In 1931 or 1932, I had received summons to attend a criminal case at Chalisgaon before the Mamlatdar. I attended. But, as the case was adjourned, I requested the court to allow me to attend on the adjourned date about 1-30 p.m. After a month I received summons in the case. On the way, I visited Shirdi, having started on the day previous to the case hearing. Next morning, I left Shirdi to go to Chalisgaon by the morning train (by which I had travelled for Bombay). But, the bus being late, I reached Kopergaon town about 10-15 a.m., whereas the train leaves Kopergaon station about 10-30. There was no tonga there. I was in plain clothes and not known there. The buses refused to take me to the station. I prayed to Baba in my mind to help me. Suddenly, some one cried out "Foujdar Sahib". I looked to see who called. Then a policeman enquired if I was a foujdar. I said I was. Then, he ordered a bus to take me to the station and that bus took me in time to catch the train and be a Chalisgaon for the trail. If I had missed attendance at court, that would have been the course of much trouble.

In March, 1929, I went on two months' sick leave for a change and went home. For a fortnight, I was alright. After that, my father went to catch fish against my repeated requests. I felt very sorry for what he did. I felt that we were acting against Baba's wishes. My father brought home first some of them alive. I told my mother that killing fish was improper. By that time, I had suddenly got fever. I told her that she was anxious about the health of her only son, (viz.) myself, but was cruel to the children of fishes and that if she wanted her child not to die, they should stop killing fish. My father then came near me, applied Baba's udhi to me and prayed to Baba; "If my son is alright by tomorrow morning. I will give up eating fish." In five minutes, my temperature came down and was alright.

About 1931, I occupied an upper storey room of Nawalkarwada. The walls had cracked on several places, scorpions abounded and there was great danger of the walls coming down suddenly. Just then, R.A.Tarkhad had found it dangerous and left. He warned me. But I had no other place to stay and in the 2 days of my stay there at Ramnavami, nothing happened. I left it then and went to Bombay and I got a letter that the walls had collapsed shortly after I left.

Some years back, a scorpion was in my cap at Shirdi. I did not notice it but put it on at Shirdi and when I got it off my head at Bombay (some 12 hours after my start), I saw the scorpion inside just as I was going to place it on the peg. It had not hurt me all the time I wore the cap. A few years back, I slept in a room adjoining Baba's samadhi, I found about the middle of the night music coming from the samadhi, I could not explain.

### XXXVII

Mr. G.K.Rege, Retired Thasildar, Indore, says:

I was suffering from sciatic in 1912, I was so uneasy with fever also that I could not get sleep or rest. So I went to my father-in-law Narayan Rao Parulkar at Giggaon, village near Harda. He was a great Sai Bhakta. He had udhi of Sai Baba and he applied it to my forehead. That very day, about 2 p.m I was resting on a cot and then a sanyasi with kashaya, etc. appeared before me and tapped me on my shoulders. He said: "Child, do not be afraid. You will be cured in three days". I shouted out to my father-in-law that a sanyasi was standing before me and telling me the above. He wanted to see the sanyasi but the latter disappeared before my father-in-law turned up. He was sure that the visitor was Sai Baba. Exactly on the third day, to my astonishment, my pain disappeared and I felt I was all right. Within a week I fully recovered. My father-in-law asked me to go to Shirdi for Baba's darshan.

But I could not go for 2 years. In 1914, I took leave for performing my third daughter's marriage at Mandla. We sent a marriage invitation to Baba and had his reply: "I will come in person and attend the marriage". As the marriage ceremony was in progress, the postman brought a letter from Baba with udhi in it and chit of instructions that the udhi should be applied to the married couple. On that very day, a fakir came and asked my father-in-law for once pice. But, my father-in-law neglected the opportunity, repented later, and told me that fakir might be Baba. Then I declared that if it was Baba, he should appear again. Next day, another fakir

came to me and asked for one pice only and I gave it. The fakir accepted that only and declined the dinner offered to him by my father-in-law.

After the marriage was over, I went to Shirdi and stayed there for four days. Baba, as soon as he saw me, remarked: "Why so much delay?" I replied that I was a poor clerk and could not easily come. He asked me dakshina, I gave him five rupees. But, he insisted and wanted five more. I did not know his reason but I gave him the five rupees extra. Then he said. "Nothing more is due to me from you". I discovered the reason for that demand only after my return home to Kathegaon when my wife told me that she had sent Rupees Five by money order to Baba a year ago (unknown to me) and that the money-order had come back with the endorsement that it would be received in person. That is why, I see, Baba asked me, in person, five rupees more.

My youngest daughter Prema Bai, aged 4, was suffering from fever and it had taken a serious turn. She had become a mere skelton. Medicines and treatment brought no relief. My wife, who was a devotee of Sai Baba, prayed to Baba to help the girl. Baba's voice, she heard at the prayer in the waking state, saying "I will take away all the trouble on the third day". To our surprise, the girl died on the third day on her mother's lap. She sent word to that effect and asked me to come home from my office at Manasa. I came up at once. I saw the girl was dead. My wife was wailing. I took up the child and then gave it a bit of Ganges water (which we always keep in our pooja) with Baba's udhi. I poured it into the child's mouth. The water did not flow out. So I gave some more. Then the child opened her eyes and I was sure that she was alive. After that, we gave her udhi and teertha; and in a month she fully recovered her health. She is hale and health and a matron in the Indore L.R.T (Boarding) School.

I lost my wife in 1926. My health then gave way. I had Baba's photo before me. A voice seemed to come from it: "Do not serve any more". On three successive days, I heard the voice. I could not discover any person who spoke it. My friend Doctor Parnekar said to me that the voice must be Baba. So I retired in 1926 on pension.

Before this, (i.e.) in 1924, I was anxious to get my 4th daughter Minabai married. But, no groom could be found. I had already taken leave. I took my wife to her brother at Anjangow (C.P). The second day after I reached, I heard a voice: "Go to Jirapur". I returned to Indore and found my son had received an order to go to Jirapur. But, his wife being in ninth month of her pregnancy, he could not go. So his superior officers cancelled the order. After my leave expired, I learnt that I was posted to Kathegaon in Nemawar Dt. When, however, the draft went to the Revenue Minister for signature without any request from me, he cancelled that order and wrote 'Posted to Jirapur'. So I went to Jirapur. Within a fortnight of my taking charge, I went on tour and halted at a place near Sayath where my brother was serving the Gwalior State. I visited him. There I saw with him one Balwant, who was really strong, stout and handsome. I enquired about him and found him a good match for my girl. That settled and the marriage was accomplished.

### XXXVIII

Mr.X says of his experience in Sai Sudha:

Before I write anything in this about Sai Baba, I should say something about me. I have been, no doubt, devoted to God. I have visited almost all the temples in South India. I have been by nature charitable towards the poor. I was always discussing with a lawyer friend, the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and others. The lawyer friend is very much interested in my prosperity. But my friend never revealed to me about Sai Baba during all these years, though he was a devotee of Sai Baba. On 1-7-39 during our conversation, he mentioned to me the sacred name of Sai Baba and his great powers, wisdom and his loving kindness towards humanity. I came home thinking of Sai Baba. I conveyed this to my wife. Sai Baba appeared to me in my dream on the very same night.

My wife had been suffering from some boils on the legs for a long time. We had tried many medicines and even injections but to no purpose. I asked my wife to apply udhi.

She was daily using udhi. There was not much udhi with us. Then she thought of Sai Baba, and said that there was no udhi in the house. Without any letter from us to the secretary, we received a packet of udhi from Rahata. We thought it was a miracle of Sai baba. She is now completely cured of her boils. We became more devoted to Sai Baba from that day onwards. We have been enjoying peace of mind since we began to worship Sai Baba.

All these wonderful powers of Sai Baba confirmed me that Sai baba is God but not a saint. On 27-11-39, I casually thought that Sai Baba should give me thirtham in his physical form. On the same night, he appeared to me in his physical form, and gave me thirtham with some jaggery. I took thirtham and drank it. Sai Baba has been helping us always. We have been taking the picture of Sai Baba where ever we go for worship. These are the experiecnes of a period of 6 months from 1-7-39 to 31-12-39.

I boldly declare that Sai baba is God and not a saint as held by others. I record all these statements in he name of Sai Baba with the solemn declaration that I have not added a word of untruth.

### XXXIX

Appaji Sutar, Shirdi says:

I had in S.1851, (i.e.) in 1929, boils on my leg, weeping eczema, it seemed. I spent Rs.200 on Kopergaon Government doctors for cure, in vain. Shama (i.e.) Madhava Rao Deshpande also gave me medicines but to no purpose. Nasik Hospital, to which I then resorted, gave equally no benefit to me. When I was an in-patient there for 8 days, one night Baba came to me in my sleep. He said: 'Go back to Shirdi to read puran'. But I replied that on account of my suffering from eczema, I had come to Nasik. Baba replied: 'Go on reading my puran and apply udhi you will be cured'. I then returned to Shirdi. When I came here to Shirdi, Vittal Rao Mahratte was reading pothi, and he had to go to Siruval. As I got down from the bus on my return to Shirdi, he came to get into the bus and told me that there was none to go on with



pothi in Baba's presence, during the time he stayed away at Siruval and he asked me to read Pothi. I undertook to do it (i.e.) to read Jnaneswari Ekanath Bhagwata, Adhyatma Ramayana and Sai Satcharitra by A.D.(G.R.D). Thenceforward, I read these before Sai Baba daily and applied his udhi. In seven days' time, I was completely cured of my eczema.

Another experience of mine is this. I owed Rs.350 to a Multan Fatechand Marwadi of Shirdi. He was threatening to sue me and arrest me for the debt in 1932. I was frightened. Then Baba came in my dream. He asked me and four others to repeat stanzas from Gita one after the another. They did so and I repeated stanzas in my turn. Then Baba asked me "What do you want?" I requested that he may be pleased to relieve me of my debt. He replied that the debt would be removed. Next morning, my creditor came to my house and wanted me to build a house for him; and he gave me a written agreement that on my building the house for him, my bond would be returned. I executed the work in a month or so; and he returned my bond. I tore it up and cast away the pieces.

## XL

Imambai Chota Khan, aged about 65 years, Vajapur, Aurangabad Dt, says:

I heard of Baba for the first time from Durves Shah (30 years ago). He was a Mohamedan Saint. I went to him to consult him about the disputes (i.e.) litigation between me and my paternal aunt, who was also my mother-in-law. He then told me to go to Sai Baba at Shirdi and gave me some directions. Therefore, I came to Shirdi. I met Baba, near Gonkar's house. Then Dixitwada was being built (1910) and the Madras Sadhu Vijaianandaswami was here before Baba. Baba was standing and a lady was taking darshan in this lane. I was advised by Durvesh Shah, to repeat 1st chapter of the koran behind Baba's back and not to accept any money gifts from him. So, I began the repetition of the 1st chapter with the word 'Bismilla'. Baba at once turned round and faced me. He angrily spoke thus: 'Who are you? Why have

you come to ask me about something - as if you were my father?' and he showered abuse. I got terrified. Baba went to the mosque, uttering unintelligible words as usual. I followed him and sat at the pavilion of the masjid. I could not get up the masjid without Baba's permission and that, I got only two days later through Kaka Dixit's intercession. Dixit said: "These are your children, Baba. Why are you angry with them?" This referred to me, Baba replied 'You call him a child. He has beaten the master (to death)'. This was a reference to an escapade of mine two months earlier. I was a Nizam's sepoy in the Mamlatdar's office and had beaten with a stick a Christian 'Master', who failed to give prompt information in an investigation which the police were making (I went to assist the police). The master bled in the mouth and fell senseless. This is the fact Baba referred to, though none could have told him of it. I had told the mamlatdar about this beating and he advised me to run away. So I resigned service and went up to Shirdi. The additional and the immediate reason for my visit to Baba was my fear of prosecution for what I did. That day of Dixit intercession, I still was afraid of Baba did not go up into the mosque. Two or three days later, I was taken by Kasim Bai, son of Bade Baba, Jog, and Dixit up the steps of the mosque. Then I took darshan of Baba and he touched my head saying: "Do not fear. Allah Malik". I stayed on at Shirdi for 1 3/4 months. During that period, Baba told me: "You go back. Your land disputes will be settled and your relations will be amicable". I then went back to my village, and then filed my case against my mother-in-law in the court for possession of lands. It ended 7 years later with my obtaining possession.

Second visit to Shirdi: I came for Baba's darshan and wanted to go back. But, Baba was in the presence of Mahlsapathi and Mavusi. Baba said to Mavusi: 'People do not listen to me. Rascals go away and suffer and by a thorn injury lose the parent'. In fact, though Baba did not permit me to go, I was in a hurry to get back home and so I went away without permission. Two days after my return home, my mother struck a thorn in her foot while collecting fuel and she died 8 or 10 days later, as her legs had swollen. Then, I understood what Baba said to Mavusi about thorn and losing of the parent.

Third visit: On the 4th day of her death, I came to Shirdi as I had no funds and no employment and was hoping that Baba would relieve my financial distress. I stayed on 34 days or so and Baba said to Mavusi in my presence 'Udhi must be received and then departure must be taken. I, at once, inferred that Baba meant those words for me. Baba's usual method is to address words to some one person when they are meant for another, or to address them to a whole group, when only one of them is concerned. Next morning, Baba extended his hands with udhi when I approached and thus confirmed my inference. At the time of giving udhi Baba said 'At the doorway of the house (i.e. my house), there will be an old woman standing. She will give something- using which, celebrations may be performed. Guests have become. The feast should be had in their company'. I could not make out Baba's meaning then. On going home, the widow of the Kazi, a very old lady was standing at my door and out of love or friendship for me, put fifty rupees into my hand, and said 'perform your ceremonies'. That was the fortieth day of my mother's death when the ceremonies corresponding to the Hindu Masik had to be performed: and for that, my four sisters and their husbands had come in my absence. These evidently were the guests mentioned by Baba. I celebrated the fortieth day with the money given to me by the old lady.

Fourth visit: on my next visit to Shirdi a month or so later, Baba said to me: 'Gulab (rose) has come to your house'. I went back and found that my wife had recently been delivered of a male child. Believing that to be the 'Gulab' (rose) mentioned by Baba, the boy was named Gulab.

Later visit: On a later visit to Baba, he did not permit me to return. But, I was impatient and started away, Baba when refusing permission, said "People should not go. If they go, there will be storms and balls of fire and immense trouble". I did not quite see to whom this referred and I went reached Vari (10 or 12 miles off) in 2 hours (i.e.) at 5.30 p.m. Then I went by the bank of Surala. It was sunset then. There the patil told me 'Do not go. The weather is cloudy. Do not go, or you will suffer.' But I replied 'It is only 4 miles more, a short distance to my village and I will go'. I went on. Three miles I went and then a big storm came on and lightning fell

on a huge pipal tree close to me and in front of me. The tree crashed and broke into two and fire started in the tree. I was dazed by the lightening and I turned my face back from it. Then I saw Baba standing behind me with two tawny dogs. I bowed to him and he disappeared. Then I went on. There was a river near my village. I went to cross it, not knowing its depth. I felt the water only knee-deep. But when I reached the other shore and looked back, I saw the river was in full flood and was amazed as water was running over its banks. The depth of water might have been 20 feet. I wondered how I had crossed it. I reached home safe. Baba's statements as to storm and ball of fire was shown to be correct.

Four years ago, I was badly in need of money to get Gulab married. I came here and slept in the mosque. In my dream Baba blessed me and said the if I go to Poona, I would be benefited. I went to a stranger at Poona, and there, Mr.Ladkar came. He was suffering from severe piles. I told him that I knew of a Saint's (Baba) prescription that would cure the piles. At his bidding, I prepared it. He was greatly relieved by it. Then, he betted on a horse at the Poona races and got Rs 1,000. Out of that, he gave me Rs.700 which I performed my son's marriage.

Hardidwar Bua, who was here for 8 days, had a wonderful experience. A sparrow used to sit on his head when he started from Shirdi for bath and would be on his head as he went on until he dipped for his bath at the stream in the village border. Then, it would go up and sit on a tree and resume its seat on his head after the bath was over. We saw this, in our presence, Haridwar Bua asked Baba what this phenomenon signified. Baba said: "La ila illilah. Kya bada durbar hai. Munshiji tho andai hai. Sardarji chuti hai. Allah malik hai. Allah accha karega!" This was said pointing to the Buty wada which was then under construction.

Four months before Baba passed away. Baba asked Appa Bhil at about 8 pm. "Bring four fowls. Guests are to come". I wondered who were the guests to come. That night I stayed on behind the curtain hanging in the mosque, and was awake. After 2 a.m., a huge ball of fire- over one foot in diameter - streamed into the mosque, and went up to the

nimbar, (i.e.) the niche in the western wall. It sat a while, then went up to the ceiling, there split into innumerable fragments, spread throughout the mosque and lit up everything there was with a blaze so powerful that I could not continue to see it. I covered up my eyes and bent my neck down. Appa Bhil also who was with me, did the same. Then Baba went near the dhuni and placing one end of his short stick in his bent neck was going on saying something on Arabic for about 10 or 15 minutes. The bright light disappeared as soon as Baba went to the dhuni. Baba asked Appa Bhil in the morning to bring the four fowls. They were brought and cooked. Baba prepared poli at the fire in the mantap.

Kasim, son of Bade Baba, came later on. Baba gave him some of the food cooked by him and told him "Go to Aurangabad. See Shamsuddin Mea. Give him this Rs.250. Do there moulu and kowali" and do nyas.

"Next, go to Banne Mea Fakir, Garland him with this garland, and then tell him: "Navdin, nav tarik. Allah meane apna dhunia legaya marji Allaki".

So saying, Baba gave Kasim Rs.2.50 and garland of Sevanti flowers. Kasim said he was a stranger to those parts. Then, Baba asked me to go with him. So we two, (i.e.) I and Kasim started, taking with us Kasim's servant Amir and reached Aurangabad station at 3 p.m. When we were at the station, the fakir Shamsuddin (whom I knew already) came there and said: "Who are the guests who have come from the Fakir Sai?" I went then and took his darshan- as also Kasim. Shamsuddin himself repeated Baba's direction to us word for word and took us to his house in the fort and fed us. We paid the Rs.250 to him. He then fed large number (Nyas). Shamsuddin performed the kowali and also moulu. These were completed by that night.

I knew Banne Mea's house and we went there next morning. He was standing with one arm praised and one arm held down. The Arabs with him told us not to approach Banne Mea, as he would be at us. After waiting nearly one

hour, I plucked up courage, took Baba's garland in my hand, and put it round his neck. Then Banne Mea lowered his upraised arm. Then I told him the words uttered by Baba to be told to Banne. Then Banne Mea gazed into the sky and tears rolled down from his eyes. We took leave from him and came away. Four months after that, Baba passed away. The date of Baba's passing away was the ninth (day of Dussera) of the ninth month. We had gone to Aurangabad in the Ramzan month. We fasted during the day and ate at night.

Baba knew Arabic, read and taught Koran to Abdul.

Nuriddin was Risaldar i.e. (horse-soldier) chevalier in service of the state. One day, he came to Baba, took darshan, and wanted leave to go back. Baba told him to go the next day. But Nuriddin said that the rest of his regiment were marching on and that it was not possible for him to stay on. Baba then gave him udhi and told him something in Urdu, which literally means, "Dig a pit and eat the udhi". The man took the udhi and rode away. At Kopergaon, he saw a corpse being carried. And: Then later on he reached his destination. From that day he had a vision of the corpse before his eyes. On those days that he had such a vision he got food and dined to his satisfaction. On days on which he did not get the vision of the corpse, try as he might, he failed to have this food for some reason or the other. This mortified him so much that he gave up service in disgust and thinking that Baba's words and udhi or his failure to stay with Baba brought about that state of affairs, he returned to Baba and stayed there at Shirdi for 6 months. His curse left him. Then, taking leave of Baba, he went away. He is now a grocery shopkeeper at Devali.

Abdul Kadir is now in the Poona cantonment. He came to Baba. About 1915, when he was here at the Takia, Baba came that side. Kadir then begged of Baba to give him fakir as he wanted to become a saint. Baba then flung his folded palm at him as though he held something in it and was flinging it at him. But there was nothing visible held in Baba's hand. Thereafter, Kadir's manner and talk were changed. He gave moral advice and behaved like Baba, sometimes abusing in unintelligible language and sometimes picking up a stone threatening to throw it. He was getting un-

manageable. Baba after 1 1/2 months of this forced asceticism faced him at the mantap of the mosque, and said: 'lavbale idar' and drew his folded palm from Kadir's side to himself. Then Kadir got back his original state of mind and stayed on for 15 days more. Then, with Baba's permission, he went to Kirki and started his beedi shop opposite to Baba Jan's margosa tree (where her tomb is). Abdul Kadir was the guru of Madar Ali, who was then here and who is now at Yeola. Madar Ali is a Khoza. Abdul Kadir and others would do namaz and azar. People would do also moulu every day, during day time before Baba at the mosque, and kowali in the morning with tabla and sarangi.

Baba used to order tabla to be constructed at the mantap and paid for it. Baba prepared Kichada (i.e.) Kichadi and mutton. This he did for many years. This tabla stopped after mantap was prepared. Baba used to pronounce fatia or get it pronounced. Moslems go for Idga to this mosque even now and they did so in Baba's time also.

I have seen and heard Baba pronouncing namaz at the mosque near the fire, without however bending the whole body on knees as others did. Baba pronounced namaz when fire was prepared in a pit at the mantap and thrown on moslem's bodies by themselves. Baba gave spiritual uplift to two Moslems, that I knew. Shaik Abdulla of my village came here. Baba spoke to him in words all of vyragia. "If we die to day, the third day follows. What is the use of house, lands etc. to us?" Shaik Abdulla returned to our village. He had only a wife and children. He left his house and property to them, and wandered in the streets and spent his night at tombs, muttering something. He lived upon what people gave him and did not care if he got nothing and starved. He had that sort of life for 10 or 12 years and died. He had developed wonderful powers during these 12 years. Once he asked me not to go on my journey as at a particular place named by him on the path, as there would-be a serpent. As it was day light, I did not heed him. But I found the serpent exactly in the place named by him. One Abbas Sait, a beedi seller of my place, once told Abdulla "What for are you behaving like a mad man and giving up wife and relations?" Abdulla said "You will come to know". Abbas Sait replied that he knew this was but madness. Abdulla then flung his closed fist in the air

as though he threw something at Abbas Sait and said "you also become like that". From that time, Abbas Sait gave up his business, home and relations and is still wandering about.

In Bhopal of Varhad (Behar) Anwar Khan lived and once he came to Baba. He told Baba "I do not want samsara". He lived in the Chavadi here for 12 months. Baba gave him a mantram "Bismilla, Kuliya hiyo valkafireno nabudo mabudana etc.". I know that also. That is also in Chapter 1 of the Quran. Baba told him to repeat this 101 times at midnight. Then he was to recite 'Devut'. Baba then gave him prasad of peda and sent him to 'Bagdad' in Arabia. He then went to Bombay where Haji Kasim of Bombay helped him with free passage to Arabia. He has not returned from Arabia.

Hida Beg of Kanad near Aurangabad came to Baba and stayed here. Moulvi Yakub of Delhi was here then reading Quran daily sitting in the mantap during day or night. One night, about 8 p.m., Baba told Hida Beg: "Do not remain here! Go to the cantonment near Kanad (i.e. Aurangabad) and change your name to Punjab Shah. Go and sit there, eat what you get" - He is still living there as a saint and people revere him. Kanad is 70 miles off from my place and is a hilly place. I went and saw him there. He was sitting quiet.

Mohammad Khan, a Rohilla of Newasa, was here with Baba. Once, he lifted the curtain to see Baba, who was talking with Mahalsapathy. Strange to say, he could not see Baba. He was getting queer and crazy. His younger brother who was at Newasa, came to Shirdi to take him. Baba gave udhi to him and sent back and he then became alright.

Some 4 years ago, I had Madhav Fasle were at the mosque one night, I heard Baba's voice crying to Madhav; "Madho, get up, I want to go to pass urine". Madhav did not stir. Early in the morning, we found in the hollow at the place where Baba used to sit, cented water. The hollow was filled with that water. There was no explanation for its presence except Baba's cry and his statement that he wished to pass water. I have never heard from Baba who his guru was. I have noticed some peculiar events.

1. Anwar Khan Khaji of Ahmednagar wanted to rebuild a masjid at Telikakot (Kajichi Masjid). He came to Baba for funds Baba told him (after he had waited long) that



the masjid would not accept any money from him or from others, but would herself provide the funds. "Dig 3 feet under nimbar, and you will find a treasure. Rebuild the masjid with that" said Baba. Then the Kaji went to Ahmednagar, found treasure, rebuilt and came to Shirdi and when seated in the Takia here, told me and others of the above facts. As for Baba's telling him the above I was present then. Baba was seated on the big stone in front of the mosque. Anwar Khan was even then aged about 65 or 70; and he died long ago.

2. There was one Maddhushah, a fakir at Meran. Jalgaon in Khandesh. He came here 27 years back and was entreating Baba to give him Rs.700 for some urgent need of his what the need was, I do not know. He cried and cried. Baba directed Bapu Sahib Jog to give him Rs.700. Bapusahib Jog brought Rs. 700 (i.e.) all silver coins and placed them before Baba. Baba told two boys-Gulab, son of Kondaji, and Laxman Bala Barkar Shimpi and asked them to give the money to the fakir, who was seated in the mantap before Baba. The boys in handing over the money pocketed Rs.200 delivered only Rs.500. The fakir wept and cried and said to Baba that he has received only Rs.500. He was grumbling for 2 or 3 days. Baba did nothing to give him more at Shirdi. So the man took udhi and went on walking. While he was walking near Nungaon, a tonga came up and stopped. One Irrus Shah-Parsi, Tahsildar in the Nizam's State, alighted from the tonga, accosted the fakir and gave him first food and then Rs.200 saying "Are you now content?" Then, Irrus Shah came to Shirdi, went to Tatyapa Patil's new house (at the east end of Shirdi) and there told him and all present the following facts. He had a dream in which Baba told him to go by tonga to Shirdi, and said that he would see a fakir near Nungaon carrying a tiger skin, that he should give him food (for the fakir would be hungry) and hand over to him Rs.200, which is the balance of money for which he is panting. So he came in a tonga with food and money and gave the same to the fakir. That Irrus Shah is dead now.

3. A Moslem from Lasoor in Nizam's State (Taluk Vyzapur) came to baba some 27 years ago, and cried wanting Rs.4,000 or 5,000 to meet some urgent need. Baba told him to go and sit under the Vat tree for stool, that a vessel full of coins will be found by him. Next morning, he passed stool and went to wash himself and stumbled upon a very heavy vessel evidently full of treasure. He could not lift it and so he came to Baba at the chavadi. When he returned, it disappeared and he cried. Baba said Ganu Kadu of Ruihad carried it away and so nothing could be done. That Ganu Kadu is a rich man and this Lasoor went back in grief.

## XLI

Sri M.V.Saharabuddhe, S/o Vishnu, age 41, Brahmin, Civil Engineer, Paltan Sugar Works, Paltan, Santara Dt. says:

I learnt of Sai Baba at Rahata in 1931 when I went there taking up the contract (viz.) Nimgaon-Shirdi irrigation and drainage scheme. I came to Shirdi and attended arati. I was greatly impressed. I began to get help from Baba sometimes miraculously. Here are some instances: in 1932, I was digging up the earth and laying drainage pipes, with large number of workmen. One noon I slept on the bund of the channel under a tree. I felt that I was shaken and roused from sleep. Baba then in my sleep said "Get up. A man is being buried, owing to the slipping of the earth. Go and remove him at once". I woke up, called coolies and cycled up to the place of the accident which was two miles off. I found that the two sides of the trench had come down and buried 20 men. We dug up the earth. All of the buried men escaped with very little hurt. One man was seriously hurt. He was bleeding in the nose and mouth and his eyes bulged out. He wanted to be taken to his home in a cart. That was done. He died there. But for Baba's rousing me, he would have died in the works and more would have hurt and I would have had great trouble to meet the inquiry. In this case of accident, and inquiry was held by the Collector two months after the event,

and I was not taken to task. This is very remarkable help from Baba.

The next help from Baba was in 1933. I was in Poona. Baba appeared in my dream and said that the Shirdi Samsthan Committee wanted me at Shirdi. Out of curiosity, I came to Shirdi, Mr.S.D.Navalkar of that committee (who knew I was the Nimgaon contractor) was inquiring where I was. I met him and he asked me to take up the contract for building the Sabha Mantap. I then put up the iron work now standing here.

In 1936, in my mother's illness, Baba gave help. She had to undergo a liver operation. Poona is the best place but as there was plague there in 1936, we decided to have the operation at Wai (Satara Dt.), where we were living. Baba came to me in my dream and told me not to have the operation done at Wai but to have it done at Poona. We, therefore, had it done by Dr.Gharpure at the Sassoon Hospital at Poona. The operation was a success and my mother is safe and healthy even now. I am an orthodox Brahmin and therefore averse to things being touched by Moslems and untouchables. Baba told me in a dream not to care for this untouchability so much.

I have recently been elected member of the Sai Samsthan Committee. Baba has shown me in a recent vision that he is in all and is all gods. When I was at Paltan, I had a vision one night of a Satya Narayana image and pandal being put up and worshipped in the Shirdi Samadhi Mantap or front hall. The offerings made to the image, I found, were passing straight on into the tomb to the body of Sai Baba, whom I saw to be seated within the tomb. The tomb had become transparent. To verify the truth of this at least partially, I wrote at once to Shirdi to see if Satya Narayana Pooja was conducted at the time and place mentioned above. I got an answer in the affirmative. Baba has thus shown me that he is Satya Narayana and that pooja to Satyanarayana is pooja to Sai Baba.

## XLII

Bhaskar Sadasiv Satam, Hindu Mahratta, Sub-Inspector of Police, Lamington Road, Bombay, says:

I joined the force as an ordinary Co., in 1911 and rose to the position of S.I. About 1930, I met Nagesh Atmaram Samant, who spoke to me about Sai Baba. I told him I would go to Shirdi. But for years I did not. In 1940, both of us were at Nargam Training School. I had then some misfortunes resulting in the loss of my job. I was suspended on 16-2-1940. I prayed to Baba while under suspension. Udhi and Prasad from Shirdi were wanted and sent to me. Prasad was received but not Udhi though Sagun Rao Meru Naik sent both. It is after that I received the dismissal order on 28-2-40. Samant wanted me to go to Shirdi unconditionally. I and my son came on last Ramnavami here, and prayed to Baba. We spent only 2 days here. On my return, at Dadar, I met a constable and he said that I was reinstated and posted to Lamington Road. But no such order could have been passed then. On 28-4-49, I appealed. On 14-5-49 the order passed was "Reinstated and posted to Lamington Road". Baba's decision and come from the constable's mouth two month's earlier.

I had debts to clear. I prayed to Baba and he sent me some money. I am now free from debt and I am well-provided. I prayed to Baba only for this state of happy freedom.

## THE END

"OM SAI SRI SAI JAYA JAYA SAI"

"My eye (of vigilant supervision) is ever on those who love me. Whatever you do, wherever you may be, ever bear this in mind, that I am always aware of everything you do."

**SAI BABA**

द्वारकामाई

