



LIFE OF SAI BABA

(All Four Parts in One Composite Volume)

By

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Published by

ALL INDIA SAI SAMAJ (Regd.),

Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004.

Phone : 24940784



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Preface

This treatise on Sai Baba is intended to contain as much information as possible of great interest to the devotees and the public. The volume has been growing and is still growing, so that at a very early stage it was discovered that the book would be too big for a single volume. It has been decided to split the book into three parts, the first part being the preliminary part containing matter which is useful for understanding the latter parts. An account is given of his early life, how he was understood and misunderstood, how he looked insignificant at first and became all important later, and what various and even conflicting views were and are taken of Sai's life. Amongst these, in the first part, a good portion has been allotted to view Sai Baba as *Guru* or *Samartha Sadguru*, especially in dealing with his *Ankita* children. To some, this devotion of a large number of pages to the subject of *Gurus* might appear to be unnecessary and may even be displeasing. On the other hand, it is noted that those who approach Sai Baba in dead earnest to achieve the highest that life holds for them were and are anxious to view in that light and deal with him in that capacity in which he would be of the greatest use to them for achieving the goal of life. And it is as *Guru* to all, that persons of all faiths and places can meet at his feet. His worship was first begun by Mahlsapathy and others as he was a supreme saint, a *Paramaguru*, an advantage to resort to and who is a necessity for one's attainment of *moksha* and other high aims of life. Mahlsapathy, his friends and the hermits meeting Baba in his earliest days at Shirdi realised what a highly advanced soul he was, how full he was of divine nature and therefore possessed of power to impart that nature or realisation to those seeking it in the proper way and to impart to various people various other benefits which circumstances might warrant. In the Mundaka Upanishad¹ we find the root of what has been expanded later in the Bhagavata. That Upanishad says that a self realiser or person of God-realisation can achieve anything and be in any world that he thinks of.

Yam Yam lokam manasa samvibhati,
Viscuddha satwah Kamayate Yamscha Kaman,
Tamtam lokam jayate,

Taamscha kaman,

Tasmat atmajnanam hyarchayet Bhutikamah.

The Upanishad adds, therefore those who are anxious about their own welfare must resort to such an Atmajnana. That was evidently the feeling of Mahlsapathy though perhaps he might never have heard of the Mundaka Upanishad. Baba's saying *Main Allah hum* or I am Laxmi Narain² is *Atmajnana*. The same doctrine is expanded in Srimad Bhagavata³ and other works. The *Jnani* is compared to *Agni*.

Bhungte Sarvatra Bhoktrunam

Dahan Prak Uttara Asubham.

that is, 'The *Jnani* goes on eating what is offered by devotees just as the fire consumes every oblation offered by devotees and completely burns out all the evil *karma* that may have been committed by them formerly or may be committed thereafter'. This is seldom actively and fully held before the mind of persons going to feed saints. For instance, Bayyaji Bai, when starting the feeding of Sai Baba from his very first entry into Shirdi, and pursuing him into the jungle for feeding him, dimly sensed the glory and appropriateness of feeding such a saint though it is clear that her having been Baba's sister, *janma* after *janma*, was the *Rinanubandha* that, accounted for her anxiety and zeal to feed him. Sai Baba's nature was slowly understood, and Volume I shows how very slow the process was. But at one stage, we might say that Baba had left obscurity behind and came out in full blaze like the noon-day sun upon the public. From about 1910 the blaze had begun, and in 1918 the blaze had advanced, and by 1918 the blaze was so powerful as to strike even comparatively blind people. However, there are such blind people even now whose eyes have to be opened to see the glory of the light of that sun, Baba. Baba's work has begun and is anything but finished. What the future holds seems to be far more important than anything already achieved by him. The object of this book is to help people to realise more and more the great work that is being done by Baba and his essential greatness. Therefore, there was a special necessity to hurry up the publication of this 'book. It was ready in some form even last year. But financial and other difficulties

prevented any publication and even now those difficulties permit only the publication of part after part, and that is one special reason why volume I alone is being issued now. In trying to cut up one closely inter-related mass of information about Sai Baba instituting his life, *lilas*, and teachings, one feels a great difficulty. However much thought is given to the subject of separation of parts, we find it difficult to say which chapter should get into what part. So in a rough way, Part I has to be closed with roughly one-third of the size" of the matter ready for printing, including in it the early history and accounts of Baba and the materials necessary for getting an idea of Baba as a *Samartha Sadguru*, who will help one to attain the highest in life, while at the same time enabling one to get the other incidental benefits of contact with such a saint. Chapters about *Ankita* children are the natural corollary of the chapter about 'Baba's Love or *Prema*' and 'Baba's *Samsara* in this world, and Baba's *Brahma Nishta*. Baba said to Nona G. Chandorkar 'You want to escape from *samsara*. I cannot escape from it myself. As long as there is the body, *samsara* is there. One cannot be released from *samsara* by running away to a jungle or by other similar process'. There is in this statement an important question of attitude to life. Several great saints who made great strides in *Atma Jnana* and God-realisation simply contended themselves with remaining absorbed in *Para Brahman* or in their *Iswara*, Personal God, and did not wish to continue any of their lives' activities. Some condemn this attitude. Others applaud it. But we should do neither. In the world, there are various sorts of fruits and views and in Divine Providence any soul may select its own fruit that is the particular attitude to life that suits it best, especially in view of its *poorva karma* and training. In Sai's life, the above quoted views as to *samsara* stress the fact that he was never for deserting society in order to be completely drowned in Impersonal or Personal God. On the other hand, he insisted upon being in the thick of life attending to his duties, drawing to him the very large number of persons, who contacted him in previous lives or in the present, all the while with his concentration God, unimpaired by such contact and in stressing the importance of performance of *rinanubandha* obligations with similar detachment upon his devotees also; he set

an example of what he taught. This matter will be dealt with at greater length in the Third Part which contain his teachings. The second volume or part mainly consist of Baba's dealings with various prominent persons showing how they were drawn to him and influenced by him, what progress they made and how they were helped to make it by reason of their contact .with him. This naturally includes teachings, for teachings form an important part of the way in which Baba developed people who came to him, and yet it is not by what we call 'teachings' that Baba moulded several prominent devotees. Therefore whatever is left over after dealing with Baba's prominent devotees in Part II must come into Part III, which as the residuary and final part must include general matter not covered by the previous parts.

The object of this work has been repeatedly declared to be practical. In cutting off a third of the book and sending it immediately before the public, the author is eminently practical. He wants that as many as possible who are hungering and thirsting to contact Sai Baba should have their satisfaction at once, that as many as are anxious to become Baba's *ankita* children should be immediately enabled to become such, and that those who wish to understand this mysterious universe and the puzzling problems of spiritual development with the aid of what Baba said and did, should be given an immediate chance of picking up as much as possible and proceed with it. Above all, the author feels sure that there is a considerable section of serious minded persons who wish to adopt Sai baba for their *Gurudeva* and want to be trained by him and taught by him every way in which Baba would consider it fit to teach and .in them. Baba's methods have not been exhaustively studied, but they include what is known as the *Dakshinamurthi* method.

Chitram Vatatarormule

Vridhdah Scishyah Guruh Yuva

Guruostu Mounam Vyakhyanam

Scishyastu chinna samscaayah.

this means, What a wonder! At the foot of the banyan tree, aged, grey bearded disciples are seated at the feet of a *Guru*, who is young. The *Guru* keeps silent

and talks not a word. The doubts however, of the disciples are all dispelled. One naturally asks, 'How is that possible?' In our present day civilisation, we have only understood conveyance of thought by speech. But with persons of the coming race or the fully developed human being that is represented by Baba, one of the most elementary power is to convey the thought impulse to action without utterance of a single word. 'Radiating thought' is an expression used about several great souls. A person seated before such a *Mahatma* feels that his whole being is permeated, controlled, communed with and moulded by the *Mahatama* without the use of a single word and without direction that any book should be studied or any practice should be followed. Fuller details of this will be found in the chapter on Upasani Baba in Part II. Apart from radiating mere ordinary thought, radiating wisdom or bliss and filling the disciple's soul with illumination never before experienced appear to be very grand, perhaps the grandest feat. Narayan Ashram formerly called Mr. Toser⁴ sat by Baba. Narayan Ashram says "He graciously conveyed to me without any words the feeling that differences between various souls were unreal, that the One real thing is that which underlies all."⁵ That means that he completely forgot himself, that, Toser's soul lost the idea that he was a single Toser with joys and sorrows, and limitations, of one body but instead, he perceived absolute bliss within him. As there was nothing else, within that bliss was Toser and he was identified with Sai Baba. And all sense of separateness was gone. This is the momentary conversion of an ordinary *Jiva* into *Satchitananda* or something on the verge of it. Baba's powers were similarly extended to G.S. Khaparde and Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiv Tarkhad. This activity of Baba would be very highly esteemed by many a reader who might consider it the privilege of his life, the total achievement of one's life to get into *Satchitananda* at least for a moment at the feet of Baba. Baba's training, teachings and achievements were of widely different sorts and were suited to the conditions of each who approached him and are suited to the conditions of those who approach him now. Baba is still a *Guru*, a Divine Personality, not a mere abstraction and can be seized by those who are in dead earnest. Unfortunately for mankind, very few are so earnest. Most stop with

raising preliminary questions as to the impossibility of such an experience or its undesirability and the various objections from the standpoint of the learning that they have already acquired. The ifs, the buts, the hows, the whys and the other numerous ways in which they face the problem prevent most readers from having the chance of approaching Baba in the right receptive spirit with full earnestness and getting the highest out of him. If the highest is not possible at the present moment, Baba suitably develops them either in this life or in the life beyond, for Baba has repeatedly undertaken to guide his devotees, life after life, promising to be born with them for that purpose. If this is not a sufficient attraction, it is difficult to find anything more attractive. There are people to whom these are not attractions, but the chance of getting Rs.500 a month, or a fine estate, or success in a particular contest, would be esteemed of far greater interest and importance than any of the things mentioned above. People's ways are peculiar and Baba does not expect every one to come to him fully perfect. Any one with all his defects may try to approach Baba and Baba will mould him, change his view point and his capacity to understand, appreciate and desire. The correct attitude is very important. That in turn depends upon one's view of one's life, one's neighbours and God. If one thinks of oneself to be a mere body, all earthly attractions overwhelm. But Baba by the grace of his *Guru Mourshad* was, as he said "taken away from the body which was but his house." That is, the *Guru* showed him that he was the spirit and not the mere body, that his interests were not to be confounded with the thousand and one things of the organism or one's artificial or sentimental personality closely associated with the organism. Baba has in turn developed several of those approaching him, at least partially to shake off the *Dehatmabuddhi* and obsession that the body is one's self. If a person once realises that he is not this organism and this body, but is something very much wider, which may be the result of Baba's training him to pitch himself into all other's hearts and identify himself with those souls, then the present necessity and the desires and aversions formerly prevailing with oneself, all drop off. The scales fall from one's eyes. All values are different. The world looms as something totally different from what it did. One sets about it and acts in a

different way. The results therefore of Sai contact will be of such wide variety and importance that it is not possible to set them out here. The earlier a person seizes upon a book about Baba and makes a careful and voracious study of everything about Baba, and a sincere attempt to absorb all that he can out of it, the better. We are sure that even after a perusal of Part I alone, several would achieve the position of becoming Baba's *Ankita* children, and there are already a good number of them. Several would definitely fix themselves up as Sai's *sishyas* anxious with his help to get up step after step in the ladder of spiritual progress. The details of these steps it is neither possible nor desirable to state here and now. One step seen at a time is enough. Baba gives the needed push and sees to the proper progress of everyone according to the circumstances and it does not matter whether one's progress is achieved completely now or later. If complete progress is not achieved in one life,

Bahunan Janmanam Ante,

Jnanavan Maam Prapadyate

that is, The *jnani* reaches God after many births. There is sure to be appreciable advance in one's position and one's nature as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita⁶. Thus one feels that he has after all come to the right place, namely, the feet of Sai Baba.

Before closing this preface, acknowledgements have to be made for all the help which have taken shape in the form of this book. The need for a complete biography in English has been felt by the public and by this author for over a dozen years, but something or other prevented the work from being undertaken and carried through. While in that condition, October 1953 brought on a serious breakage of the thigh bone and sixty days' confinement in the hospital, and subsequently a very serious attack of dysentery served to complete what appeared to be a total wreck of the physical and mental constitution. No energy was left to the author to move about, to think out, to look into the authorities or to write out a biography. There was no health or freshness and energy. In such a state of affairs, which continued yearly up to the middle of 1954, it was a wonder to the author himself that he discovered the object of his life being spared d the

object also of sufficient of energy, mental and physical, being left to him. It was clear that the remaining energy and remaining life were intended to be devoted to Baba just as the previous decades of this author's life were. So the matter of this big book within his memory was fairly and easily recallable. With some little effort, he began work and strange to say, though he had no power to sit and write, Baba provided his *Ankita* child with a stenographer who, out of modesty, wishes to conceal his light under a nom-de-plume R.R. Without the help of a stenographer, it would be impossible to turn out any work either for the book or for the *Sai Sudha* or for the numerous pamphlets that were being constantly requisitioned by others from this author. But by Baba's provision, this stenographer worked at all the .above matter and spent a large number of days in the year, that is, all the spare time that he could command, by the side of the author doing this work merely out of love for Baba. His work, if it had been charged for according to the prevailing scales, would have involved the author in the expenditure of over a thousand rupees which, of course, were not available. But Baba, like Sri Krishna, always provides *Mat parayanas* those who are devoted to him entirely, by looking after the affairs of those who assist. Says Bhagavata⁷

Samuddharanti Ye Vipram
Seedantam mat Parayanam
Tan uddharishyeham Achirat
Apatbhyo Nawn Rivarnavat.

that is, Sri Krishna says, 'Those who rescue my entirely devoted *bhakta* from his troubles, them I shall rescue and help from all troubles and calamities, just as a boat rescues one in the ocean. Baba somehow gives the feeling to the author's helpers that they are being looked after by him.

The author's health being, since October 1953, extremely unreliable, the work would have been impossible but for the due provision of medical help. Here again Baba's help to his *Ankita* child is remarkable. Baba designated a doctor in a very good position and with excellent knowledge and made him repeatedly attend, without receiving any recompense at all, upon the author and that doctor

is still attending upon him. Here also the above mentioned stanza applies. When the work was helped on in this way, the size of the volume grew and grew, and the task of reviewing even the original typed pages was too much for the physically weak author. Sri Dewan Bahadur R.V. Krishna Ayyar, for whom the author has always entertained high regard and love, went through over 500 sheets of typed matter making the necessary corrections. This was in the midst of his official work. So sincere thanks are due to him as also to Miss Indira, professor of English, Government College, Coimbatore, who was kind enough to go through 200 pages of the manuscript. Thanks are also due to the retired Law College Professor of Indore, Sri V.N. Visvanatham, and several others for having taken down notes necessary for dictation of the book. As already stated it looks impossible to publish a big book of 900 or more pages with a depleted cash balance in the All India Sai Samaj. It is Baba's grace alone that made the work see the light of day and also aided in getting the means for publication. The royal present of Rs.5,000 by His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore enabled the Samaj to purchase a Press and types. In the last twelve months, 360 odd pages constituting the first volume have been printed and got ready for publication. Stage after stage, idea after idea, and reference after reference, the remarkable help that ^fj/as suddenly forthcoming was the clearest evidence to the Author that Baba is giving unstinted support for this publication, fact it is not mere modesty but love of truth that makes the author say that the real producer of this book is Baba himself.

There may be numerous others who have helped this author in the course of getting up this book, but it is impossible to name them all here, and the author's apology may be accepted for the omission.

B.V. NARASIMHA SWAMI 1955

One

Who is Sai Baba?

The phenomenal spread, like wild fire of faith in Sri Sai Baba throughout this great country, within the last decade or two and its wonderful hold on the mass mind naturally roused the curiosity of many to put the above question and have necessitated the writing of a full and clear account. Those who know nothing of the personality in whom the faith of many centers, ought to know something of him. Those with prejudices or with wrong or defective views about him must be enabled to cast aside such prejudices and views and to acquire better and more accurate ideas about him. Those who have just a faint or superficial notion of Sai Baba must likewise be enabled to get a deeper, wider and more authentic idea about him, so that they may thereby extend or increase their contact with him.

Correct knowledge of any kind is good. But correct knowledge of facts connected with the lives of saints is not only good for the individual who knows them, but is beneficial to society as in the long run it promotes social unity and ethical, spiritual and religious study and endeavor. Lives of saints give not merely information for the brain of the reader, but food and strength for his heart, and they facilitate the general advancement of the temporal and spiritual interests of mankind. By the study of such lives, basic ignorance and illusions are dispelled. *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* qualities such as egotism, pride, hatred, and cruelty are checked or suppressed and noble virtues like humility, earnestness, love to all, service of saints, *Guru Bhakti* and *Jnana* are developed. These in due course lead to the goal of God-realisation. Apart from these, even the temporal benefits derived by individuals from appreciation and knowledge of Sri Sai Baba and the acquisition of a real living touch with him are great enough to justify an attempt to place a book like this before the public.

Further, there is even now an important section of readers, however small their number may be, that require something more than mere bread and butter or health, wealth and worldly comforts, whose spiritual longings should be met in some measure by a work which presents something of the facts about a unique

and perhaps one of the strangest of known spiritual personalities adorning the earth during recent times.

The task undertaken is however extremely difficult. There exists a mass of information about what Sai Baba said and did during his life time and about the experience of him which people who met him in life had. There is an even greater mass of evidence about the experiences of devotees who have after 1918, that is, after his *Mahasamadhi*, treated him as their true God or *Ishtadevata*. The difficulty however is to remove the grain from the chaff, to sift and arrange all the mass of evidence that exists and to present what, after enquiry and investigation, has to be accepted as true beyond reasonable doubt. If the evidence which exists regarding Sai Baba is properly sifted and carefully examined and selected, a trustworthy biography can be written and may form a useful inducement for progress in spiritual matters.

The difficulty of sifting the evidence before us is by no means slight. First, Sai Baba himself left his body more than thirty-six years ago. It is not therefore given to a biographer to go and ask him about the true facts and discover the truth. Very few who met him, or benefitted from him till 1918, made use of their contact with him to collect and record facts about him. Many of them did not understand him at all. For the mere sight of Sai did not enable a man to understand him. The right approach or mentality that is necessary for understanding a saint was wanting in many who met him, and Sai Baba himself once said: "They were coming for water to the supplier of water, but insisted on holding their pots with their mouths down, so unreceptive they were".

To many who saw him, Baba's deeds and sayings were rather confusing or perplexing. For instance, when he said, I am not at Shirdi, but everywhere.⁸ He who thinks Baba is in Shirdi alone has totally failed to see Baba.⁹ You have been with me 18 years. Does Sai mean to you only this 3^{1/2} cubits height of body?¹⁰

I am God, Allah"

such statements appeared to them like eccentric pronouncements of a mad man. In fact his queer unconventional ways, his habit of accommodating

himself to all sorts of people including Hindus, Mohammadans and others, and his fearless and unorthodox originality failed to impress many of his visitors. Sectarian prejudices and narrow views led many to think and pronounce all sorts of opinions about him. Even G.G. Narke¹² and Syama¹³ took him at first to be a mad man. Others such as Londa¹⁴ and Megha¹⁵ took him to be a communalist. A few people took him to be a hypnotist¹⁶, a black magician¹⁷ while others even denounced him as an immoral and dangerous man who was ruining Hindus and Hinduism¹⁸. When new comers like Dr. D.M. Mulky tried to go to Shirdi, railway personnel en route stopped several by their abuse and vilification of Baba.

This kind of attitude to Sai Baba is to some extent prevalent even now. Many are the persons who hate Sai, presuming from the name and residence at the mosque that he must have been an iconoclastic *Mussalman*, while others are indifferent to him, as they have not been fortunate enough to get proper information about him.

There can therefore be no doubt that there is a great need for a book of facts regarding Sai Baba like the present one. The difficulty of the task should not act as a deterrent. One very closely associated devotee of his, now living, still believes that Baba was only a *Mohammadan*. What can 'only a Mohammadan' mean? It means that even after 25 years of personal experience of him and 36 of his post mortem glories, the devotee treats him as a communalist just as he did when Baba was in the flesh. On the other hand, to Sri. M.B. Rege, a retired High Court Judge, Sai is only God, the *Paramatma*, and this view he held even in 1914.

Baba wished to convince the devotee, if he was a Hindu, that he was *Mahavishnu*, *Lakshminarayan*, etetra and he bade water flow from his feet, as Ganga issued from *Mahavishnu's* feet. The devotee saw it and praised him as *Rama Vara*, but as for the water coming from his feet, that devotee simply sprinkled a few drops on his head and would not drink it, coming as it did from a Mohammadan's feet. So great was the prejudice of ages that even one, who thought of him as Vishnu, thought he was a Muslim Vishnu. Prejudices die hard and the devotee wondered how people can believe that Baba was a Brahmin and

that his parents were Brahmins when he had lived all his life in a mosque and when he was believed to be a Muslim. It was only a few persons like S.B. Dhumal who saw clearly that Baba was neither Hindu nor Muslim, but above all castes, sects and religions.¹⁹

It is still fewer people that could rise to the level of accepting Baba's supreme claim²⁰ that he was *Paramatma* in all beings. Such persons naturally worship him as *Ishtadevata*.

Thus there are vast differences, sometimes poles apart between the various ideas which people have about Sai Baba. These render difficult the task of presenting the real Sai as distinguished from the popular distortions of him. His devotees and strangers alike said that Sai could not be understood and that nobody could know the secrets of Sai Baba. Syama called him *Deva*, that is God, but did not always behave as he would towards God.²¹

To a Haji who was proud of his Haj, Baba said "You do not know what is here", that is, in the Sai body or personality. A well known song is²²

"More Babaku Mdrma na Janare koyi More" "None knows my Baba's secret".

Till now, there has not been a good biography containing a fair, full and faithful description of his life. In Marathi, the work that can be thought of when facts about Sai Baba are wanted is Hemad Pant's alias Anna Saheb Dabolkar's Sai Satcharitra. This is a brilliantly written poetical work extending to 53 chapters and over 1000 pages narrating incidents connected with Sai Baba's life, and written in highly florid and resonant Marathi, serving excellently the purpose of *Puranic* study and daily *parayana*. Great as the merits of the book are from the standpoint of a *Bkakta*, it cannot be called a regular biography. It is rather a chronicle of reminiscences or anecdotes relating to him having no arrangement, not even chronological. There is a good adaptation of this Marathi work in an English garb by Sri Gunaji. Other small sketches or introduction to Baba's life have been published in English and other languages, but these also are too tiny to deserve the name of a biography, sketches of a few early incidents in Baba's life were issued as poetic pieces by Das Ganu Maharaj of Nanded during the life time of Baba in about 1906. He wrote 6 or 7 chapters on the whole about Sai Baba, and

he published them as part of big books namely, Bhakta Leelamrutha, Santha Kathamrutha and Bakthi Saramrutha. These 7 chapters are printed in Marathi. H.S. Dixit wrote a short biographical preface to Mrs. & Mr. Tendulkar's Sai Bhajan Mala in 1917.

A very short sketch of Sai Baba's life was issued in Gujarati by Amidoss Mehta. This was also before Baba's *Mahasamadhi* in 1918. A slightly more ambitious work was the Life of Baba in Tamil written by the present author. Actually only Part I of it appeared, but even that was not a full account. Subsequent to his *mahasamadhi*, there have appeared a few statements or sketches about Sai Baba, but they are scattered and do not deserve the name of a regular biography. Sai Samasthan itself published Rao Bahadur M.W. Pradhan's book 'A glimpse of Indian spirituality' but it ran upto only about 25 to 30 pages and set out just a handful of facts about Baba²³.

This list practically exhausts all attempts made hitherto to publish a biography of Sai Baba. A faithful and full account of Sai Baba's life based on a careful and critical study of the available material regarding his life and the incidents and anecdotes narrated about him by those who contacted him before and after 1918 is therefore urgently called for and will it is hoped be appreciated by his innumerable devotees.

The author has undertaken this work in a spirit of humility and as a true service of Sai Baba and in the sincere belief that Sai himself has directed him to undertake it. 'Obstacles and difficulties should not frighten us', says Bhartruhari. The most admirable of Sai Baba's charters is 'Why do you fear, when I am here?' This in itself is an answer to those who doubt and fear about the possibility of a successful biography of Sai Baba.

The arrangement of the work requires a few words of explanation. After giving as full and accurate an account of Baba's life, doings and teachings as can be gathered from the available evidence, the author has given a description of the various aspects of Baba and of the various functions which he performed. Further a sketch has been given of the more important disciples who contacted Sai Baba and benefited by such contact and of the circumstances which

attracted them to him. It will be seen that these disciples were mostly Hindus, though some of them were Muslims. In writing separate chapters about Sai Baba's doings and teachings and his disciples, it was inevitable that some teachings and incidents connected with the disciples might happen to be repeated more than once, but the author thought that it was better to allow the repetition so that each chapter may be complete and self-sufficient in itself rather than to leave the reader to go through the previous pages for the purpose of finding out references. As it is, the reader can take up any chapter and read it with interest and will not find himself handicapped for want of knowledge of the previous chapter. Further repetition is essential to ensure a deep impression.

God-realisation is a personal experience and cannot be obtained or explained through the written word. Those who are familiar with Hindu thought and in fact with religious thought generally, can realise the importance of a *Guru* and absolute faith in a *Guru* for the quickening of spiritual growth. "All things are possible to him that believeth". But faith is founded on experience and confidence is increased by tangible proofs. To create such faith and evoke such confidence. God or a God-man *Guru* has to confer wished for benefits on the disciple or devotee and the conferring of such benefits is the instrument with which God works. The less care a devotee has about his bodily or material comforts, the more perfectly he can carry out His will and programme. This book proves beyond doubt how Sai Baba took upon his shoulders the responsibility of looking after the maintenance, health and prosperity of his disciples and devotees.

The advent of Sai Baba was for the uplift of man-kind and a study of this work describing it will, shower upon the readers incalculable benefits both spiritual and temporal in this world and beyond.

Two

Babas Earliest Period

The birth and parentage of Sai Baba are wrapped in mystery. We have not come across a single person who has any direct" knowledge of them. Sai attained his fame at Shirdi in the Bombay state by the end of the 19th Century when he was already grey. It is known that he was not a native of Shirdi. He was

very young when he first came there. In the beginning he left Shirdi off and on, and returned to it. The date of his first arrival at Shirdi cannot be fixed. A very old lady, the mother of Nana Chopdar, said in 1900 that when she was young she first saw Sai Baba at Shirdi, when he was a prepossessing and attractive lad without a moustache, probably in his early teens, and of, whom nothing was known. That so little is known about his early life proves that even then he was leading a secluded life, a real fakir not hankering after the good things of the world but concentrating his attention on higher aims. He was often in solitude, not infrequently under the well known margosa tree called the *Code neeni*, meaning that the leaves of one of its two big branches are not so bitter as margosa leaves usually are and as the leaves of the other big branch are. He had no fixed residence - real *fakirs* have none. He would roam about in the fields and squat at any tree-foot, and had no interest in any worldly matter. One of his later visits to Shirdi, probably the final visit, was on the momentous occasion of Chand Bhai Patel's advent to Shirdi. Chand Bhai Patel was a rich and influential village Patel or Headman, of Dhupkeda village in the Nizam's State not far from Shirdi. His wife's newpew was to be married to a bride at Shirdi, and so in 1872, he came in the evening or night with a huge procession and Sai Baba accompanied him on that occasion from Dhupkeda to Shirdi. After that time except for two months when he was under Jawar Ali Msulana, Sai Baba never left Shirdi but only made a few occasional visits off and on to the neighbouring villages of Rahata or Nimgam, from which he immediately returned to Shirdi. So his final residence was Shirdi from about 1872 till the end of his life in 1918. He discouraged questions on parentage, and gave mostly mystifying answers. On one occasion, he said, his father was *Purusha* and his mother was *Maya* or *Prakriti*, and that in consequence, he came in as the *Dehi* into this world of phenomena²⁴. At another time he said that his uncle had brought him to Shirdi from Aurangabad²⁵. On one momentous occasion, very late in his life, he revealed to Mahlsapathy²⁶ the interesting fact that his parents were Brahmins of Patri in the Nizam's State. Patri is part of Parvani taluk, near Manwath. Sai Baba added, in explanation of the fact that he was living in a Mosque, that while still a tender child his Brahmin parents

handed him over to the care of a *fakir* who brought him up. This is fairly indisputable testimony, as Mahlsapathy was a person of sterling character noted for his integrity, truthfulness and *vairagya*. All persons including Sai Baba, H.S. Dixit, and others held him in very high esteem, and none would doubt his veracity. Sai Baba occasionally showed his interest in Patri and Parvani when people from those parts came to him, by questioning them about the residents of those places. This does not take us very far. But this is practically all that we have about the birth and parentage of Sri Sai Baba.

But who ever his parents were it is quite important to remember that from his earliest infancy he had all the associations or dissociation or detachment a true *vairagi* or *jnani* should have. Having no parents or kinsmen, and being brought up by a *fakir*, he easily picked up his foster-father's *vairagya* and spiritual turn of mind²⁷. Even *that fakir* passed away within four or five years after taking charge of him. The *fakir* directed his wife to take the young child, Baba, and leave him in charge of a noted saintly *zamindar*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh at Selu. The appellation *Deshmukh* was not meaningless in the case of Gopal Rao but denoted an actual appointment as *Deshmukh* or Provincial Governor for Jintur Parganna, and the title or *sanad* of *Deshmukh* had been conferred on him by the descendants of the Peshwas. The exact date of the title cannot be discovered. There are ballads and some old manuscripts in the possession of Deshmukh's descendants which show that somewhere about the first quarter of the last century, the Peshwas recognised his military capacity which enabled him, Gopal Rao, to bring Jintur Parganna under his control with his own horsemen and other followers. Young Baba, left under the care of this Gopal Rao Deshmukh spent the best and the most impressionable part of his life at Selu which was the centre of that Parganna, and which had a fort and castle wherein the Deshmukh resided. The young boy was very greatly attached to his master, and the master in turn was deeply interested in the boy. Consequently the boy was with the master at all times, whether the latter was in the field or at *puja*, whether he was in the garden or in the court. Baba seems to have had no education given to him at any time, that is, no book study, and no masters either in the regional

language which must have been Marathi or Telugu or in any other language. But real education of the highest sort, he had in plenty. This Deshmukh, unlike many other Deshmukhs or *zamindars* of his times, was not a dissolute and sensuous person of brutal nature revelling in cruelty and violation of all moral rules or scruples. On the other hand, he was an extremely pious devotee greatly attached to Tirupati Venkatesa whose image he worshipped daily in his own castle. He was rich, and liberal, and patronised learning and piety. Hence an abundance of real education could be picked up by the young child Baba when attending on his master. This Deshmukh's worship of Venkatesa was not of the ordinary sort. He had direct communion with his *Ishta Devata*, and the guidance of that *Ishta Devata* in all His affairs made his life a-remarkable spiritual and temporal success. He maintained his political sovereignty against all odds, and the ballads of his time show that his regiment was greatly esteemed by the Peshwas whom he helped and feared by the Muslim Nizam whom he opposed. This Deshmukh, however, spent much of his time in holy pastimes. He went round visiting holy places, and at one of those places a remarkable incident took place showing his nature. He occupied, with his retainers, a haunted house. The original owner of the house had died and become a *Brahma-Rakshas*, who would appear suddenly at midnight and kill the occupants. But Gopal Rao, the devout worshipper of Venkatesa, was not afraid. He carried on the *puja* of Venkatesa and Saligram right up to the middle of the night. The evil spirit, dishevelled and hairy all over, appeared and demanded in a terrific voice, 'Who are you? How dare you come to my house?' Then Gopal Rao coolly replied that the statement that the house was his was a mistake when there was nothing in common between him and the materials making up the house. The spirit, infuriated, tried to approach him, though with some fear. Gopal Rao waited, and when the spirit came within a few yards, he hurled the *abhikshekam* water on the head of that spirit. At once this effected a marvellous change. The spirit fell down prostrate, and recited its past history and prayed that Gopal Rao should take possession of the vast hoards of wealth which the spirit had made when alive and which it had kept in the house and watched over and to utilise all that; to release it from its

Brahma Rakshas state. Gopal Rao agreed, and carried away the treasures to Kasi where he performed the requisite rites for the liberation of the *Brahmarakshas*.

Another noteworthy incident in his travels²⁸ was at Ahmedabad. There at the tomb of Suvag Shah which he approached, a remarkable incident occurred. The tomb actually perspired with joy and spoke to him. It stated that Gopal Rao was formerly Ramananda of Kasi and that now he had become a *grihasta* and a ruler but all the same, his former devotee Kabir would be coming to him soon. It was after this, that young Baba was brought to him by the *fakir's* widow, and Gopal Rao recognised him as Kabir.

Amongst the influences that mould the character of young boys, perhaps the strongest is that of the father or the -mother living with them, and shaping their mind from hour to hour. Baba had no mother or father to mould him but he had first a foster father, the *fakir* and next a master who ultimately became his *Diksha Guru*. So, the nature and character of Gopal Rao Deshmukh must first be understood to know how Baba's nature and character developed. This Gopal Rao, though a *zamindar* or rural chieftain of ancient days maintained a character and reputation unattained by any other *zamindar* of his time. One incident in his life illustrates this point. One evening as he sat on the ramparts of his fort, it was quite dusk, and in that half darkness, a fair damsel of some twenty years came very close to the ramparts on the ground level, and thinking that there was nobody, sat down and exposed her body. Seeing a nude usually provokes lust. Others in his position would have immediately ordered some one to go and carry away the damsel and bring her for their gratification. With Gopal Rao the sinful impulse lasted only for a moment. His conscience rebelled, and he at once thought of Venkatesa and appealed to him for forgiveness. He viewed every woman other than his wife as really in the position of a mother to him. *Matruvat Paradarmscha* says the *niti sloka*. That is, no lustful thoughts should be directed to any person other than one's wife. So, treating this lustful thought as an enormous sin, he rapidly went down to his worship room, and there, before his *Ishta Devata's* image Sri Venkatesa, he repented with bitter tears this momentary

lust, and then resolved to punish his eyes for having cast lustful glances at a mother, which is nothing short of incest. He at once seized two sharp needles and poked his eyes with them. Blood issued, and he moaned. His relations soon came up and noting the fact, blamed him for the folly of losing his eyes for such a trivial matter. As his eye sight was absolutely essential for guarding them and the Jintur Parganna from the Muslims, and as they were necessary also for purposes of worship, his *Guru* asked him to pray to Lord Venkatesa for recovery of sight. Accordingly he prayed and recovered sight. The fame of his purity, nobility of character and ability to draw Venkatesa's power for curing ailments, spread abroad. Blind people and others came to him, and his very touch was curative. To a woman born blind, he applied chillies to her eyes with Venkatesa's name on his lips. This cured her and restored her sight. This incident, therefore, shows the nature and characteristics of Baba's *Guru*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh. In his highest moments of absorption, Gopal Rao uttered words which were the words of Venkatesa. He became one with Venkatesa at that time. So Baba always referred to his *Guru* as Venkusa, a contraction of Venkatesa. Perfect chastity, thorough self-control, invariable rectitude, perfect truthfulness, generosity, and serviceability to all which were the leading characteristics of his *Guru* became - transplanted and took deep root in the disciple, Sri Sai Baba.

We shall next proceed to narrate how the full personality including curative power, descended from the *Guru* to Baba.

Baba's being favoured by the Master evoked considerable jealousy amongst the *Guru's* retainers and some of them resolved to kill young Baba by hurling brickbats at him. During a *chaturmasya*, between August to November, Gopal Rao was in the garden and young Baba was attending upon him. The villains hurled bricks at Baba. One of the bricks came very near Baba's head, but the *Guru* saw it, and by his order it stood still in mid air unable to proceed further or hit Baba. Another man threw a second brick to hurt Baba. But Gopal Rao got up and got the brick on his head. This led to profuse bleeding. Baba was moved to tears, and he begged his Master to send him away as the Master was getting harmed from his unfortunate company. But the Master declined to send him

away. As for the injury, the Master bandaged it with a shred torn from his own cloth, and then suddenly said, "I see that the time has come for me to part with you. To-morrow at 4 p.m. I shall leave this body, not as a result of this injury, but by my own *yoga* power of *Swechcha Marana*²⁹. Therefore, I shall now vest my full spiritual personality in you. For that purpose, fetch milk from yonder black cow". Young Baba went to Hulla the *lambadi* in charge of the cow, who pointed out that the cow was barren, had not calved, and could not, therefore, yield milk. All the same he came with the cow to the chieftain Gopal Rao who just touched it from horns to tail and told the *lambadi*, 'Now pull at the teats.' The *lambadis* pull drew out plenty of milk and this milk was given to Baba with Gopal Rao's blessings that the full power and grace of the *Guru* should pass on to young Baba. This was the *Diksha*, the investiture of the *Guru's* personality, which young, Baba underwent. So far as mystic powers were concerned, immediately an opportunity arose for proving the transfer of power *Saktinipata*. The villain whose brickbat had hit Gopal Rao, the Chieftain, fell down dead, the moment Gopal Rao was hit. His companions were horrified, and they came with repentance to Gopal Rao's feet and prayed for pardon not only for themselves but also for their dead companion whom they requested Gopal Rao to revive. The Chieftain pointed out that the power of revival³⁰ now rested in the young man, and that they should appeal to him. They accordingly appealed, and Baba took some of the dust of his *Guru's* feet and placed it on the corpse. The dead man arose at once.

The *Guru's* declaration that he would pass away the next day from this life into the beyond, was fulfilled. After making the fullest preparations for settling all his temporal affairs, Gopal Rao with his full consciousness sat up in the midst of a religious group carrying on *puja*, *bhajan* and *nama smaran*, in the presence of his *Ishta Devata* Sri Venkatesa and at the solemn hour he had himself fixed for departure, his soul left in perfect peace and happiness like Parikshit in Srimad Bhagavata. Before leaving the body, the Master waved his hand westward to the young boy, and bade him leave Selu and proceed westward to his new abode. Shirdi lies on the banks of the Godavari due west of Selu, and Baba by slow

degrees moved on from place to place and arrived at Shirdi and after sometime made it his permanent residence.

Three

Babas Earlier Years at Shirdi

Baba's earliest years at Shirdi were passed in complete obscurity³¹. He was a poor *fakir*, whose name itself was not known, Sai Baba being merely a term of respect applied to wandering hermits of the Muslim faith. Very few incidents, therefore, of this period of his life are known. But such as are known are all significant as proving that Baba was a real *fakir* of sterling merit. Baba himself has observed³² that *fakirs* also are now seldom dispassionate, that is possessed of *vairagya*, and it is hard to find a *good fakir*. Baba had no home. *Fakirs* have none. Hermits are, therefore, to reside either at a tree-foot or *chavadi* or temple or other public places. When he came into Shirdi, Baba visited Khandoba temple at the outskirts of the village, and noting how solitary and calm a place it was, exclaimed, 'What a nice place this, for ascetics like me to live in.' Mahlsapathy, the man then in charge objected to this observation and said that no Muhammadan would be allowed to put his foot into the Khandoba temple. He was evidently thinking that Baba was a Muslim and that he would break the images and defile the temple. But Baba was just the opposite.

He had the same regard for temples and mosques, always wanted people to carry on their religious faith in their accustomed ways, and would never hurt the religious susceptibilities of any person. Baba, noting Mahlsapathy's attitude, left the place, and went to the *gode neem* tree which he used as his halting place off and on. He went about the village and the surrounding lands and had no particular arrangements for food. Luckily the village head, Ganapat Rao Patil Kothe and his wife Bayaji Bai, were greatly attracted by Baba's personality, and from the very beginning of his stay there, they undertook to feed him - even when he was running about. Gradually he gave up roaming and then went about the streets, halted at four or five places and from there collected whatever food was brought to him. For his stay and sleep, the dilapidated mosque of the village was

the only place, and it soon became his residence. He was never for wholly deserting society and living in mountain caves and deserts.

In his earliest days, even up to 1890, Baba had a youthful love of art and music, and at night he often went to the Takia, the resting place for visiting Muslims. There he would, with his very sweet and appealing voice, sing songs mostly of Kabir or songs in Persian or Arabic, which the local people could not understand. He tied tinklets to his ankles³³ and danced about in joy while he was singing his songs with rapt devotion. Baba's attachment was to *Allah*, or *Hari*, that is to a Personal God. But the impersonal *Nirakara* whom the mystics including Kabir sang of in their songs, had also seized his heart. As he mentioned several times³⁴ long years later, *Sakara* must necessarily have a strong appeal to youth as it has to the mass of mankind and he never lost sight of the *Sakara* or Personal God in his worship and songs. General speaking his worship was mostly mental³⁵ and he went through no external forms. He seldom performed the five *Namazes*, never bending on the knees and rising, as most Muslims do. He was an adept in concentration and he had reached the perfection of *Manolaya* on the *Atman*, the merger of the self in the Self. That is why he could say as he did. *Maim Allah Hum*. I am God. His worship never took him away from his social contacts with his neighbours, in relation to whom the key-note of all his thought and activity was service, absolutely selfless service.

At times when he was not absorbed in contemplation, he went about meeting people and noting their ailments. He picked up herbs or got cheap drugs from shops and with their use cured the villagers of their bodily illness. His knowledge of medicine and surgery appears to have been extraordinary for he cured not merely snake bite but also leprosy with snake venom and rotting eyes with *Bibba*, that is, washerman's marking nut³⁶ as an antiseptic alkali. He pulled out the rotting eye balls of some patient, washed them, applied *Bibba* as a caustic and replaced the eye balls and the disease was cured. He never accepted any payment for his medical or other services. He also rendered other kinds of services. He ploughed up the village common land, the very land on which his *Samadhi Mandir* now stands, and raised a flower garden thereon. He

watered the plants, carrying pots full of water on his own shoulders. He distributed the flowers and leaves freely to various Hindu temples and to Muslim holy places and never made any invidious distinction between Hindu and Muslim places of worship. From his supreme realised state, differences of caste, creed, position and learning, were nonexistent or meaningless. All persons were children of a common father or mother, and he felt a motherly or fatherly interest in all of them and helped them. So, he expected and accepted no recompense.

This is all the history of the early years of Baba. There might have been an incident or two remembered by some of the villagers about his early years, but they do not deserve mention in a serious biography. We shall proceed to mention how this obscure *fakir* grew into Sainath Maharaj, a well recognised *Samartha Sadguru*, possessed of the most extraordinary superhuman powers with a very large following of people of all classes from the highest to the lowest and from all places, from Bombay to Hyderabad, from Konkan to Ahmedabad, and finally from all over India, and how the worship itself was developing its forms and accessories as also its application to the highest purposes of individuals and the Indian Nation and how it promises to help humanity.

When he was an unknown *fakir* he was practically ignored and treated by most of the villagers as of no account. Suddenly one day an incident occurred which brought a thorough change in the situation. He always had his Mosque, wherein he lived, lit up with three or four -earthen lamps, according to the view common to both Hindus and Muslims that places of worship should be lit up at night. So, he went round begging for oil from the *Vanis* or, oil mongers. There were only two such shops and they supplied him with oil, gratis. The oil pressman also supplied him with oil. One day it struck these people that either they should make Baba realise their importance or should have some fun at his expense and they told him mockingly that they had no oil. Baba had to return to his mosque with his oil tin pot empty. It was already dusk. The *vanis* and *ganamdar* came behind him to see what he was going to do in the darkness and thereby to have some fun. Baba took some water from the water jar³⁷ and shaking up the little bit of oil sticking to the tin, drank it up. Then he too pure,

aqua from the water pot and filled his four earthen lamps with it. He placed in each of them a cotton wick and struck up a match and lighted it. The spectators thought at first that cotton soaked in water could not possibly be lit up. But to their great surprise, the lamps were lit up and went on burning the whole night³⁸ After a little time, consternation seized the guilty *vanis* and *ganamdar*, and being terribly afraid that Baba, having shown himself to be a man of mystic power, might curse them just as Viswamitra cursed Rambha and Konkanava killed a crane with a glance, fell at his feet and prayed that he should not curse them. Baba was the exact opposite of what they thought. He was not a magician resenting contempt and anxious to seize an advantage. On the³⁹ other hand, Baba was more like the *Bhikshu* Monk in *Bhikshugita*⁴⁰ and had a true motherly heart, and noted that these men now repenting were in the proper mood to receive instruction to alter their conduct, and he gave them wholesome advice which was what they needed most. First he asked them, 'You really had oil with you when you said you had none, eh?' They admitted that they had uttered falsehood. Then Baba told them never to utter falsehood. Falsehood displeases the God of truth. There was, therefore, no necessity for Baba to curse them. Next he pointed out to them how unsocial and wicked their conduct was. The lights were needed for the use of all who visited the mosque and the public would be inconvenienced if there were no lights. He asked them if they had not come to the Mosque to enjoy the pain which they expected him to endure while remaining in darkness. They admitted the fact. He then pointed out that persons who took delight in others' miseries instead of sympathising with them would be punished by God. God is mother to all and loves all equally. If you hurt a child and tell the mother that you have hurt the child, will the mother be pleased? Thus they had displeased God by coming to rejoice in his miserable plight or supposed miserable plight in the absence of lamp oil. He asked them never again to take pleasure in other's distress, or in the words of W.W. Wordsworth "never to blend our pleasure or our pride with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels". They promised. Thus, after giving them excellent pieces of advice, so badly needed by

them and by many people now, he dismissed them from his presence. The effect of this incident was marvellous.

The contemptible *pagal fakir*, as they called him, was turned overnight into the hero or the weird magician or the holy *Sadhu* of the place. Before this, Mahlsapathy and his two friends Tukaram Darji and Appa Bhil had been perhaps the only persons to worship him. Now other people also began to flock to his feet and worship him as a Divine Saint or God, much against his will, with waving of lamps, throwing of flowers and coloured rice over him and offers of fruit and sandal. However strenuously Baba tried to prevent his being worshipped as God or a Godman in the Mosque, he could not stem the tide of popular frenzy. They presently declared he was their God or Godman sent to bless them. It was thus, the *pagal fakir* became the God or Godman of Shirdi.

Such a change could not continue for long without obstruction. Worship of anything except the Impersonal God in a Mosque is forbidden by the Koran, and the Muslims, though few and poor at Shirdi, raised their protest against such worship. He himself might have felt at first the incongruity of his being worshipped at all and next the worship being carried on in a Mosque by the mass of Hindus to the accompaniment of all that Hindu worship implies, that is, the din, the bustle, the noise, the music, and the sacred rituals all of which would be totally unwarranted in a Mosque. Even his being debauched with sandal paste would strike any Muslim as extremely unorthodox and reprehensible, Abdul Rangari of Thana when visiting Baba noted that sandal paste was being applied by the Hindus to his forehead, and he told Baba, 'What is this? The Hindus are applying sandal paste to your forehead. This is not the custom among the Muslims.' Baba had to appease him by pointing out that he had to bend to circumstances. Baba's words were *Jaisa Desh Aiyasa Vesh*. This means, 'While in Rome do as the Romans do'. Baba also told Rangari that he himself was a devotee of Allah. But if the Hindus wished to please themselves by worshipping him, why not allow them to do so? To other similar objectors Baba pointed out that if Hindus worshipped a Muslim in a Mosque⁴¹ then there was no loss to Islam but only loss to Hinduism. That seemed a very plausible argument and

contented many. But some were still dissatisfied with the *puja* that was being done to him, and some of the more vigorous opponents of his *puja* went to consult the Sangamnare Kazi for finding a remedy. That Kazi found that the only chance of obstructing this heterodox *haram puja* was by threat of force. The Hindus were no doubt the majority in the village, but the actual worshippers were only a handful, and a few muscular Muslims, standing at the entrance to the Mosque, and threatening force could stop this *haram*. Accordingly a very stout, muscular, powerful and well-built Muslim by name Tambuli and four or five others went up to the entrance to the Mosque and stood there with clubs one morning. The chief worshipper Mahlsapathy was a very slim, meek, and apparently cowardly sort of person, and they hoped to stop his *puja* by their threats. Tambuli went and explained to Mahlsapathy the exact position, namely, that he ran the risk of being clubbed by the Muslims if he entered the Mosque and applied sandal paste to Baba. Mahlsapathy in his great shock and grief prayed to Khandoba and hit upon an alternative. He went upto the compoundwall of the Mosque and without entering into the Mosque, used all the *puja* articles that he had brought on a plate, for worshipping a part of the compound wall itself into which by *Avahana* he invoked Baba. After such invocation or *Avahana*, he went on applying water, flowers and scents to the wall. Baba noted this and asked him what he was doing, Mahlsapathy explained that the Muslims there threatened to beat any one who would enter into the Mosque and worship Baba with sandal paste. Then Baba judged the situation very correctly and said, 'Come in. Go on doing your *puja*. Apply your sandal paste here, there and anywhere. Let me see who will beat you'. So saying he dashed his *satka*, a short club, which he had in his hand on the ground with such a thunderous sound that the few Muslims at the entrance trembled. They found that they would have to reckon with Baba himself if they wished to pursue their plan, and Baba, individually and physically, would be more than a match for them. Besides, Baba was a weird personality who could turn water in oil, and they had therefore still greater fear in trying to oppose Baba. So they considered discretion the better part of valour and retreated quietly. Mahlsapathy entered and carried on the worship.

Mahlsapathy feared that they might attack him on his way back home, and he told Baba of his fears. Baba then gave him the assurance that not merely these, but any others who would come to attack him not merely at that time but at any other time in any other place, and not merely in *this janma*, but in *future janmas* also, could do him no harm and Baba would see to it. Thus assured Mahlsapathy who finished *his puja* and was not molested. Thus all joined in Baba's worship.

Thus the first impediment was removed. The second impediment is more interesting. Baba had both Hindu and Muslim features in his body and in his actions and practice, and, his mission in life was to unify Hindus and Muslims into one compact mass with common religious, spiritual and worldly interests. As he had a Hindu *Guru*, namely, Gopal Rao Deshmukh alias Venkatesa or Venkusa, he was considered fitted to guide his Hindu followers. In order to guide his Muslim followers, initiation into Islamic scripture by a Maulana was essential according to public opinion. So, his destiny had to be fulfilled by his getting a second *Guru*, a Muslim. Jawar Ali Maulana was a distinguished Maulana of the last century, residing for some time at Rahata. He had extraordinary ability and learning, but had disagreed with his Rahata followers. He came to Shirdi and noted that Baba had a large Hindu following who worshipped him at the Mosque. He called upon Baba to come out of the Mosque and asked him whether he knew the Koran and the Shariat. Baba had learnt neither. So Jawar Ali Maulana ordered him to accompany him to Rahata and there Baba was living with this *Guru* for about two months. The *Guru* initiated him into the mysteries of Islamic spiritual literature. Baba did humble *seva* to this *Guru*, carrying water pots, fetching faggots, lighting up fire, doing hard physical work which others would complain of. But in the case of Baba, he accepted his position as the *sisya* of Jawar Ali with perfect sincerity and underwent with sweet complacency⁴² all the ordeal and the course of training given to him. The villagers of Shirdi headed by Mahlsapathy who were very anxious to have Baba back again permanently settled at Shirdi requested the Maulana to allow them to take Sai Baba with them. This was agreed to by the Maulana on the condition that with Baba he also should be taken to Shirdi, and that both he and Baba should be fed and

supported by the villagers of Shirdi. So both came and lived at the Shirdi Mosque. Some time later, Jawar Ali was drawn purposely into a dispute with Devadas, a noted Hindu saint living in a *chavadi* at Shirdi, and Devadas's questions cornered **Jawar** Ali. The latter had to make so many admissions that the surrounding spectators were moved to laughter. Jawar Ali resenting this humiliation left Shirdi and did not return there for long years to come. Baba's worship at the Shirdi Mosque went on and gathered strength. What appeared as the second impediment tended only to increase the devotees' attachment through *Viraha* and admiration and helped Baba's mission. It must be noted here that the worship mentioned here is individual worship, each one going to Baba and placing flowers on his feet and treating him as God, *Avatar* or *Guru*. Baba followed the rule for *Jnanis* "Avoid honours as poison. Ever welcome indignity, as nectar". *Manu smriti*⁴³

Four Worship

Worship is discussed and its need or validity is questioned by several, and hence a few words about worship in general and Sai worship in particular are called for at this stage.

Worship is not usually the result of logical discussion and analysis, but is at the initial stage usually the result of an intuitive impulse arising out of a fear, a need, or other impulse. Some terrible power confronts us. Then we bow down in fear. Some terrible calamity overwhelms us. Then we yearn and look out for some help from some powerful personage that can overcome the calamity. Some terrible and oppressive need arises, such as ravenous hunger or serious illness or discomfort. Then again we look to a higher power for relief. It is an intuitive impulse in all these cases that leads man to worship, which is an emotional act. Later, comes the reflective stage and religious conduct is based on reason. Then, the question arises 'Why does man worship a higher power?' The obvious answer is, it is the feeling that a higher Power can give and will be induced to give man what he needs and save him from trouble. This is true whether the Power is an invisible God or a visible man or image. There must be in the first

place power and willingness to use the power in the object worshipped, and as a counterpart, there must be a need, a fear, or other stimulus operating upon the worshipper to make him believe in the power and willingness of that power to render help. The stimuli are of various sorts, for example, *Arti* or trouble, need for some objects and a desire to understand this mysterious and puzzling universe and one's relations to it. Of these, the *Arti* is the commonest stimulus. It is the sufferer, *Arta*, who turns to God or to a saint or to a spirit—not the contented and happy man spending his time quite easily and with joy. If, in the last case, a man is given to philosophising or investigating on a basis of curiosity to understand himself and things about him such a person is named *Jijnasu* - he may turn to God and pray for divine aid to understand. But such people are few. The question is further raised whether any object at all should be worshipped and mostly this question is raised by persons who have neither any trouble nor need nor other stimulus mentioned above nor any spirit of solemn enquiry nor any higher impulse or sensitivity. It is only in cases of persons with hard and unattached hearts that a question as to the justification for worship and next the justification for choosing the particular object of worship is raised. This class of questioners may for the present be omitted, and our discussion here may be confined to those who have some spirit of worship in them and who raise the question about what objects ought to be worshipped. Amongst the Hindus there is a wide range of worship. The all pervading nature of God enables the ardent Hindu mystic to perceive him in any and every object and to worship him in that object. Local heroes and saints with superhuman powers and *Daivi sampath* or *Vibhuti-that*. is, divine qualities in abundance naturally get worshipped in many places. According to the doctrine of *Bhakti*, it is the spirit and faith with which an object is worshipped that matter, not the object itself and hence the objects without *Vibhuti* also can be and are worshipped. According to higher systems of thought, every object in the Universe is a manifestation of God, and therefore might be or ought to be worshipped.

The Upanishads refer to both sets of cases, and the Gita, which is the gift of the Upanishads, justifies both sets. In Chapter VII of the Gita, Lord Krishna

says that one does not know and realise God unless one knows and realises Him in everything, in the Universe, that is,

The *Para prakriti* which is manifest as the Universe and which includes the five elements *Pancha bhutas*, namely Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether and *Manas, Buddhi and Ahamkar* as well as.

The *Aparaprakriti* or *Mulaprakriti*, the substratum of all. The *Para* and *Apara* put together constitute God. One ought to worship God in all aspects⁴⁴, following which all objects in the Universe are viewed as God. There is in the Upanishads no shying at worship of any objects. Following nature, the Upanishads recommend the worship of the mother, the father, the teacher and the guest. *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava*. Then come *Acharya Devo Bhava and Atithi Devo Bhava*. About *Acharya Devo Bhava* we shall have to consider in great detail many a question, and, therefore, a special chapter must be devoted to it. At present we shall only note that the father, the mother and the teacher naturally evoke great respect, and a child has to depend upon them and is at their mercy. Therefore, it naturally looks with feelings of adoration to all these just as Baba looked at his foster father, the *Fakir* as God and *Guru*. The Upanishads recognise the fact that human nature turns to see and feel God. God is the name for the Father of All; who looks after all his children through the mother and father, its procreators; and to the *Acharya Deva* who develops its mental body in understanding and wisdom. Even ordinary *Gurus* and parents without special powers are worshipped. But if any particular *Guru* happens to be possessed of noble virtues or of *siddhis*, superhuman or extraordinary powers, then he is worshipped more naturally and readily not only by the mass but by the intelligentia and the critics.

In the case of Sai Baba, his perfect purity, asceticism, general benevolence, harmlessness, non attachment, and other virtues evoked the respect of the saints, Devadas, Janakidas, Gangagir, Anandanath and Bidkar, that met him, and also of serious and noble minded men like Mahlsapathy and his friends Appa Bhil and Tukaram Darji. His nature is well described as unattached and happily roaming about fearlessly and as a help to those in

suffering and misery⁴⁵. So Mahlsapathy and his friends regarded Baba as a saint, an *Acharya* or *Guru Deva*, long before he exhibited any *siddhi* power. However, so far as the general mass was concerned, it was the fact that he turned water into oil that provoked worship. And the worship took the usual form of offering flowers, fruits and scents. Baba protested and tried to dissuade these worshippers. He asked them to go to their customary objects of worship such as the images they had in their temples and homes. But they would not listen. They felt that he was a saint, a *samartha* saint. The learned could quote Tukaram's *Sant toch dev. Dev loch sant* that is, Saints are God. God is saints. The Villages told him "You are a *Bolte Chalte Dev*", that is, a talking and walking God. The persistence of the mass idea that his *siddhis* were evidence of divine power, and therefore marked him out as a *Guru Deva* for worship, could not be combated or resisted. Sri Upasani Baba put it in these words,

Aneka Asruta Atarkya Leelavitasaih
 Samavishkrita Isana BhasvatPrabhavam
 Ahambhava Hinam,Prasanna Atmabhavam
 Namami Iswaram Sadgurum Sainatharri*.

this means, I bow to Sainath, the *Sadguru*, who reveals his divine nature through numerous unheard of and inscrutable lilas, who is free from egotism and has attained Self-Realisation". So, alike in the case of the highly learned *pandit*, Sri Upasani Baba, as in the case of the uneducated rustics, the ladies of Shirdi, the *chamatkars* or *lilas* are the first prompters to worship Sai as a manifestation of divinity. That is how worship begins⁴⁷ and grows. Gradually as we shall fully explain later it leads the worshipper higher and higher so that he understands his own self and the Supreme self more and more until the *Jiva* is absorbed in the *Paramatma*. There is a considerable distance of time, stages, and a vast amount of effort between the beginning of worship and the highest achievement, and Baba worship had and has all stages in it, and all sorts of worshippers. Baba who first objected to his worshsip, did by his own *Antarjnana* or prophetic vision foreseeing what was to follow, namely, not only individual benefits to millions but also national benefit and ultimately benefit to

the cause of religion itself for the sake of humanity. That is why he gradually promoted and then developed his worship, in spite of numerous obstacles. The obstacles arose from all sides—the Hindus and the Muslims. Naturally Muslims objected to the worship by Hindus of a human figure like Sai Baba within the Mosque with the application of sandal paste to his forehead and to the accompaniment of much din and bustle through music and in other ways. From mere protest the obstacles mounted higher as we already noted to a threat of force for stopping worship. But Baba's wonderful power and foresight overcame all these obstacles. Individual worship of Baba attracted larger and larger numbers from the immediate neighbourhood and from distant places and this developed into congregational worship, and that again from simple congregational worship to the highly complicated forms which are seen in famous places of worship like Pandharpur. All the *shodasca upacharas* and the *Raja upacharas* were brought in by the increasing volume of *bhaktas* and tended to the wider and deeper expansion of Sai worship. Gradually everything that goes on in sacred places of worship like Pandarpur and Tirupati were developed for Baba worship at Shirdi including ritual, hymnology, music, processions, cars, palanquin horse and *pujaris*. We shall now proceed to set out in full this later development of Baba worship which began about or after 1908. But we shall first notice the important part that obstacles play in the march of this as of other great movements.

Obstacles to worship arose from various viewpoints and served several purposes—one of which was to gain time to build up sufficient strength to capture all for the mission of Baba. The first obstacle might be from the modesty of Baba himself as a *fakir* who welcomed poverty and obscurity in a nook or corner of Kopergaon which means a corner *taluk* of the Ahmednagar District. Baba's whole heart was engrossed in contemplation of his *Guru* whom he always called *Fakir*⁴⁹, and in the bliss attending that contemplation, thoughts of food and rest did seldom trouble him.

Prana Vrittyaiva Santushyet'

Munir Naivendriya Priyaih

Jnanam Yatha Na Nascyeta
Navakiryeta Vangmanah II⁴⁹

that is, The sage should be contented to get just what would keep body and soul together and see that his powers of knowing, speech and wisdom may not perish.

Kvachitchannah Kvachit Spashtah
UpasyahScreya Ichchatam
Bhungle Sarvatra Datnmam
Dahan Praguttara Ascubham // ^{so}

that is, The *Muni*, sometimes concealing his nature and attainments and sometimes revealing them is approached and worshipped by those desirous of achieving their highest well being and eats everywhere the food given by donors and thereby burns up their past evil *Karma* and subsequent evil *Karma* also.

Grasam Sumrushtam Virasam
Mahanlam Stokam,
Eva Va Yadruhchayaiva
Apatitam Graset Ajagaro Akriyah II

this means, Whether food be tasty or tasteless, plenty, or scanty, the sage, following the python's example should just take what comes of itself without any exertion on his pan.

Samruddha Kama Hino Va
Narayana Paro Munih
Na Utsarpeta Na Scushyeta
Saridbhih Iva Sagarah IP-

this means, Whether he has plenty of comforts or none, as his heart is set on *Narayana* alone, he neither overflows nor shrinks, just as the ocean does not overflow when the rivers throw their floods into it, nor shrink when the rivers do not.

These verses aptly describe Sai Baba's condition and mentality. People could therefore see in him a *Parama Bhagavata*. Thus the serious minded and noble set was easily drawn to worship him despite obstacles.

At first his nomadic habits of running hither and thither as fancy drew him showed that comfort of the body and care for the good opinion of the society in which he moved did not bulk largely in his view. The Bhagavata says,

*Atmaramo Anaya Vriya Vicharet Jadavat Mutnih*⁵³

that is, Immersed in God or himself, the sage rambles like an idiot.

Bayyaji Bai had to trace him amongst the jungles or treefoots that he frequented, to give him his meal. As for fame, he knew full well that many people thought him to be mad or foolish and insulted him calling him *Pagal* or treated him as a totally negligible factor. But he had no vanity or *amor propre* to be wounded by such lack of regard. He was like the *Bhikshu* in the *Bhikshu Gita*⁵⁴, who was subjected to indignities or insults and bore up with all silently as part of his *Karma*.

Evam Sa Bhowtikam Duhkam

Daivikam Daihikam Cha Yat

Bhoktavyam Atmano Dishtam

Praptam Praptam Abudtiyala Il

that is, Whether due to his body or animals or gods, the *Tapatraya*, all that befell him, he deemed to be his *Karma* and bore them unruffled.

On the other hand when people began to show him great regard and wanted to worship him, he wished to avoid it in the interests of his own peaceful and quiet life. His happiness was complete in itself and did not require offerings of *naivedyas*, of praise, of camphor lights, and the assembling of crowds round him. Thus the first obstacle was from Baba himself. But Baba was divinely gifted and had important objects to achieve in his life which formed his mission. When in 1886, exercising his wonderful power or *Siddhi of Swechcha Marana* dying at will he left the body and returned to it after three days, he evidently confirmed the idea that there was a mission for him to fulfil to benefit thousands, if not tens of thousands of people, connected with him, directly or remotely, through *rinanubandha* and the very society or population of India amongst whom he was born and was living. He felt probably that he could do something for the uplift of humanity also. These put together may constitute his mission and evidently it is for the fulfillment of that mission, which he might be slowly realising

and working out as we shall explain later on, that he returned to his body in 1886, But even before 1886 he would surely have perceived that his mission in some form existed for him. So, he might have gradually endured, encouraged and fully developed the worship offered to him in the above view, that is, to carry out his mission. But we must not anticipate. A separate Chapter must be devoted to the subject of Baba's Mission.

Five

Success Begets Success

The benefits attending such worship were quickly seen and hence numbers from outside the village, that is, from the immediate neighbourhood were drawn to the worship. This spread gradually from place to place and people from even remote parts were attracted to the worship. As for the details of worship, it is not necessary to mention how Baba objected to sandal paste being applied to his forehead though no objection was raised to its application to his feet by any one except Mahlsapathy and how ultimately he acquiesced in every one applying sandal paste to his forehead also⁵⁵. Individual worship itself was first not systematic nor organised. But K.G. Bishma, a good *Kirtankar* and a great adherent of Vittal worship at Pandharpur, drew up the ritual for Sai Baba worship on practically the same lines as the Pandharpur worship, and he brought a set of *artis* that is ritualistic; verses for use by individuals at Shirdi, and these were sent up by Baba to Nana Saheb Chandorkar at Jamnere and were approved of by him. They were largely in use and tended to develop the worship of Baba on the customary lines of worship in well known temples, The next step was from individual worship to congregational worship. It was in 1908 that the change was started. Congregational worship implied that there would be some one to officiate as the *pujari* and that he would be available at various periods of worship namely Matins, vespers, night *artis* and noon *artis*. For this purpose, Hari Vinayak Sathe, a Settlement Officer, who in 1905 was blessed by Baba with the promise of a son in case he married, and who got married in consequence, sent up one Meghashyam called Megha to Shirdi so that he might officiate as the *pujari* and carry on congregational worship. But that man was an extremely dull

and rustic Brahmin having hardly any learning either in Hindu sacred literature or in any other literature. He heard that Sai Baba was a Muslim, and he requested Mr. Sathe not to send him up to worship a Mohammadan. He was a Siva worshipper, a staunch Hindu, and might worship Datta but not a Muslim. Sathe told him that Baba was God, and, therefore, he might worship him. So under pressure from Sathe, the man arrived at Shirdi and was taken by Shama to Baba. Baba, reading his mentality completely, shouted against him at his first approach and said, Why does that fool of a Saheb send this idiot to me? So saying he drove Megha away, because he would consider it demeaning to worship Baba. Megha being a Siva worshipper was attracted to *Triambak* a sacred place for Siva, 18 miles away from Nasik, and tried to spend his time there. But there he fell ill, and remembered his refusal to worship Baba. He thought that might be the reason why he had his illness. Having learnt about Baba's greatness, he returned to Baba, this time more humble. By Baba's grace he regained his health and started early in 1909 the congregational worship. He was fully convinced that Baba was Siva, the same as the Siva at *Triambak*. He was determined to worship him with Ganga, that is, Godavari water and *bilva* leaves. So, he usually went out five miles to fetch Godavari water for the daily worship, and three or four miles to fetch *bel* leaves which are said to be specially appropriate for Siva worship, *Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam* that is one *bel* leaf even is sufficient offering to Siva. When even the very orthodox Megha thus became an ardent devotee of Baba, others followed suit and sooner or later gave up their prejudices against Baba and joined in the congregational worship. All this required time; and obstacles like Megha's sentiments, had to be overcome and made stepping stones for further progress.

To make the congregational worship more advanced and attractive, there was an enthusiastic set gathering at Shirdi. One Ramakrishna Ayi, a young widow of the family name of Sahasrabuddhe, came and established herself as a devotee of Baba, and being highly accomplished, was intent upon using all her gifts and cleverness for developing Sai Baba's worship. She drew a large number of people to herself and made them more enthusiastic in the cause of Sai

worship. She made them carry out her plan of fitting out Baba and his *chavadi* in exactly the same way as these would be fitted out if Baba was a real *Maharaja* and a real God's image. The 16 *shodascaupacharas* common to all Hindu worship and the *Raja Upachars* add pomp to worship in temples and *mutts* *Raja Upacharas* means treating the object of worship as a *Maharaja*. They add to the impressiveness of the ceremony and the religious effect on the mind of those who attend that worship. They also increase the extent of worshippers. Thus, Ramakrishna Ayi introduced silver whisks, silver maces, silver umbrellas, silver candelabras, moons, and artificial gardens to deck the *chavadi* where Baba was worshipped on alternate nights. A car, a palanquin with silver appurtenances, a horse, and other regal paraphernalia were furnished on her insistence and the insistence of other devotees to make Baba worship run exactly like *Vittal* worship or the worship of great *Acharyas* in their *mutts*. This, by itself, would be impressive. But Baba fell into the humour of the devotees. They wanted to make him and called him always a *Maharaja*, and he was determined that he should be a *Maharaja* to satisfy the devotees. What are specially wanted in a *Maharaja's durbar* were valuable presents in cash and kind and to various people visiting the *durbar*, the hope of obtaining those presents. *Pandits*, acrobats, *nautch* girls, wrestlers, *kirtankars* and musicians, who flock to regal *darbars* visited Shirdi Sai *Maharaja's durbar* also. Sai Baba, therefore, arranged for funds to pay them all. Moreover, there were those depending upon his favour to get wealth which, on the principle of *rinanubandha*, he wished to shower upon them, such as Tatya Patel, Lakshmi Bai, Bade Baba and Ramachandra Patel. So Baba's *durbar* had need to get an income and Baba began from 1908 to ask for *dakshinas*. Formerly, he would refuse offer of rupees to him saying that he had no need for them⁵⁶. But from the time that this new tide began, he began to ask his visitors for payments of large sums. Some he would ask for Rs.5, some for Rs.25, and some others for Rs.250. Almost every one that he asked would pay. Baba knew the minds and state of the Purse of all the persons and could get exactly what he wanted, and he would not ask for any funds except where he was going to recompense or where the visitor had already been blessed by *Dana* or *Vittal* and

was bound to pay⁵⁷ whom or those God pointed out. Many sent "vowed Sums" of their own accord. For example one paid Rs.6,000. Therefore, Baba easily succeeded in getting as *dakshinas* in the course of each day varying sums that totalled up in the evening sometimes to Rs.300 and sometimes to thousands. The total income came up to a Provincial Governor's income on which the authorities tried to levy Income-tax. But Baba himself retained, nothing at all, as every evening he would dispose of the day's accumulations. But the Income-tax authorities were able to levy tax upon the regular recipients of Baba's daily doles such as Bade Baba and Tatya Patil. Thus Baba had a steady and large income from which he was making very liberal presents to *Ramadasis*, other *dasis*, acrobats, *pandits*, and various people who came to him from distant places, for example Madras and Punjab like Addullah Jan who hoped Baba would provide funds for *Haj*. In addition to the large crowd of persons who offered *naivedyas* of eatables to Baba, it was possible for 200 beggars to be fed everyday by Baba's bounty and doles. Thus the appearance of a very prosperous *darbar* was presented at Shirdi from 1909 up to 1918. All this pomp Baba despised. Profusion of wealth also could never captivate him but he could use it without, being tainted⁵⁸. It served a purpose, namely, the widening of Baba worship, which had a great purpose behind it. That is why Baba allowed all this to develop his worship.

As Baba's having wealth and a royal *darbar* was misunderstood by some, we are obliged to stress again the following facts that prove that Baba was a *Janaka Maharaja* and continued to be a Divine *Samartha Sadguru* carrying on the noble work referred to already.

Baba had no attachment and so could handle wealth and make it run into and out of his hands without danger of being tainted. He was a perfectly realised soul in the perfect *laya* stage as disclosed by his words *Main Allahum* that is *Aham Brahmasmi*. For such a person, Srimad Bhagavata says, danger of attachment does not arise. Baba told the *sadhu Devadas*⁵⁹ that *fakirs* and hermits must avoid the *upadhis*, namely, *Moha* and pomp. But in Baba's case, at the latter end of his life, pomp was thrust upon him and had a useful purpose to

serve. Till then Baba avoided pomp. He would not even sit on a chair or lie on a cot, but sat and slept upon a sack cloth or gunny mattress placed on the floor. He would not put on his head the crown or regal dress when the devotees wanting him to look like a *Maharaja*, brought these for him. Nor would he accept or allow other royal insignia upon his person. When a silver-plated palanquin was brought to him with its small silver horses as appurtenances, he refused to receive it, and said that he did not want to sit in it. The devotees then said that he need not sit in it, but that his picture would be placed in it, and that it will be used for the procession. Even then he would not allow the palanquin into the *Dwarakamayee*, and so they had to leave . the palanquin in the open yard in front of his Mosque. At night some of the silver horses were stolen. The devotees noting it were very sad, and came to complain of it to Baba. But Baba asked them, "I say, why was not the whole palanquin stolen?" That is, to Baba it was a matter of utter indifference whether palanquins or silver articles or any other things were provided or not provided, were stolen or remained safe. He lived as a true *sanyasi* up to the end of his life on *Bhiksha* food. Of course, it is well known that when people go out for begging bread, all sorts of things, insipid, or even partly rotten, are given as *Bhiksha* especially to beggars. In the case of Baba, who enjoyed more respect than beggars, rotten things would not be showered on him, but many people, who were content to eat rather ill cooked and tasteless or insipid food, would bestow part of their stuff upon Baba also.

Yad annah purush bhavati,
tadannah tasya devatah

that is, what we eat, we give to God. That is why the hermit is directed in Uddhava Gita⁶

Stokam Stokam Graset Grasam
Deho Varteta Yavata
Grihan ahimsan Atishtet
Vrittim Madhukarim Munih

this means, the sage should observe the *Madhukari* system in begging for food. He must take little doles from several houses, without taxing them too much. He must take only what is absolutely needed to keep body and soul together.

Baba did not hate or fear poverty. But on the other hand he was content with it and esteemed it. He said '*Fakir Aval padsha*' that is, 'The *Fakir* is the real Emperor', because he can lead a life free from care and anxiety. So Baba had no possessions, and all these regal paraphernalia mentioned above were kept with Ayi, and on her death, were held by an association, and finally vested in the Sai Sansthan, formed by the order of the Ahmednagar District Court in the year 1922.

When Baba left the body, he had only Rs.16 in his hand and no other property. Hence the *Raja upacharas*, which would have puffed up or affected other persons, did not affect him. In refusing to own properties or have a palace, he set an excellent example. If all *sadhus* had followed his example, there would not be so much of scandal against *sadhus* and so much of wreck in *sadhus'* lives that we notice. Baba followed the direction of the *sastras* for hermits and *fakirs* that a hermit should not put by anything for the morrow. Srimad Bhagavata⁶¹ says,

Sayantanam Scwastanam Va
Na Sangrinhita Bhikshitam
Pani Patro Udharamatro
Makshika Iva Na Sangrahi II

This means, The sage should not store what he obtains by begging for the evening or keep it for the next day. His vessels for receiving alms must be either the hand or the stomach. He should not hoard things like the bee. The 12th verse adds, If he does, like the bee he will be killed. Spiritual persons who store, develop attachment or *Moha*, which means death of the soul. Baba had also no necessity for delicacies. He had thoroughly conquered his palate. Srimad Bhagavata⁶² says,

Jitam Sarvam Jite Rase

that is, When the palate is conquered, everything is controlled. Baba was a perfect *Jitendriya*. His *dhriti* or self control included conquest of the urges of hunger and sex as directed in Srimad Bhagavata⁶³,

Jihvopastha jayo Dhrutih

that is, *Dhruti* means perfect control over the palate and the sex urge.

Six

Further Results of Worship

So far we have been dealing mainly with the externals of worship and it is to be feared that some highly refined and sensitive souls might have been displeased thereby. These worthy persons wish to have the kernel, the very essence of the fruit of worship without having to deal with any shell or bark, skin or other outer coverings. It is true that mere formal performance of worship unaccompanied by the pure and fervent spirit counts for nothing and that the spirit is the essence. But so far we have had to deal with externals, as externals are indispensable to clothe, embody and convey the spirit from person to person, from place to place, from stage to stage and even from age to age just as husk and shell serve a similar purpose in Nature. It is the nectar we want, but the liquid nectar comes only in a cup, as its necessary vehicle, just as the grain we need comes and must come with chaff and cannot be grown without the husk. Sweetness is what we want. But except by getting sugar or other sweet article, sweetness is not got. This is so patent. Sugar stands for sweetness. So worship stands or should stand for the best form of worship, that worship which in every item is saturated by fervent admiration, reverence or love. It is on supposition that this is well understood, that worship has been and is referred to till now as a highly desirable object, as conferring on individuals, the country and humanity what is badly and urgently needed by them. But still to satisfy the demands of these specially sensitive readers referred to above, a few words on the nature and essence of the worship may be added here, to stress their importance.

Indian readers would appreciate worship better if we take them to the corresponding Sanskrit words and note what they connote. Those words are *puja* and *upasana*. These are well understood terms in constant use. We say a person

is doing *puja* when he offers flowers, water, food, scents and praise to a person or an image of a divine being. Yet all the while, that worshipper is not acting like a robot machine, but is simultaneously using speech and thought. He utters words, mostly *mantras* and *slokas* and his mind turns to their meanings for most of the time. Occasionally he may be merging himself in the object of worship mentally - attaining *Poorna laya*, or feeling perfect bliss and forgetting all ideas of his self being the actor. Most readers would have admired the simple hunter Kannappa's worship of a stone *linga* in *Peria Purana*. He just saw the *linga* on a hill covered by leaves and flowers, and water used by some adorer who had made formal worship of the stone. At once by some *purva Vasana*, some trace of memory from past births probably, *Bhakti* entered into his soul and he had a powerful urge to go to the *lingam* and worship it. He had no object to gain that is objects as expressed in the *sankalpa* or initial portion of every *puja* but simply felt the irresistible impulse to go to the image and to feel its beneficent presence. What was the worship he offered? The devotee, judges the worshiped, God only by standards and ideas applying to oneself. So besides leaves and flowers and *abhisheka* water brought in his mouth as he had no vessel, he offered roasted flesh to God as that was the food he liked and lived on.

Yadannah purusho bhavati,

Tadannah tasya devatah.

this means, Whatever is a man's food is also the food of his God. But however repulsive this flesh was to the orthodox *Saiva acharya* who was worshipping the image there, it was not repulsive to the deity that Kannappa worshipped in the *linga*. For the deity appreciated Kannappa's unmotivated but powerful love, and to prove the superiority of worship with such love to cold formal worship albeit with *Vedamantras* that deity Siva began to bleed in his eyes. Kannappa, who saw it, at once plucked out one of his eyes and placed it on the image in lieu of the injured and or bleeding eye. Then Siva made his second eye in the image bleed. Undaunted, Kannappa started to pluck out his second eye for replacing the second eye of the image, but in order to be sure of the place where the second eye of the image was, which, after plucking out his own second eye he would not

be able to see, Kannappa placed his foot with its *chappal* near the second eye. Then Siva appeared and stopped this sacrifice of the second eye. And the formal worshipper noticed how greatly God Siva esteemed the love freely flowing from Kannappa's heart and how much superior it was to his formal external worship with all *Vedic* rites, *mantras* and ceremonies. Sri Sankaracharya in his *Sivanandalahari* refers to this superiority in the oft quoted verse,

Marga avartita paduka Pascupateh angasya kurchayate,
 Gandushamfpi mshechanam purdy'voh divya abhishechayate,
 Kinchit bhakshita mamsa scesha kabalam navyo paharayate,
 Bhaktih kirn nakaroti aho vancharo bhakta avatamsayate.

which means God Siva felt the touch of the worn out *chappal* delightfully thrilling,

The water given for bath *abhisheka* carried by the hunter in his mouth mixed with his saliva was enjoyed as a divine ablution,

The flesh which was previously tested by tasting had been found good and offered by the hunter, was felt to be as good as newly cooked food,

Well, what cannot devotion achieve? A forest hunter was esteemed as the highest worshipper.

Thus it is the spirit that matters. It is needless to quote other stanzas from *Mukundamala Amnayabhyasanam*, to illustrate the same truth.

But when all is said and done, one must recollect that Kannappars are not found everywhere, and every one cannot imitate Kannappa. The ordinary man has to remember that his gentle plant of devotion has to be grown and tended and hedged with considerable care and for that purpose the regular forms of worship and the usual directions for the growth of devotion by attending *pujas*. *Bhajan*s and other ceremonies must be followed for a long time before attaining full fruition of *Bhakti*. Especially the nine modes of worship mentioned in the Bhagavata and stressed by Sri Sai Baba often have to be attended to and followed. In setting out those nine forms, one can see how the external and internal are inextricably interwoven and combined and how one gradually progresses with lower and external forms till his inner kernel of devotion attains maturity and perfection.

The nine modes are,

Sravana Listening to accounts of the deeds of God, his *Avataras* and Saints.

Kirtana of Vishnu, reciting these or repeating God's names and praise,

Smarana constantly recalling these, especially uttering God's names⁶⁴.

Padasevanam falling at the feet of God and Saints.

Archana formal worship, for example with flowers, water, food, scents and all the 16 *upacharas*

Vadana prostration before God and the saints.

Dasya, for example service, doing every work for God or Saint.

Sakhya remaining in the company of God or Saint.

Nivedana that is, surrender of the self that is forgetting oneself entirely in the contemplation of God after formally offering the self as a gift to God.

The devout reader would like to have a further sketch of the nature and the works of devotion at this stage before we deal with the expansion of the mere system of worship of Sai Baba throughout the country and its diversification. So, once again we may refer to Sri Adi Sankaracharya who, though a perfect adept in the metaphysics of *advaitism* and an authority in respect of the Impersonal Absolute or Brahman, in his numerous works has also shown his grip of the subject of the *bhakti marga*. This is how he describes what *Bhakti* is :

Ankolam Nijabhija Santatih, ayaskantopalam,
Suchika, Sadhvi Naijavibhum,
Lata Kshitiruham Sindhuh Sarid Vallabham,
Prapnoti Iha Yathatatha Pasupateh Padaravinda Dvayam
Cheto Vanchati Sada Sa Bhaktir Iti Uchyate.

This means, as the seeds of the *Ankolam* tree or plant are regressed by the parent tree,

as the parent magnetic block attracts needles one behind another,

as the chaste wife clasps her husband,

as the tendril creeper clings to the adjoining tree and mounts upward and upward,

as the waters of the rivers are for ever drawn downward and downward till they reach the ocean and get inextricably and indistinguishably lost in it, similarly the heart of the devotee longs after the Divine feet of Pasupati, God Siva to be ever there.

This is called *Bhakti*. The ideas of Sri Sankara are very well thought out, and we see in example after example here, how *bhakti* is to be understood as a natural force which is found working in all creation namely, vegetable, animal, mineral, and human. Each illustration takes *bhakti* one stage further up. First comes the tendency of the *Ankolam* plant and its seed. After the seed is first shed from the parent tree, it gets reattached to the tree. Thus the tendency even in vegetables is to get back to the original source and get reabsorbed in it. That is the real nature of devotion in the human being also, for we are parts, *amsas*, or sparks from God, and are drawn by a natural force to look to and reach the original source of all creation and of ourselves, namely, God. this force being devotion. The second example is from *Ayaskanuj*, that is the magnetic stone. The magnet, when approached by a needle. magnetises It. and then draws it to itself and converts it into a magnet that is it gives parts of itself, its force to the new corner, and that in turn acts in a similar way towards other needles, and thus a string of even seven needles might be found attached one behind another to a big magnet. This shows the nature of devotion. *The jiva's* contact with the parent body is ever to strengthen devotion to God, and every growing *bhakta* tends to attract others and impart his devotion to them and through them to others ad infinitum. These are inert pieces of creation, and even these exhibit the nature of devotion. The third is human. The chaste wife longs for her husband, and even his slightest absence for even a short period makes her full of unrest, *viraha* and pant for his presence, and when that presence is regained she is full of bliss and joy and sticks to him. This again is quite descriptive of *bhakti*. The Bhagavata treats all devotees as females, Gopis, and the only male in the Universe is Krishna. So in the *Rasakrida*, Krishna by his flute or magic sound draws all the Gopis to himself, and they form a ring round him. Between every two Gopis is Krishna and between every two Krishnas is a Gopi. That is, each Gopi sees only

Krishna on either side of her and not the other Gopis. Perfect white heat of love converts everything into Krishna. This feminine devotion to the Purusha is the loftiest love and bliss known to humanity and that, therefore, is the best way of indicating what devotion is. Next comes the creeper. The creeper is a very feeble tendril and it must be sending up tendrils which intuitively clasp a strong, powerful tree next to it. The wind will shake out and break the creeper to pieces. But when it twirls round and round a big tree, the wind can do no harm. The natural tendency of the creeper is to go further and further upward and upward till the top of the tree is reached. This helps it to get more light from the Sun, more of air, and more of freedom and safety from animals which will bite and eat up the creeper. Similar is the tendency of a weak human being who resorts to God as the source of his strength, just as the creeper resorts to the neighbouring tree as the source of its strength, and clings to God and ever tends to mount up higher and higher in his spiritual levels to achieve nobler and nobler objects and to transform himself into more and more of the like-ness of God till he reaches full *Sarupyam, Sameeepyam and Sayujyam*. So long as *bhakti* is in the lower stages, there is the danger of his *bhakti* being disturbed or his safety being affected by other creatures or beings. But when he mounts up higher and higher and reaches the top stages of *Sarupyam, Sameeepyam and Sayujyam* there is no more danger to his existence or perfection. Lastly comes the example of the rivers. All the above mentioned examples are all objects which retain their identity as separate from the objects to which they are drawn. In the last, namely, the rivers, the perfection of the current of devotion is attained by losing one's own entity or existence in that of the Divine or the end of the course. The river is inevitably drawn down. Does water go back or upward? It is drawn downward and downward, and finally it meets the ocean. The waters of the rivers were originally part of the ocean, and after being held up in the form of water vapour, cloud and rain, they take the shape of a river. So, it is the oceanic waters that flow through the rivers and get back to their original source. The devotion of the river which was issued out of that immense, endless, infinite expanse called the ocean, makes it get back to that ocean and be lost in it. Once the rivers Ganges,

Indus, get into the ocean, they Cannot be pieced out again as Ganges or Indus water. *Purnalaya* is the end of the devotion and that is obtained by the *jivas* surrendering themselves, that is, making *Atma nivedana*, which is the ninth mode mentioned in the *Navavidha bhakti*. That is both devotion and also absorption. After that there is nothing further to reach. Thus the various stages, attitudes, and relations of a *bhakta* can be very well dwelt upon and learnt by studying the above illustrations and applying them to oneself.

Another stanza, which may be quoted next, sets out the names of a number of loving *bhaktas* so that they may ever remain in one's heart and show how *bhakti* achieves its ends. The end of *bhakti* is not achieved by the offer of money to God or by mere learning or by age or beauty of a person, God does not want any of these. God wants only your heart, that is, your self, and he will not be satisfied with anything else. The stanza runs as follows,

Vyadhasya Acharanam Dhruvasyacha Vayah Vidya
 Gajendrasya
 ka Ka-jatir Vidhurasya Yadavapateh Ugrasya
 Kim Pourusham
 Kubjayah Kamaniya Rupam Adihikam
 Kimtat Sudhamno Dhanam
 Bhaktya Tushyati Kevalam
 Natu Gunaih, Bhaktipriyah Sripatih.

This means, as for the hunter *Kannappa* what. *Achara* or religious course of conduct had he?

For *Dhruva*, what was his age?

For the elephant *Gajendra*, what education or degrees and titles had he?

Had *Vidura* favourite of Krishna any qualification in respect of caste? He was the son of a slave or dancing girl.

For the king of *Yadavas* called *Ugrasena*, who was favoured by Krishna what manliness had he? He was a great coward: ,

For *Kubja* also was favoured by Krishna, had she any great beauty? She was deformed in person.

For *Sudhama*, known as *Kuchela* who also was favoured by Krishna, had he any wealth?

Therefore, God is pleased with and wants only *bhakti* or devotion. God is captured by *prem* or love. The above stanza refers to well known *bhaktas* who received great help or favour from Krishna or God on account of their *bhakti*. One's profession or conduct, that is, whether one is a hunter or a *Vaideek Brahmin*, whether one is young or old, whether one is highly learned or a creature without education, whether one is a high caste person or the son of a slave whether one is a brave man or a coward, whether one has beauty or wealth, none of these are the reasons for God's help and favour. God is pleased by *bhakti* alone and *bhakti* can capture Him. This contains the essence of the doctrine of *bhakti* or devotion, and, therefore, earnest readers who are anxious to study the history of Sai Baba, who realised in himself the perfection of Godhead by attaining *Purnalaya*, concentrating his mind always on God with intense love from his earliest period of life, and thereby attained *Aikya*, so that he could say *Mainm Allahum*, that is *Aham Brahmasm* and could exhibit all the powers of God; would find the use of the above stanzas. Sai identified himself with Krishna and with every other form of God. As the object of everyone should be to please God in Sai form or in any other form, one may note how in point of historical fact, from this biography, numbers of people were drawn to Sai Baba and achieved the love of Sai Baba, and thereby achieved every object of human existence. The succeeding chapters of this book would deal with the details of a large number of devotees being drawn to and benefiting from Baba, and would fully illustrate the truth of the above verses. At present we have sufficiently satisfied highly sensitive readers who wish to have the essence of Sai Baba's *Marga* placed before them, before we deal with the expansion of the Sai movement and the details of persons who approached him, and the problems that arise for consideration in the life of Baba.

Seven

Worship, Its Further Expansion

We have stated so far how the worship of Sri Sai Baba expanded and assumed vast proportions during his lifetime. This however did not stop with 1918 but continued to expand further and further, not merely as to the forms and modes of worship but also in respect of the populations and areas covered and further extended in its inwardness and heightened its results. In describing the *post-Mahasamadhi* developments, and the introduction of Southern modes of worship the spread of Sai faith to all parts of India and beyond will be dealt with more fully. One feature of present day worship will be noticed by any one touring the Indian States, and that is the fact that there are over a hundred institutions named after Sai, carrying on Sai *Puja*, Sai *Bhajan*, Sai *Prachar*, often called Sai *Samajs* or *Sammelans*, *Bhajan* groups. Most of them have Sai *Mandirs*. A good number of decent buildings with suitable compounds sometimes with *gopuras* or towers are seen dotting the face of the country. In Madras City alone we have the Mylapore All India Sai Samaj Sai Mandir, the Guindy Sai Mandir and the Egmore Sai Mandir, At Kurnool, Coimbatore Ventrappagada, Tenali, and other places there are notable *Mandirs* attracting thousands to worship there. These are but the nucleus of what is to be, a tiny patch of cloud prognosticating the vast rainy clouds that will soon screen the sky and flood the whole country. Sri Sai Baba has ordained all this expansion.

Baba's gradual permission of his worship has been noted, and it has been specially stressed that Baba allowed his own worship with the prescience that it would be the means for providing temporal and spiritual benefits to millions of individuals and also the means of solving India's national problems of communal and religious unity as *Sarva loka malapaha*.⁶⁵ In India we have not merely Hindu and Mohammadan divisions but various subdivisions of religion, among the major communities also. In their ideas and modes of worship they differ widely from one another. Till recently, religion meant differences between group and group and, therefore, mutual conflicts, preventing the unification of India or even of Hinduism, urgently calling for its purification and unification⁶⁶. Sri Vishnu and Siva conflicts have been going on for centuries. Also Hindu-Muslim conflicts. To

Akbar must be given the credit for trying to solve the problem of religious disunity in India by using his powerful position and influence to unify and consolidate the two chief religions, namely, Hinduism and Islam, by making the representatives of both gather at one place to worship the common father of all, *Din Ilahi*, Akbar's attempt though slightly successful during his days, perished with him. His successors did not take up the idea and some of them took up the opposite idea of oppressing the non-Muslims with a view to inducing them to embrace Islam -Aurangzeb being the most notable of such successors. What Akbar tried in the region of statesmanship and politics was attempted in the field of literature and religion by Kabir, Guru Nanak, and others, and they tried to establish the bedrock of ideas on which Indian unification in religion could be accomplished. Each had some degree of success, but even their efforts fell short of that completion and perfection which we shall find in Baba's performance Sai Baba declared on one occasion that in a former *janma* he was Kabir, and it may be noted that Baba, as Kabir, was suiting the narrow views of former centuries, while Baba of the 19th and 20th centuries had broader views and more efficient means of reaching unity. Kabir brought under his own leadership Hindus and Muslims who gave up former labels and were called Kabir *panthis*. But a little later, a short time after his demise, the spirit of division came in, and there were Hindu Kabir *panthis* and Muslim Kabir *panthis* separating each from the other. Guru Nanak also accomplished the same remarkable feat in bringing Islam and Hinduism closer to each other. But the Sikhs, who now represent the fruits of his labours, cannot provide any basis for the religious unification of India. Sai Baba fully grasped the difficulties of the problem. The only thing that could bring Hindus and Muslims together was a weird, saintly personality acting as a *Guru* or god-Man, absolutely neutral, allowing all sects, religions and creeds to have their own ways, and yet bringing them all to a common platform, namely, devotion to that saintly personality and enabling them to see that the differences are petty and ridiculous, unworthy of serious men of *jnana* or realisation. Sai Baba was such a person. In him, divine qualities, obviously super-human powers combined with even-minded beneficence were so patently manifested that all alike, Hindus,

Muslims and Christians, who came to know about him felt that they were before a higher influence and that they could all approach and reach God through him, that he was the high watermark of saintliness, or Godliness or God head and they willingly made him their *Gurudeva and* protector. Some of them treated him as their god. The result was that Sai, by allowing his worship to be done at the Mosque by different people with varying sets of ideas, was drawing all to Mysticism, the common essence of all Religion and thus building up, by a slow but inevitable process, a united community engaged in common worship which ultimately could include at least the whole of India. Sai devotion means tolerance towards all, faith in God and in Sai as *Guru*, and the acceptance of the basic principles found in all religions. These factors were stressed by Sai Baba from time to time and many a time. Sai allowed the Hindus to adopt their puranic method of worship and treat him either as an *Avatar* or *Ishtadeva* or a *Gurudeva*, as they liked, while he allowed the Muslims approaching him to read their Koran and the *shariat* at the Mosque and to join his flock as his devotees, treating him merely as an *Avalia* or a saint with remarkable powers. All alike noticed that Sai was the soul of love and purity, and a storehouse of superhuman power and superhuman enlightenment. It is such a person that has succeeded in drawing the otherwise jarring and warring sects into a peaceful flock of Sai devotees. When his *puja* is gone through during the day time with all the din, bustle, and formalities of *mantras* and rituals of Hindu worship in the Mosque or *Dwarkamayee*, the Muslims do not interfere. When the Muslims on *Idga* Day have their rituals or prayers at Baba's Mosque, the Hindus do not interfere. During the day, Hindu *puranas*, *Tukaram gathas*, *Ramayan*, *Vedas*, were being read or recited and at night the Koran or *shariat* was read or repeated either by Abdul or by a person known as the *Rohilla* or by some other person, offerings brought to Baba were distributed by him to all after *fatia* was pronounced in true Muslim fashion. Though Baba did not himself perform the five *Namazes* every day, he encouraged the orthodox Muslims to do so at his place. Baba was displeased and showed his anger when any religious intolerance was exhibited. On one occasion a devotee came up and deplored the fact that the newly

appointed *Foujdar*, that is, Police Sub-Inspector at Ratha was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim but a Christian, Baba's immediate reply was, 'What of that? He is my brother'. Again, H.S. Dixit, though generally observing all propriety, once fell into the unfortunate mood of decrying Christianity and Christ when talking at his quarters with some others. After that, he went up to Baba to pay his respects. But Baba severely said "Don't come near me". At once Dixit felt that, by decrying Christ and Christianity he had offended Baba, and immediately he repented. It was only thereafter that Baba allowed him to approach him. Baba expressly declared⁶⁷ that when devotees were quarrelling amongst themselves, he was feeling great pain, whereas if they all put up with each other and pulled on amicably, he felt happy. In effect, his message was "Love ye one another even as I love you all". Baba's love and wonderful power of reading and controlling hearts was mainly responsible for the almost perfect concord between Hindus and Muslims that always reigned at Shirdi. In other places when a Muslim festival came on the same day as the Hindu festival, battles were fought, and heads were broken. But at Shirdi there was not a single occasion of a Hindu-Muslim class fight. When Baba's picture was carried in procession through all the streets including the neighbourhood of the Muslims, no one felt the least repulsion or objection. On the other hand, in front of, and behind the palanquin carrying his picture, Hindus and Muslims vied with each other for the honour of carrying various insignia of devotion, namely, whisks, umbrella and Maces etcetera. Baba distributed *prasad* brought by members of any community to all, and they were accepted by members of all communities. The chief point to note about Baba's unification is that there was no fixed book or doctrine to which he wanted all people to subscribe; and no fixed observance was forced on any one⁶⁹. The main mass of the devotees were Hindus, and they carried on their worship of Baba at the Masjid with rituals based on the Pandharpur *Arti*. Their *bhajans* were full of allusions to Hindu mythology, but the Muslims who were present on such occasions were free to ignore all the above and simply regard Baba as their kindly disposed *Avalia-lheir* Guardian. Christians and Parsis also had the same freedom and they adopted whatever course they thought was

proper. There was no compulsion of any sort in the matter of religion before Baba. The common point was attachment through powerful love to the personality of a weird *Guru* who exercised all his vast and wonderful powers of seeing or knowing, everything everywhere and of even doing the impossible for the benefit of his devotees. Love, keenest and burning love was the means and the end. Love is really what every one wants, with relief from distress and attainment of desired objects. At Baba's feet they were obtained by any person-Hindu or Muslim, Parsi or Christian, and the question of a difference of religion did not arise at all as love to the *Guru* was the common plank of all, the other planks being different. To many a Hindu, Baba was identified with various gods or *Avatars*. Each man saw in Baba sometimes the very form of the deity that he wanted to worship. A South African doctor would respect none but Rama and did not care to approach a Muslim as Sai Baba was supposed to be. But when that South African Brahmin doctor came to the Masjid on the express stipulation that he would not bow to a Muslim Baba, he stayed for a few minutes outside and, afterwards, darted into the Mosque and fell at Baba's feet. When asked for an explanation, he gave the answer. 'I saw that Baba's form was really the wonderful form of *Nila Megha Syama Rama*. As I found my Rama in Baba, I worshipped him' and Baba later filled him with *Parama Ananda* and love. This is a typical instance. A Sub-Inspector of Police M.S. Nimonkar had regard for nothing except Hanuman, and when he was looking on, Baba appeared to his eyes exactly like Hanuman with all the hair and prognathous face. N.G. Chandorkar's relative Binnewalla did not care for anything except Datta, and was anxious to go away from Shirdi, where Baba was worshipped, to some place where Datta could be seen. Suddenly to his eyes, Baba appeared with three heads, that is, as Datta. Baba exercised these marvellous powers to induce faith in persons that approached him. Thus, he was Siva to Megha, Rama to the South African doctor and Madrasi Ramadasini, Krishna or Vittal to Krishna bhaktas, Maruti to Maruti bhaktas,

Ye Yatha Maam Prapadyante

Taams Tathaiva Bhajaami Aham⁷⁰

Shirdi Sai Noon Arati Song says,

Jayaa Manim Jaisaa Bhaava

Tayaa Taisaa Anubhava

Davisi Dayaghana, aisii tujhi hi maava

Which means, According to the feeling or attitude of mind of each person, you give him experience of you. Such is your sport, merciful One. Thus, he really was God, that is, he had not merely God essence, Supreme Power and Love but also every form of God that the devotee wanted to see. As he was completely self-realised he could with perfect truth say Main Allahum, that is, I am Allah or God. When a Deputy Collector was gazing at Lakshminarayana's figure at Bombay and concentrated his mind on that image it disappeared and Baba's form took its place; the Deputy Collector was afraid that his concentration was a failure. But when he came to Shirdi, Baba knew what happened and asked him, "What is the difference between this form and Lakshminarayan's form? I am Lakshminarayan'. He showed in himself the form of Ganapati to others such as B.V. Dev's sister. He was all gods, because according to the *Sastras*, all gods are parts of God *Angani anya devatah*⁷⁰. Baba had the complete realisation of the fullness of God-not merely of God forms, but God essence. He was *Sal Chit Ananda*. He had absolute freedom from attachment to all earthly objects and freedom from all those emotions which take persons away from God. Therefore Baba was best fitted to bring into a common fold all persons who had desires or objects that religion could grant through service at his feet and acceptance of him as the *Gurudeva* or guide. This work which occupied so many decades of Baba's life on earth has greatly developed since he cast off his earthly body. As Justice Mr. MB. Rege remarks in his foreword to Baba's Charters and Sayings. 'Now that the fleshy body is gone, he is to me only God.'¹ The fleshy body repelled many people who came to him because of their sectarian or other prejudices. Now when a person reads about Baba and notes the effect of prayer to him with full faith, the physical body of Baba, the Muslim appearance, is not there to repel him. Thus, his casting off the fleshy body in 1918 leaving thousands or tens of thousands bound to him by love and a system of worship by love, with the fame

of his *lilas* helped to continue his work and was a very useful step in carrying out and in perfecting his mission to unify all faiths by acceptance of him as the common *Guru-deva*, especially because the worship of, or prayer to, tombs of saints is practised by both Hindus and Muslims⁷¹. Kabir objected to images and image worship. Baba on the other hand allowed people and even directed people to go to particular temples to worship the images there and he presented *lingas*, *padukas*, coins, and pictures to devotees as fit-objects of worship especially his own pictures. These images too are needed to make the minds steady and concentrated in meditation⁷². These steps among others help to bring more into Baba's fold.

It is common knowledge that any one who pins his faith to Baba, regardless of castes or creeds and appeals to him, gets remarkable relief, and therefore, feels convinced that this Sai whatever he might have been by birth, parentage, or training, in his corporeal life, is now nothing but God, that is, the dispenser of desired things to those who want them and make the proper approach. So Baba is the God or the God-man to all Sai devotees. While unifying India on that basis, he is the granter to millions of individual devotees, of all their cherished or most ardently longed for objects.

Eight

Unification and Purification of Hinduism

In India the divergences of worship between class and class or group and group are so great that some foreigners thought there was nothing like Hinduism that there is nothing in common at all between the *Todas* and the *Brahmins* in worship and that they reflected different levels of thought and had contents of truth or degrees of philosophy in them. Toda worship might simply amount to bowing to natural forces or a few objects whereas the worship by the highest cultured classes in temples and else where reveal a great diversity of philosophical systems, and of religious thought, Apart from this, the distinction between the worship going on in Siva temples, Vishnu temples, Jain temples and other temples, was noticeable enough. The differences were sometimes sought

to be bridged by enclosing Siva and Vishnu temples in the same compound or inside the same building. In some cases there was amicable worship of the different deities inside the same place but in others the differences of view were intensified by the closer contact. In some cases, the *bhaktas* of Siva claim that Siva should have priority in procession and that Vishnu's procession must follow. The other group contests this claim. These and other similar matters appear however to be a quarrel over trifles. But there was bitterness enough to take the differences to courts and even to the highest court like the Privy Council. It was not easy for anyone to say that there was a single religion called Hinduism, the characteristics of which one could set out. In any case, there was a war of literature going on during the last two or three centuries developing bitter antagonism between Siva and Vishnu faiths and between Jain and both of these and other similar religious institutions. The quarrels were always on non-essentials. But anyhow they prevented unity and sowed dissension. The consequence on society was to weaken society and demoralise religion. In order, therefore, to unify the people and to purify the religion and raise it to the highest grade, the one great thing needed was to discover what was the essential substratum of all these faiths called Hinduism and to bring in actual practice the adherents of all sects and views into one mass that could work harmoniously. Sri Sai has done marvellously good work in this connection. Having been brought up in his earliest years by a *fakir*, the idea of unity of God struck deep root in him. He changed at a very early age his residence and his caretaker, and coming under the Selu *zamindar's* care which naturally involved contact with various forms of gods. Baba thus naturally developed the feeling that the one God or *Allah* that he knew in his earliest years under the *fakir* was the same as Venkatesa whom his *Guru* at Selu worshipped, and that other gods or god-forms that were incidentally brought to *Selu* or were visited by his master were all forms of the same God, that is, the *Ekam Sat, Vipra bahuda vadanti*, which means, "The Real is one. The wise call it variously." *Angani Anya Devatah*, that is, all gods are part of God. So Baba had, as the backbone of his religion, the unity of God-head in all names and forms. This, is the feat that must be achieved by all in

India, and Hindus especially should attain unity and purity of religion. Therefore those who contacted Baba by worshipping him at Shirdi or elsewhere were deeply impressed with and felt this truth that all god forms such as Vittal Maruti etetra are God. "All that is *Allah*" was what Baba told the Rohilla. Baba constantly used one name for another, namely, Vittal for Khandoba or Maruti for Vittal, and it may be noted that advanced *bhaktas* following *Hari Hara Guha Bhajana Paddhati* do the same. He told Upasani Maharaj that he Upasani would get God's grace after four years of severe training at Shirdi. and the word he used for God's grace was "Khandoba's grace." When he referred to Upasani's residence at Shirdi, he would say "Vittoba's temple," but Upasani Maharaj corrected him and said it was Khandoba's, for Vittal's temple was inside the village and Khandoba's temple outside. Baba would again correct Upasani Maharaj and say, 'What is the difference between Khandoba and Vittoba?*' By persons who are ingrained in Hindu notions of difference between Siva and Vishnu, Khandoba would at once be declared Siva's *avatar* and Vittal as Mahavishnu's *avatar*, and so the two cannot be the same in their functions, their dresses, or their pleasures. The two, Mahavishnu and Siva, are severely contrasted daily by *murthy* minded Hindus, thus

Alankara Priyo Vishnuh

Abhisheka Priyas Sivah⁷³

that is to say, Vishnu is always dressed up in fine *pitambar*, that is, golden dress, and given a fixed number of ornaments, weapons, insignia, whereas Siva is either undraped as in the *Linga* or clad with tiger skin, and he wears his hair on the head in the form of a rough tuft. But Vishnu's hair is nicely combed and presentable. In the description of accompaniments also, living or other, the two are described differently and presented differently in temples. Mahavishnu is surrounded by Lakshmi, *bhaktas* and *bhagavatas*, all wearing *Namams*, whereas Siva is ash besmeared and surrounded by ghouls, demons, and fierce looking creatures, for he is supposed to dwell in the horrid cremation ground, which is considered a polluted place to visit. Hindu groups exultingly developed the peculiar merits, each of its own *Murthi* ideas, as contrasted with those of others;

and the *Vishnu Mala kandanam* by Saivas and the *Saiva Mata Kandanam* by the *Vaishnavas* gave plenty of scope for hairsplitting, philosophising, and bitterness for centuries, and in practice, often the followers of each kept themselves apart from the others. Even in the Valmiki Ramayana., Bala Kanda, there is a chapter showing that Siva came to conflict with Vishnu, and even after they stopped their fight, their followers continued their fight. This unedifying spectacle of degrading religion by enthusiasm over unessential and exulting over differences has worked sufficient harm already to the great neglect of the essence of religion that should alone be stressed by all sensible and truly religious persons. Baba, therefore, drew the attention of all his *bhaktas* to the fact that whether you called your God, Siva or Vishnu, he is the Supreme Power that is responsible for the creation, maintenance, and the withdrawal of the world, and he gives you all that you need and finally the highest bliss at his own feet. This, being the central essence of all Theism, is or should be the central plank for unifying all branches and sects of Hindus and also unifying Hinduism with Islam and other theistic religions. In fact, world unity of religions can be achieved mainly on this basis. Sporadic teachings on the same lines existed. For example,

Sivasya Hridayam Vishnuh

Vishnoscha Hridayam Sivah

Ishadapi Antaram Kritva

Rouravam Yati Manavah⁷⁴

This means, Siva is the essence or heart of Vishnu and Vishnu is the heart or essence of Siva. Any one who makes the slightest difference between the two goes to Hell. There are many similar authorities. But why go to authorities? Does any one think that God, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe can be many? If there are many, the universe will be a chaos, not a cosmos. The above are functions or aspects of one and the same God. Baba was always impressing this silently on all. We have the opposite ideal deeply ingrained in us. We are bodies, we think. So we think Siva, Vishnu and Brahma are embodied beings, *murthis* with eyes, legs, nose and crown. It is absolutely essential for the seeker after

salvation to shed these and consequent differences. So Baba stressed unity just as even Srimad Bhagavata stresses unity. The *Vedas* on which all schools rely seem to support the idea of multiplicity of Gods and in fact multiplicity of objects in the universe. In Srimad Bhagavata⁷⁵ Sri Krishna says.

Mam Vidhatte Ahhidhane Mam

Vikalpya Apohyate Tvaham

Eiavan Sarva Vedarthah Sahda Asthaya Mam Bhidam

Mayamatram Anudya Ante Pratishidya Prasadati

that is *Vedas* enjoin Me, Me they express. What is stated tentatively to be refuted is I. This is the import of the entire *Vedas* with Me as their substratum, that is, the *Vedas* affirm the existence of duality and that duality is but a illusion. Refuting that duality at the end, the *Vedas* are satisfied. Baba did not stop with stating the principles on which all could be brought to a common basis. He went further and worked out the actual unity of the groups by bringing men from different groups and making them all form one solid block of Sai devotees under his own care. Those who came to him saw in him their only God, recognised him as their *Guru Deva* and that was the highest religious sentiment that they had and there was no possibility of their tearing themselves off into divisions, though their original loyalties were in other respects maintained. Baba hated intolerance and made people tolerate each other's views and peculiarities. He did not allow the Hindus under him to fight against the Muslim devotees. He removed disparities and made them work in unison as fellow devotees, as brothers in Sai faith. Thus, he worked out not merely the unification of Hinduism but also the unification of Hinduism with the other great religion in India, namely, Islam. Especially under Sufi influence, one sees that it is impossible to distinguish the essence of Hinduism from that of Islam. When the essentials of Sufism are put forward, it is difficult to say whether those essentials do not constitute real worship according to the Bhagavata doctrine as well as esoteric Christian doctrine. Sai Baba is both a perfect *Sufi* and a *Parama Bhagavata* following the Bhagavata or *Parma Guru* of the Guru Gita embodied in *Skanda Parana*. The one thing that religions must agree upon is that God, the Supreme Power, is *Sat Chit Ananda*; the highest

bliss that man can know is represented to be God, and God is, therefore, the ultimate goal of all religious striving, and every effort should be made by every sincere and honest seeker of truth to realise this real *Sal Chit Ananda* as the basis of the Universe and the basis of his own personality. All personalities will, therefore, finally merge in the one grand personality, *Paramatma*, that is God, which is Love. This is the essence of Baba's teaching and practice and is well fitted to be the basis of unification of all faiths in India and in the world.

BUT HOW CAN POLYTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM BE RECONCILED?

This is a question on which theoretical differences of opinion exist in abundance, and theoretically one can go on maintaining that monotheism and polytheism reflect different levels of thought and action and that the two are poles apart. In one sense that is true. Yet it is also the truth recognised in the lives of great souls and in the history of nations that the two co-exist and are reconcilable in Mysticism. This is well illustrated in Hinduism. Is God really one or many? Are the various forms of worship of various gods and goddesses reconcilable with the worship of one God? In the case of the one God, is worship necessarily external and formal or might it be equally advantageous, if not more advantageous, without external formalities? Is the realisation of pure *Satchitananda* a form of worship? If it can be termed worship, then probably the term worship must have an extended significance which ordinarily it does not have. When a person is simply enjoying *Satchitananda* he is generally referred to as in a blissful state, and he might even express his own condition by the words *Mainm Allah Hum*, I am God, *Aham Brahmasmi*, *Soham*, That is, if the individual soul has so completely surrendered itself to and got identified with the *Paramatman*, then there may be no such thing as relation of one soul to another. Worship is usually understood as the attitude of one soul, a *Jiva*, towards God, viewed not as identical with it, but as in some way different from it, though the Godhead might include the *Jiva*. One might worship a God which includes oneself because it includes others also, and is thus different from oneself. If worship must necessarily connote differences between the worshipper and the worshipped, it is not correct then to say that the merger of the individual soul in the *Paramatman*

is an act of worship. It may be the ultimate end of worship. There in *Atma Nivedana* worship ends. But ordinarily no one would think loss of identity is worship. In fine flights of poetry, as in the pages of Wordsworth, we come across passages where the soul is lost in admiration of the beauty, the infinite character and the glories of Nature treating them as expression of love and joy arising on God's Visitation. That is described sometimes as an act of worship as loss of self is only temporary. Even the person who worships a God-form is lost in it for a time and then comes back to himself and treats that form as different from himself. A mystic has various stages, one stage of which is losing himself in Nature or in a God-form other than Nature. Thus Nature and he are two different objects, and that is how the term worship may be applied to such cases. But apart from verbal differences, taking only the essence into consideration, if God is bliss and man is only a spark from God, the spark, after much *sadhana*, gets reabsorbed in the original flame from which it came. Then, the process of approaching, absorption and getting back may be called worship. But the end, that is being permanently part of the original flame or bliss or love, is called worship, as means and end are bundled together as in Bhagawad Gita⁷⁶. Worship is usually described as a *sadhana* or means, and the end of it is reaching God. Persons of all grades of development were flocking to Baba's feet, and a very large number of them were incapable of any *laya* or merger in God. But a few like Wordsworth's 'youth at sunrise' quoted in a 'later chapter occasionally touched that *laya*. Once Balwant Khaparde and Bhisma went out in the morning when dew was falling and the Sun was just rising. The Sun's rays hit them and threw their shadows behind them. Their shadows began with their feet and continued right on to the distant horizon, and at the horizon there was a rainbow caused by the piercing of the dew by the Sun's rays. Thus the long shadow of each of them was crowned with a halo of the iridescent seven coloured rainbow. This struck each of them as marvellous. From each one, who is finite, goes out an infinite shadow which at the other end is crowned with divine glory! This was by the rays of the Sun who sends his rays upon all. The Sun is typical of God. The halo of glory cast round the head of the shadows was also

typical of Godhead, and so each one had a feeling that he himself was identical with that elongated shadow which had a crown on its head. Therefore each one dimly sensed his divinity. The finite body and its infinite and glorious shadow were really one. The Sun showed the oneness. That was the mystic meaning to be attached to their morning experience of the Sun, the dew, and their shadows. They communicated their experience to G.S. Khaparde who said that Baba had kindly given them a mystic experience of *Atmananda*. With this uppermost in their minds, they went to see Baba. Baba gave them a smile of approval and said nothing. One would take it that Baba set his seal of approval on their interpretation of this natural phenomenon of having long shadows of themselves crowned with divine glory, and considering the same as typical or significant of their being in essence divinity, something infinite, blissful, and beautiful, and that their *Jivas* must be recognised by each one of them as being the *Paramatma*, that is, Divine, as was demonstrated by their blissful *laya* absorption for a moment. Baba similarly expressed his approval of the use of music also for purposes of enabling the *Jiva* to get *laya* in bliss. Baba himself in his early days used to dance with tinklets tied to his feet singing rapturously songs of Kabir, some of which undoubtedly referred to the beauty and blissfulness of infinite Godhead. Baba must have enjoyed what Tyagaraja says is enjoyed by the *bhakta* in moments of musical *laya*,

'*Gitarfiamu*' *Mokshamu Galada* asks Tyagaraja, that is, Is it possible for a man whose mind does not melt with music into *laya*, to obtain *laya* in any other way into God?. Baba told Rangari that on the night previous to his coming, there was *bhajan* and music, and all night he was in rapture. 'They abused me', Baba said.

Tyagaraya who like most Hindus revelled in meditating on the details of God forms attained *laya* or mystic absorption especially with the aid of music. Sufi and Christian adorers of God without form also succeed often times in merging their selves in rapt communion with God. Both these groups of mystics show that concentration in the end gives the longed for bliss of God and is the way to reconcile all religious differences. Baba as the pastmaster of mystic bliss

and lord of *siddhis* or psychic powers flowing from mystic concentration helped on the reconciliation of these apparently conflicting faiths of Polytheism and Monotheism.

Nine

Guru Worship

Sri Sai Baba's beneficent work especially on the vast scale that is seen more and more now was and is exercised through various means, Sai worship being one of the most important of these means. That worship was mostly *Guru* worship, his *marga* being *Guru marga*. Hence *Guru* worship must form an important feature of the Sai movement. A full study of the *marga* here is out of the question. But to understand Sai Baba's life, *guru-sishya* relations and nature have to be studied, and Sai Baba's life and *lilas* throw a flood of light on the full significance and value of *Guru marga*. That term picked up from *Guru Gita* is clothed with power and glory from Baba's life.

The story of the life of such a great saint like Sai Baba must include references to *Gurus* and *Guru* worship, for it is by their grace that saints achieve perfection which they naturally endeavour to impart to others. By reason of Sri Sai Baba's ability to conceal his real nature and the working of his mind and body obviously in pursuance of the directions of *sastras* and *Gurus* that eminence must be concealed, for example, the saint must be unfathomable and undiscerned like the ocean and the python⁷⁷, moving about like a dullard, idiot, or devil, his acting as a *Sadguru* and a *Samartha Sadguru* was unknown to the thousands that met him in life or heard of him thereafter. It is only by revelation of devotees' experiences that people now mostly realise that he was a *Samartha Sadguru* and had various grades of devotees and *sishyas*.

His biography is the practical illustration of what *Guru* and *Sishya* mean and of the principles that govern their conduct and mutual relation, Hence a preliminary discourse on these subjects is needed, though it cannot exhaust either the general subject or its application to Sai Baba, his *Gurus* and *sishyas*. The *marga* that Baba followed has puzzled many. Many asked and ask whether he was a *Yogi* or a *Jnani* or a *Bhakta* or followed any *marga* peculiarly his own.

Several thought and think that Baba cannot be classed under any of the divisions applying to saints and *sadhus*. As a result of study, aided by His own grace, one sees at last that he was an adept of all the *margas*, though his chief *marga*, was *Bhakti marga*, the special form of it that it described as *Guru Marga* in the *Guru Gita*, and that *Jnana* and *siddhis* including *yoga siddhis* came in the wake of his *Guru bhakti*. These will be made clearer as we advance in the study of Sri Sai's Life and of his relation to devotees. At present in this chapter we shall state just a few preliminary matters relating to *Guru* and *Guru* worship.

Definition : *Guru* may be defined as one who imparts information or gives training to another. Any school teacher or moral teacher or the one who teaches the way to salvation or *mukti* or even teaches *mantras* for various religious or secular purposes, high or low, can be called a *Guru*.

Derivation : The word *Guru* is a Sanskrit word and a number of derivations are found especially in *Guru Gita*, which is a part of the *Skanda Purana*. 'Gu' generally means '*Guna*' and therefore means 'darkness'. 'Ru' denotes the action of destruction just as fire destroys or removal. So *Guru* means the dispeller of darkness or ignorance.

Gu karascha Andhakarastu

Ru karah tannirodhakrit

Andhakara Vinasitwat

Guru riti Abhidhiyate.⁷⁸

Another derivation says that *Guru* is one who takes you from the *Gunas* to That beyond the *Gunas* that is, Brahman⁷⁹.

Arabic and Persian : It is always better especially when dealing with Sai Baba whose teachings are unique and cosmopolitan to give the word *Guru* its equivalents in Arabic and Persian, as used by Sufis, *Murshad* is the Sufi equivalent which Baba himself used. For example Baba said "My *Murshad* has taken me away from this body which is but my house'. This means his *Guru* had destroyed his identification of self with the body *Dehatma buddhi* and made him realise that He the *Atma* is not the body just as the fire which burns the fuel is

different from the fuel, and the seer is not the seen⁸¹. The Sufi equivalent for *Sishya* is *Talib* and *shakir*.

Everywhere in the world we find, the usual practise is to have *Gurus*.

Purpose for a *Guru* : A *Guru* being a teacher, the question as to what he teaches or what help he gives or is expected to give, is the essential question.

Classes of *Gurus* : There are various classes according to what is taught or given, for example *Siksha* or *Diksha*, secular or religious subject, sex of *guru*, methods adopted, whether *guru* is visible or invisible.

Guru Gita⁸² classifies *Gurus* under seven heads calling them:

Suchaka is the ordinary school master who gives secular teachings - the three 'R's and arts.

Vachaka is one who imparts ethical teachings, *dharma sastra*,

Bhodaka is one who teaches *mantras* for various purposes - secular or other, and stops with that.

Nishiddha is one who teaches *mantras* and other methods for achieving lower purposes just as *marana*, *vasikarana*, *sthambana* and *akarshana*. These are almost invariably used to achieve low earthly objects and are hindrances to one's achievement of the spiritual goal. It is a danger for one to get under a *Nishiddha Guru*.

Vihita is one who teaches *Virakti* or detachment, that is frees one from attachment to earthly things and prepares one for achieving one's spiritual welfare. *Vairagya* or dispassion is the *sine qua non* for progress just as its opposite, namely, extreme attachment to *kamini* and *kanchana*, is a powerful barrier to all progress.

Karana instructs the *sisya* as to the import of the *Mahavakyas* the axioms or axles of the Upanishads. After securing thorough *vairagya* one is ready to get at least an intellectual grasp and then a realisation of the grand basis of all *mukti*. *Mukti* is the realisation of the real nature of oneself and of *Atma*, that is *Paramatma*; and the *mahavakyas* embody that truth. Thus the teacher of this basis of salvation is the cause, *Karana* for salvation and therefore the *Karana Guru*.

Parama Guru, The last and the greatest of all, who enables the *sisya* to thoroughly absorb the truth of the *Mahavakyas* and to realize for himself the *Mahavakyas* and thus escape *samsara* or rebirth, is the *Parama Guru*. He is also called the *Moksha Guru*. Others are mere *Gurus*.

The Kula Moolavatara Kalpa Sutra Teeka Gata Kulagama mentions six classes of *Gurus* in regular gradation. They are;

Preraka one who just starts the pupil

Suchaka one who indicates and carries further

Vachaka one who regularly teaches and coaches

Darsaka one who points out the way and goal to the pupil.

Sikshaka one who regularly teaches and guides the pupil fully. These five are preparations to go to the 6th.

Bodhaka one who is also called the *Karana Guru*, who thoroughly illumines the pupil and prepares him for *Brahma Jnana* and *Moksha*.

There are *Gurus* who are seen and others unseen; and there are *Gurus* who merely impart teachings and do not care for results, that is, they are those who do not undertake any responsibility for the *sisyas*. There are others who give definite undertakings and carry out the same at all costs and if necessary life after life proceeding to seek the *sisya* in subsequent lives for the purpose. The best instance of such a *Guru* is Sri Sai Baba who undertook liability for H.S. Dixit, N.G. Chandorkar, Bandra Master T and M.B. Rege and others.

Another classification is based on the powers and methods of the *Guru*. The *Guru* who teaches something secular or religious is merely called *Guru*. He who teaches about God or Sat is called *Sadguru*. He who uses all his *siddhis* and superior powers to carry the *sisya* right up to the goal is called *Samartha Sadguru*. Ramdas, Guru of Shivaji, and Sai Baba belong to the class of *Samartha Sadgurus*. *Paramaguru* is a *Samartha Sadguru* who looks after the entire welfare secular and spiritual of his disciple.

Diksha Guru who formally initiates the pupil and invests him with *mantra*, power,

Siksha Guru, that is the usual *Guru* who teaches or trains a pupil.

Male Gurus usually prescribed in all *Sastras* for pupils to attain *Moksha*.

Female Gurus specially referred to in *Tantra* works to give *mantra* and training to pupils who aim at *siddhis*, The *Sastras* generally dissuade persons anxious to attain *Moksha* from resort to female *Gurus*. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Bhairavi Lady *guru* trained him in *tantras*. After that came the *Nanga Avadhuta Guru* who initiated him into concentration on *Nirguna Brahman*. Similarly in the case of Sri P.R. Avaste, a lady *guru* initiated him into *Mantra* that is Siva Panchakshari permutations and combinations *japa*, which would result in seeing various god forms and produce various powers. Later he came to Baba. *Kula Gurus* - hereditary. *Other Gurus*.

Prefer the *Kula Guru* to begin with. But if no benefit, then go to a competent *Guru*⁸². Baba was not the *Kula guru* of Nana Chandorkar, but his *rinanubanda Guru* and in a sense the *Guru* of his Destiny.

Was Baba a *siksha Guru* to any? For example, to N.G. Chandorkar and Balakram Manker? Yes It seems so.

Gurus for all round training and teaching for example, Venkusa.

Gurus for some push or help, for example, Sai Baba to Narayan Asram.

Gurus for some *mantra*, *tantra*, special *vidya*, *yogabhyasa*, and *asana*.

Gurus for *Vydeeki* profession and *Vedic* study.

Gurus for secular purposes only. for *tantra*

for spiritual purposes only. and *mantra*

for both. and

for *Moksha*.

Gurus for Inward working *Dakshinamurthi* method and Baba's.

Gurus for Oral teaching mainly. *Gurus* for Both.

Diksha is a special process for removing evil taints and investments of pupil with powers and *siddhis*⁸³. Kinds of *Dikshas* are :

Chakshushi by mere glance, *Sparsa* by touching the head, *Vacha* by words blessing, *Manasi* mentally blessing. *Sastri* by teaching *sastras*,

Yoga that is *Gurus* entering into the pupil inwardly.

Howtri Kriyavati performing homas with fire,

Howtri Jnanavati doing the *homa* mentally, to bless the pupil.

Derivation, *Diiyate Vimalam Jnanam Kshiyate Karma vasana tena diks heti prokta. Di-giving jnana, Ksha* eradicating taints.

Need for a *Guru*. The question whether *Guru* is needed is often times debated by people with great warmth, some holding that there is need and others holding that there is no need. These debates are usually infructuous and they excite and result in loss of peace. A good example is Hemadpant alias Anna Saheb Dabolkar's case on his first visit to Shirdi⁸⁴. He hotly contested for one hour or so and, contended that a *Guru* was an unnecessary fetter and quoted the Gita, in his support. Bala Saheb Bhate took the opposite view and maintained that destiny was supreme and that a *Guru* was had by all. The discussion made Anna Dabolkar less fit to approach the great *Guru* Sai Baba by reason of restlessness. But Baba by graciously revealing his *Antarjnana* of all that passed during the discussion made Anna Dabolkar feel humble and contrite, and he felt that Baba was a wondrous Supreme Power before whom he and his weak powers should bend and give up his "reason" and supposed independence. And thus he became the *sishya* of Baba by the latter's grace and found that destiny had fixed him up, though his reasoning might indicate independence was his proper course. The *Sastras*, for example, Srimad Bhagavata, Bhagavata Gita, Guru Gita, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya, Maha *Narayanopanishad* say clearly that without a *Guru Brahmanjnana* and *Moksha* cannot be attained.

The need is questioned as a rule by persons not yet fit to be *sishyas*, that is those without humility, reverence, patience, receptivity and other virtues, or the proper attitude towards great saints. They must be advised to have *Satsang*. That is they must move with *bhaktas* and fit themselves for further progress. When they are fairly fit, they will get their *Gurus*. It is not the truth that *sishyas* always go out to find the *Guru*. The reverse is often true. There are many noble souls waiting to be approached by persons who want to become *sishyas* and have the proper attitude and training.

Scanta Mahanto Nivasanti Santah

Vasantavat Loka Hitam Charantah

Teernah Swayam Bhima Bhavarnavam janan
Ahetuna Anyan Api Tarayantah⁸⁵

This means, There are great souls who have attained perfect peace and who are working to benefit and bless the world like the spring season. Though they have themselves crossed the terrible ocean of *samsara*, they are ferrying others across without any reward or recompense or motive. *Amayantu Brahma Charinah*⁸⁶, this means, Let students come. Sai Baba himself sent for N.G. Chandorkar expressly and drew hundreds or thousands to himself inwardly and unnoticed by them. Baba says⁸⁷, 'No one comes to me except by my drawing. I draw people unto me under various pretexts such as the worldly objects they want, When a boy ties a bird's foot with one end of a string and pulls the other end, can the bird refuse to come?'. This drawing is mostly due to *rinanubandha*. that is prenatal ties and obligations. This is termed by Bala Saheb Bhate, the irresistible pull of destiny. The need for a *Guru* is patent especially in worldly affairs. People do not expect the children to learn the three,'R's, drawing, etcetera without a teacher. If this is so in the patent material world, how much more essential is the need in the subtle spiritual field? Generally one's spiritual progress and the stages one has to go through, and the way of mastering problems that arise there are often dealt with in books on religion. These books will not suffice to enable one to tackle this subject effectively. Religious literature is a vast forest, through which one cannot pick one's way. Guru Gita says, *Scastrajalam*. It is "*Bahu Kanataka Avrutam*",

Bhava aranya pravishtasya

Ding moha bhranta chetasah

Yena sandarscitah panthah

*Tasmai Sri gurave namah*⁸⁸.

This means, Salutation to the Sri Guru who shows the path to one who has got deep into the forest of *Samsara* and lost all knowledge of even the cardinal directions and got confused". It also adds that the *Guru* alone can help one to go through this forest of the spiritual field. On one occasion this point was raised by Baba apparently accidentally⁸⁹. Baba was referring to the fact that he

himself was a *Guru* who could guide those who came to Shirdi or to his feet to make spiritual progress. On the general question about the necessity for a *Guru*, Baba mentions⁹⁰ the discussion between himself and three other fellow students who were reading *pothi*, *parayana puran*, and discussing how to get realisation.

Baba himself described how he met his *Guru*. Once myself and three others were studying our *pothi*, *puran* and other works and discussed how we were to get realisation.

One said we should depend on ourselves and not on a *Guru*. For Gita says, *uddharet-Atmana*, Raise your self by the self.

The first *sadhaka* here is like the Devil quoting scripture. In quoting Gita⁹¹, he wrests a verse out of its context and misapplies it. The Gita⁹², emphasises the need for a *Guru* to get realisation, and these are ignored and the wrested verse is treated as cancelling the other express reference to the need for a *Guru*. The *Sadhaka* ignores the all important fact that the Gita *upadesa* is given to Arjuna only after he got disgusted with his life situation and he made *Prapatti* and *Saranagati*⁹³.

The second and third *sadhakas* quote the need of qualifications or requisites for *Brahmajnana* as per *Vivekachudamani* correctly. But this is mere reproduction by bookworms. How to get self-control and release from doubts? How to actually feel that the thing our animal, uncorrected nature draws us to is transient and how to overcome our desire for it and feel a revulsion to it! There lies the rub. Books do not solve. Surrender to a loving *Guru* and love towards that *Guru* alone can solve these problems. Baba the fourth *sadhaka* was practical and noted that Surrender and Love to *Guru* were the only solutions.

A second said The main thing is to make the mind self-controlled, free from thoughts and doubts. It is we who are in every thing every where.

A third, The form that is in phenomena is ever changing. The formless is unchanging. So we must always be making *Vichara*, that is distinguishing between *Nitya*, unchanging and *Anitya*, changing.

The fourth disliked bookish knowledge. He said Let us do our prescribed duty, and surrender our body, speech and life to a *Guru*, who is all pervading. Faith in him is the thing needed.

As we rambled through the forest, we met a *Vanajari* one that works in the forest who asked us "where are you going in this heat into the forest?" We gave no direct reply. He kindly warned us from getting into the trackless woods and that to needlessly. He bade us share his food. We disdained his advice and marched on.

But in that vast and dense wood we lost our way. That man met us again and said that by relying on our own cleverness, we had got into a wrong way and that a guiding finger was needed to show the way. "Do not despise offers of food. Such offers are auspicious signs of success in one's endeavour" he said, and he again invited us to take food with him. Again we declined it and went away. I soon felt hungry and I went and accepted a bit of bread and ate it and drank some water.

The *Guru* then said, "What was your dispute?" and I told him all our talk. The others left him and did not care for him. But I reverently bowed to him. Then he took me to a well, tied up my legs with a rope, and suspended me, head downwards, from a tree by the side of the well. My head was about three feet off the water, which I could not reach. And the *guru* left me there and went away, God knows, where. He returned after 4 or 5 hours and asked me how I fared. "In great bliss was my time passed" I answered. The *Guru*, mighty pleased with me, drew me near him, passed his palm over my head and body and spoke to me tender words dripping with love, and he put me into his school where I entirely forgot my father and mother and all attachments and desires. I loved to gaze at him. If he were not there to see, I would not like to have eyes at all. I did not wish to go back. I forgot all other things but the *Guru*. My life was concentrated in my sight in him. That was the object of my meditation. In silence, I bowed. Meaning, Realisation flashed upon me, of itself without effort or study purely by his grace. *Guru* s grace is our only *sadhana*. *Jnana* comes as experience or in its wake.

The above is a correct description of Baba's *Marga* which has been called *Guru Marga* in *Guru Gita*⁹⁴ *Guru Marga* may be defined as that form of *Bhakti Marga* in which faith in and devotion to the *Guru* is the only *Sadhana* for achieving every end including salvation, *Mukti* or *Brahmaikya*, *Satchidananda* conquest of *samsara*, and also all *yoga*, *siddhis* and temporal welfare.

Here Baba showed the applicability of the *Guru Gita*⁹⁵ to religious progress. The one who is acquainted with the 'ins' and 'outs' of the spiritual field, a forest, is a *Vanajari*. The fourth person, Baba, who realised that a guide was needed, and mere talk with bookish knowledge was no use at all to help one to realise God and himself. Above all, the question was not an intellectual one. It was a problem as to how a particular soul was to be raised to realisation, and that was essentially a matter of moulding the entire soul of the student or *sisya*. What is wanted, therefore, is humility, receptivity, and a powerful desire to reach the goal with the aid of a *Guru*, and therefore, a readiness to adopt a *Guru* and surrender everything to the *Guru*, as Baba has said. Everything *Tan*, *Man*, *Dhan* that is, body, mind and possession. Baba sacrificed and surrendered at the feet of his *Guru* as a result of the intense love he bore to his *Guru*. The solution of the problem as to whether there is need for a *Guru* is already reached when the *sisya* gets into the proper humility, receptivity, and longing attachment to the *Guru*, culminating in mutual love. Then realisation is reached. Realisation flashes upon the *sisya* purely by *Guru's* grace as is repeatedly stressed also in *Guru Gita*⁹⁶, in *Jnaneswari* and other works. Baba wound up most appropriately by saying⁹⁰. The *Guru's* grace is our only *sadhana*. *Jnana* comes as experience or in the wake of *Guru's* grace. He alone succeeds who feels the *Guru* is the one thing needed. If *Sastraic* authority is needed on the question of the need for a *Guru* we have it from the *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, and *Itihasas*. *Acharya Devo Bhava*, is mentioned in *Taittiriya Upanishad*. The last verse in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says,

Yasya Deve Para bhaktih
Yatha Deve Tatha Gurow
Tasya ete kathitah hi arthah

Prakascante Mahatmanah

This means, He who has intense faith in God and equally intense faith in the *Guru*, who is treated as God, to him these teaching of the *Upanishads* about God, flash out.

This is to be taken along with *Acharyavan Purushoveda*, which means, It is the man who has a *Guru* that can get knowledge or realisation.

Mundaka Upanishad⁹⁷ says,

Tad vijnanartham sa gurum eva abhigachchet,
samtpanih scrotriam brahma nishtam.

This means, To get *Brahman*, Knowledge and realisation, one should go with fuel in hand to one versed in the *Vedas*, who has realised God.

The same idea is conveyed by Srimad Bhagavata⁹⁸

Madabhijnam gurum scantam upasita Madatmakam

that is, the *Sadhaka* must resort to a *Guru* devoted to God, who has realised God and is calm.

Maha Narayanopanishad also says the same. Authority is also quoted from the lives of *Avatars* and saints and their sayings. Such as, Kabir's maxim *Guruvina Kona Batave Vat* which means, If there is no *Guru*, who will show us the way ? will suffice. It is quite enough to refer to the fact that all great teachers and even *avatars* have had their *Gurus* including Rama and Krishna. Especially on the question as to whether realisation is possible without the help of a *Guru* the *sastras* are quite emphatic. The Katha Upanishad says *Ananyaprokte Gatih Atra nasti*, which means, In this matter of realisation unless some one else speaks it out, there is no way. Guru Gita 191 says :

Yadi api aditah Nigamah

Shadanga agamah Priye,

Adhytamaadini sastrani,

Jnanam Nasti gurum Vina

that is, Studies do not suffice. Without a *guru*, there is no Realisation.

Naayam Atma pravachano Labyah.

Na Medhaya Na Bahuna scrutena.

Yam eva esha vrūnute tena labhyah.

Tasya Esha Atma vivrūnute tanum swam.

This means, This *Atman*, that is, its realisation is not got by study or repetition of *Vedas* nor by keenness of intellect nor by much learning. It is he whom Realisation desires that gets it. To him it reveals its form. Of course this realisation which is personified comes as a matter of fact because there are methods through the grace or bodies of the *Gurus*. Even Vyasa, who taught his son Suka all the *Vedas*, sent him to *Guru* Janaka for confirmation. This King Janaka acted as his *Guru* and enabled him to perceive that what his *Guru* had taught and what the *Vedas* explained was the same as the actual realisation which Suka had in himself. Until and unless such a seal is set on one's realisation, that realisation is not complete. A story narrated frequently in this connection relates to Namdev".

Namdev was an ardent worshipper of Vittal and had frequent *sakshatkara* of Vittal and Vittal even spoke to him. So Namdev was under the impression that he had achieved complete God-realization and self-realisation, and that there was nothing further for him to achieve in the spiritual field. When he had such wrong notions in his head, he once visited an assembly of saints, and there Gora Kumbhar, another saint, wanted to test which of the saints present were ripe or *pucca* and which were unripe or *kaccha*. The *pucca* pot that is the fully baked pot, when struck with a mallet, produces highly musical sound different from the thud which alone is got by striking the mallet on an unbaked or ill-baked pot. Gora Kumbhar went round with his small mallet in hand and struck the head of one saint after another and said, *pucca, pucca*, that is, 'ripe, ripe'. When he came near Namdev, the latter got afraid and did not wish to face the mallet stroke, So he got up and went away. Then Gora Kumbhar said 'unripe, unripe', and 'kaccha kaccha'. The whole assembly held Namdev to be an unripe one, because he had no *Guru*. Then Namdev went up to Vittal and complained. Vittal said that he was really unripe, *kaccha*. Namdev thought that Vittal's *sakshatkara* to him was sufficient. But Vittal answered, 'No', and that he must go to a *Guru* before realising God in full, whereas at the time he was only realising God in Vittal and

not in other forms. He was not able to see every form as God. Then God Vittal told him to go to the *Guru Visoba Kesar*. Namdev challenged Vittal to appear in any form and said he would recognise him in any form. Vittal then appeared first in the form of a Harijan who was baking in a pot a buffalo, recently cut, and next his own child to the great horror of Namdev. Namdev not realising Vittal in that Harijan form came to Vittal and said that he had not kept his promise of coming to test him. Vittal said that he was the Harijan and Namdev was horrified and wanted another test. Next Namdev was told to sit under a tree near a well and go on with his worship, and then Vittal would appear. Instead of Vittal appearing, Namdev found that a *Mohammadan* riding on a horse came and trampled upon all his images and went with his horse to the pond for the horse to drink water. He was fiercely glaring at Namdev and left him. Namdev went on the second day to Vittal and complained to him that he had not come. Then Vittal said that the *Mohammadan* who broke his images was Vittal. 'Can you break images?' was the wondering query of Namdev. Vittal answered 'Yes' and in order to be able to realise God in all forms, he asked Namdev to go to Visoba Kesar. And when Namdev went to Kesar, he saw Kesar, an old man, placing his feet with shoes over a stone *lingam* that was worshipped. Namdev was aghast and entreated that old man to place his foot elsewhere than on the head of a *lingam* which people worshipped. When the old man requested Namdev himself to lift his emaciated legs and lift them up and leave them where there was no *lingam*, Namdev at once lifted up the old man's shod feet and placed them two or three feet off. There, right where he placed his feet a *lingam* shot up. Again when Namdev shifted those feet, to another place a *lingam* shot up. Namdev was greatly surprised, and then that teacher told him, 'You think my shoe is unworthy and that the *lingam* alone is God. It is to enable you to get over this prejudice and wrong notion, you are sent here'. After serving this Visoba Kesar for some time, Namdev went back, and then his *pucca* God realisation was proved by Vittal's test. Namdev sat at a dinner along with his caste men who were all full of *Achara*. When the leaves had been spread and covered with dishes, a dog ran up to Namdev's plate seizing and biting a *roti*, ran away. Every one cried out, polluted,

polluted. Namdev alone lifted up a cup of ghee or butter from his leaf and ran after the dog saying 'Vittal, Vittal, if you are taking only dried bread, it will choke your throat. Take this *ghee* along with it'. People were laughing at the madness of a man who wanted to give extra feeding to a dog that polluted his plate and prevented his dinner. But the dog suddenly assumed the form of Vittal and told him, Now that you have served under a *Guru*, you are able to realise Me in a dog and other forms'. This is an excellent way of teaching the need for a *Guru* to have full realisation of God in all forms, which, according to the Gita, is the only knowledge of God.

Why do we need a *Guru*. The object of seeking a *Guru* may be secular, temporal or spiritual. So far as secular matters are concerned, people take very great care to get appropriate *Gurus* to achieve the highest results. It is in spiritual matters that the issue is more often raised. People are apt to fancy that there is no clear reason to approach a religious *Guru*, especially when other considerations such as one's own pride, one's disinclination to part with goods as *dakshina* to the *Guru*, arise. But if one sufficiently clarifies the position in one's own mind as to what a *Guru* is needed for and what a *Guru* can do, a solution is easy or made easier. Now the main question being spiritual, one might note what there is as authority and next as precedent, and then finally come to one's own reasoning and try to decide the question. So far as the aim or object is concerned, aim with the highest spiritual benefit, that is, to be reaching God or realising God. But even for making out what the goal is, a *Guru's* help is very often needed. Our nature and tendencies due to *poorva karma* are mostly concealed and not realised or controlled. They are so confused as to make many people find it difficult to decide what it is that they want and what is really good for them to aim at. In such cases, even to clarify the issue and to make a man clearly see what is best, a *Guru's* aid is often useful, if not absolutely necessary. When some people realise that in the case of a certain set of *Gurus*, called *Samarthas*, every benefit is achieved including temporal, then the solution becomes easier. So, we shall first take up the question of authority. What is a *Guru* wanted for? Is it reaching God or God-realisation? Is that the highest? For

that the Upanishads in unmistakable terms refer to the necessity of a *Guru*. *Ananyaprokte Gatih Atra nasti* is what the Katho Upanishad says. That is, Unless somebody else points it out to one, there is no other way of finding it. The realisation of Self or God is so very subtle a matter that no amount of trouble in various directions such as study and running up to meet people will alone suffice. Study, *Tirtha Yatra*, *Dana*, other *Punya* works, *Ishta* and *Poorti*, will not themselves show God, but will help one to a purer state of mind from which we can get the proper *Guru* and realisation of God. When he take up the authorities in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*, we notice that a *Guru* is able to achieve not only the above but everything else. Especially in Baba's *marga*, called the *Guru Marga*, the *Guru* provides everything, including food, safety, and protection, to the *sishtya*. That is the present counterpart of the ancient *Guru sishya* system for every study. In ancient times, all knowledge was one. All training was one. Any knowledge was called Veda, including Mathematics, Astronomy, Prose and Grammar. Therefore for any and every learning, teaching was the regular course. A boy went up for *Gurukulavasa*¹⁰⁰ that is to live with his *Guru* for 12 years as part of his household and rendered even menial services and was treated as a member of the family. He reaped a rich reward in having not only his food and clothing and shelter provided for him but also in the attention paid to every other item of his welfare. Consequently the *Guru* and his wife loved the pupil as their child and the pupil loved the *Guru* and revered his *Guru's* wife as his mother. The best illustration is found in some Tamil *puranas*. One *Aruni* was a pupil who went to live with his *Guru*. The *Guru* had a wet land which had to be looked after. The boy was told to go and see the *Guru's* land one day. The boy found that the water needed for irrigating the *Guru's* field in order to feed the standing crops was all running away on account of a breach in the clay ridge. He had no stones with which to fill up the breach, and thinking that the loss was too great, he put his own head and body in to the breach and, as a result, died. That *Aruni* is an excellent illustration of the extent to which the love between *Guru* and *Sishya* could go. So the *Guru Gita* says

Sariram, Vasu, Vijnanam, Vasah, Karma, Gunanyasun

Gurvartham dharayet yastu Sa sishyah Netarahsmritah

that is, the true disciple's body, wealth, skill, action, merit and life are the *Guru's*. Exactly similar to this was the love of Sai Baba towards his *Guru*. The *Guru's* return of love in ancient days was equally strong. The *Guru* if a *Samartha* had every power, including the power to ward off death or revive the dead, and it was the *Guru's* duty to use his power to save his pupil from death. Rishabha says in Srimad Bhagavata,

Guruh na sasyat Svajano na sa syat

Pita na sasyat Janani na sa syat

Daivam na tatsyat svapatih na sa syat

Na mochayet yas Samupeta Mrutyum

This means, He is no *Guru*, nor a Kinsman, nor father, nor a mother, nor God, nor one's husband, who does not avert death when death is near. This was not a mere theory but was the actual fact of practical life due to the *Samartha's* greatness. In Baba's own case, his *Guru* Venkusa averted his death from a brickbat hurled at him by making the brickbat stand still in mid air. Baba himself averted death in the case of a good number of persons such as Nana Chandorkar, Santi Kirvandikar, S.B. Nachne, G.S., Khapharde, Balwant K. Nandaram. Baba expressly mentioned these¹⁰¹. Apart from death, there are numerous other important matters in one's life for example, success. Success very often counts so greatly that people desire success even at the cost of death. It was the *Guru's* function to help the proper *sishya* .to success even in such cases. Referring to *puranas*, the best instance is that of *Sukra Acharya*, Bhrigu the great master of the *Mantra* science, helping his *sishya* King Bali to conquer all the three worlds and make *Indra* shake in his shoes and run up to his own.

Guru Brihaspathi. Brihaspathi told Indra,

Janami Maghavan scatroh Unnateh,

asya karanam Scishyaya upabritam,

tejo Bhrigubhih Brahma Vadibhih

This means, Indra, I know the reason for this success of your enemy. Bhrigu, the *Guru* of Bali, being a *Brahma Vadin*, that is a master of *mantras*, has

exercised his fullest knowledge and power on behalf of his *sisya* Bali, Therefore, one can see that for temporal purposes also, it would be excellent if one can get a *Guru* who has vast powers, that is, is a *Samartha Sadguru*. Let not people think that this power to provide material things is a mere bookish statement and not a reality. Sai Baba, a *Samartha*, has proved in a good number of cases several of which are recorded that he could provide everything and that he undertook to provide everything. Let us take the case of H.S Dixit. Baba told him, 'Why have you any anxiety? All care is mine'. Accordingly Dixit alike in the matter of health, wealth, and religious training, trusted entirely in Baba and left everything in his hands, not only during Baba's life time but even after Baba passed away. He found that he did not trust in a broken reed. On every occasion and in every matter Baba looked after him. In the matter of health, Baba told him, 'You are going to have fever. It is however going to last only a few days. Do not fear'. The pupil found the statement true and was happy. When he had to meet an enormously large claim at a time when his practice and his income were practically nil, Baba helped to find for him a sum of Rs.30,000 at the nick of the moment to pay his creditor. There are numerous instances, of Baba looking after the entire welfare of the *sisyas* and they remind us of Bhadrachala Ramadas and how his large debt of six lakhs of sovereigns to Tanisha Batcha, Ruler of Hyderabad was met. Now the above will suffice to show that a *Guru* is a distinct advantage if not a necessity, when he can provide everything. But as *Samarthas* are not as plentiful as blackberries, and one finds only ordinary *Guru's*, the question may still be considered to be dependent upon the nature of the *Guru* that one gets. But even taking ordinary *Gurus* into consideration, a person is likely to make a very good advance alike in temporal and spiritual matters if he has perfect faith even in an ordinary *Guru*. It is not so much the personality of the *Guru* that matters, as the extent of the *Sishya's* faith. Ekalavya's case is an instance in point. Ekalavya finding that Drona would not be his *Guru* made a clay image of the teacher, and with the aid of that clay image, by his own intense faith in it, learnt all the innermost secrets and essence of the art of archery. Baba told a lady that she could find great benefit by putting faith even in a potsherd¹⁰² and

that the most important thing is the faith of the *sishya* and not so much the merit of the *Guru*. Having said so much, we might next turn to the question of the qualifications of the *Guru* and *sishya*.

Ten

Gurus Qualifications

As the main interest in this book is religious development, we shall take up only the highest of *Gurus*, that is those who attend mainly to spiritual welfare. The description of a qualified *Guru* is given in Manu, in Bhagavata Purana, in Tantra works, Guru Gita¹⁰³ and Dasa Bodha¹⁰⁴ his glories are sung in Jnaneswari. The central fact of *Guruship* is that the *Guru* is approached by an earnest person for achieving highest spiritual welfare. Hence the best *Guru* can only be one who knows what the highest welfare of humanity is, who has himself achieved it and is both able and willing to train and carry others to that state. *Niscreyas* and *Screyas* that is the good, the excellent are the words commonly used to denote the highest achievement in spiritual welfare. The other aim contrasted with it is *Prgyas*. that is the pleasant. The contrast between the two has been brought out from the earliest times for example, in the Kathopanished,

Sreyascha preyescha Manushyam etow

Tou samparikshya vivinakti Dhirah.

Tayoh Screya adadhanasya sadhur bhavati

Hiyate arthat ya vu prayo - vrinite.

This means, Both the excellent and the pleasing confront man. The wise one observes, compares and chooses. It is well with him who chooses the excellent. He who chooses the pleasing loses even pleasure, that is loses his aim. The same is also the choice of Hercules between virtue and pleasure in ancient Greek tradition. Man has, in him, both the brute level based on his animal urges especially Hunger, Sex & Self assertion and the higher or divine level and capacity of raising himself above the brute level. Ordinarily men pursue their lower aims connected with the maintenance of the body and its appurtenances and neglect the hard task of controlling the brute instincts and achieving the

divine nature which alone can carry man to Godhead a realisation of the identity of the *Jiva* or individual soul with the *Paramatma* or Universal soul.

The *Guru* must be from the Vedantic standpoint a realiser of *Atman* that is *Atma Brahma Aikya*, Identity of soul and God and that comes to much the same thing as God-realiser of the *Bhakti marga*. *Vivekachudamani* and other works say that the *Guru* must be in perfect *Atmanishta* or *Brahmanishta*, and the *Bhakti* works like *Srimad Bhagavata* say⁹⁸

Madabhijnam Gurum,
scantam upasita Madatmakam

That is, Krishna says the *sishya* must go to a *Parama Bhagavata* who is thoroughly familiar with, that is steeped in love of a Personal God, who treats God as his own self. *Bhagavata* stresses the effort to reach personal God as the Vedantic works stress the reaching of the Impersonal God or the Absolute. Both are necessarily intertwined¹⁰⁵ for the Personal merges in and emerges from the Impersonal. Both the *Bhagavata* and the *Guru Gita* say that the *Guru* must be a Supreme realiser of the Impersonal Absolute and Personal God. The *Guru Gita*¹⁰⁶ asks how a teacher who himself does not know the Absolute Brahman is to teach it to others and how a stone which itself cannot float across the ocean, can be expected to carry other stones to the other side of the ocean. Instances of ignorant *Gurus* posing as teachers of Brahman are not rare, and persons deficient even in moral qualities posing as teachers of *Daivi bhakti* have played havoc with credulous *sishyas*. Realisation of the Absolute is one of the rarest accomplishments and it is by no means easy for a *sishya* going to a reputed teacher for the purpose of acquiring realisation of the Absolute to see whether that teacher has that realisation. There are no standards or recognised insignia or marks¹⁰⁷ of soul-realisation or God-realisation and several of the external characteristics usually attending *Parama Jnanis* and *Parama Bhagavatas* are easily put on, professed or assumed by others. In this great perplexity, most seekers after *Gurus* have to trust to the repute which the alleged *Parama Jnani* or *Parama Bhagavata* has in society and trust to intuition, *purva vasana*, *rinanubanda* or luck. *Guru Gita* says¹⁰⁸ 'Observe and choose your *Guru*'.

But the chances of observing and testing, which a student has, are hardly sufficient to enable him to arrive at a correct conclusion. Persons who achieve some *siddhis* by *upasana* of petty gods are taken to be perfect *gurus*. Anyhow, the *sadhaka* has to get on, and if he has made a bad choice, he is compelled to retrace his steps and give up a bad choice, and give up a bad or false *Guru* and change for a better one. The *Guru Gita* warns the *sisya*'s from falling into the clutches of false *Gurus*

*Jnana Hino Guruhtyajydh Mithyavadi vidambakah*¹⁰⁹.

This means, a hypocrite who really is without God realisation and who pretends to have such realisation should be abandoned. Verse 200 of *Guru Gita* says that these are

Darsanat bhranti karakah

that is, by external appearance, they mislead people into the belief that they are true realisers. Verse 201 of *Guru Gita* says that the following are false *Gurus*.

Pashandi, that is, those who reject the *Vedas*.

Paparatah, that is persons revelling in sin.

Nasthikah, Atheists or agnostics.

Bheda buddhayah, Those who are under the tendency to oppose one God to another, to distinguish *Guru* from God, and stress differences instead of stressing the unity of existence.

Stree lampatah, Those who are under the influence of lust.

Duracharah, that is the sinful or wicked.

Kritaghnah, that is the ungrateful.

Bakavrutayah, that is, those who like the crane put on the appearance of *Dhyana samadhi* or wisdom or realisation, professing to concentrate on *Brahman*, all the while concentrating on worldly aims and objects. The crane while waiting on the bank to catch fish wears a solemn look, as though it cared for nothing.

Karma bhrashthah, that is, those who have fallen from their duties.

Kshama nashtah, that is, those who are without patience or forgiveness.

Nindyatarka vadinah, that is, those proceeding on fallacious modes of reasoning.

Kaminah, that is, men subject to strong desires for women.

Krodinah, that is, men with ungovernable temper.

Himsah that is, murderous men.

Chandah, that is, cruel men.

Scathah, that is, rogues

Jnana luptah, that is, men without realisation or wisdom.

Mahapapah, that is, highly sinful men.

These have to be avoided. The reason for avoiding such is patent. *Sadhakas* do not always succeed in avoiding them. One Kavle Patel who was a subordinate of *Mamlatdar* B.V. Dev of Thana had such a *guru*, who told him he, Patel, should install a brand new image of the Goddess of Vani in the place of the old image of Vani that he had in his family temple, evidently with the hope of making a great profit out of the new installation, that is *Pratishta* and *Kumbhaabhisheka* ceremonies. The Patel had some doubts and so approached Sai Baba through B.V. Dev and next through Shyama to get his decision in the matter¹¹⁰. Baba, a *Samartha Paramaguru* without any desire for gain, definitely stated that the new image should not be brought and only the old should be installed. When asked about the harm of introducing the new, Baba mentioned that by contravention of a similar advice given by him about the purchase and introduction of a cow, an epidemic was the terrible consequence. The Patel who still believed in his own *Guru*, brushed aside Baba's advice, and brought in the image. And Lo! an epidemic came into the village, and the Patel's wife was one of the first to be attacked. When the Patel appealed to his *Guru* for aid, the latter demanded a gift deed by the Patel of half of his landed property. The Patel then woke up and discovered that his *Guru* was an avaricious *lobhi*, an ignorant man, and a crane like hypocrite and gave up his *Guru* and followed Baba's advice of reinstalling the old image. Where the *Guru*, however, is not a person who is sinful or wicked, Baba was conservative and directed people not to shatter their loyalties. His advice was that people should stick to their own *gurus* however little

their merit might be, and not change over to another *guru* who may have more merit¹¹¹. The *Guru Sishya* relation is more personal than the marital.

The process of the *Brahma Nishta Guru* that is, one with Supreme Realisation of *Atman* enabling a proper *sisya* to get the realisation is compared in the *Guru Gita* to getting another's lamp kindled in the flame of one's lamp. It is the same heat and light which proceed from one to the other, and thus there is continuity in the *Guru Parampara*. The final result also is said to be light within light.

The realisation of *Atma Nishta* or *Brahma Nishta* is very well set out in *Vivekachudamani* and other works, and the requisites therefore are *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Scamadi shatka*, and *Mumukshutva*¹¹². *Vairagya* or detachment is the state when attachment to worldly things disappears. Love of God and love of *Guru* are based on the decreased pull on the heart from wife, child and wealth, So the *sadhaka* has to march on to strengthen his *vairagya* and *viveka* based thereon, in his *Jnana Marga* and strengthen his love of the *Guru* also. These, *Viveka Vairagya* and Love of *Guru* form a virtuous circle so to speak, mutually assisting each other. The development of *scamadhi shatka*, *scama*, *dama*, *titiksha*, *uparati*, *shraddha*, and *samadhana* also fall into the same course. In the *Bhakti marga* also, the increased love of god helps one to overcome the attraction of sense objects and that in turn strengthens one's *Bhakti* or *Prema* to God and *Guru*. The best antidote to worldliness or sense attraction is declared in the *Hamsa Gita*¹¹³ to be worship of God with *Bhakti*, *Bhakti* gradually grows in power and intensity and finally leads to a merger. In *Bhagawad Gita*, Lord Krishna says,

Bhaktya maam abhijanati
Yavan yatcha asmi tatvatah
Tato maam tatwato jnatva
Viscate tad anantaram

which means, A person contacts me and recognises Me by his Devotion, a dynamic process, and learns more and more what sort of personality and what

I am in reality. Thereafter by proceeding higher and higher on to the highest reality he fully realises Me and then merges in Me.

The qualifications of true *Gurus* may be partly inferred from the above statement of who the false *Gurus* are. But the positive marks of a true Guru are set out in various words like the Upanishads, Manu, Guru Gita, Bhagavata Purana, We will take the Guru Gita¹¹⁴ first. He must be a

Tatvanishta Adhyatma jnani
Viveki, Sadhu, Nirmalamananas
Scuchi, Kamakrodha Jit Indriya Jit,
Scanta and Mita bhashana

From these qualifications, namely *Tatvanishta*, which comes along with *Adhyatma jnani* and *Viveki* it is patent that the *Guru* must have perfect *nishta*, that is, must have steady and continuous realisation of *Brahma Atma Aikyam*, which is the real significance of the *Mahavakyas*. Unless a man has reached that realisation, he will not enable the *sishtya* who approaches him to reach it. Mere bookish understanding would only lead to doubts of various sorts as the matter is extremely subtle. As the *Guru* has to impart *jnana* or enable the *sishtya* to realise it, it is not sufficient that the *Guru* should have got into the supreme state of *Brahma Nishta*. He must also understand the theoretical basis which is found in the *Mahavakyas* and in the Upanishads for the same. He must have *viveka*, that is, be able to distinguish between the real or the Brahman and the phenomenal or unreal Universe. There are persons who know a fact or realise a state and yet do not and cannot impart it to others. The omission or inability to impart may be due in part to unpreparedness and in part to incapacity. It is not all who can express what they feel.

The Guru Gita draws a distinction between two sets of *Parama Gurus*, the *Mouni* and the *Vagmi*. The former *Mouni* enjoys the bliss of perfection but does not impart it to help others to get it. But the *Vagmi* expresses his thoughts and realisation as far as possible, and uses language and other means to enable the *sishtya* to acquire that realisation. So the *Vagmi* is the one primarily to be preferred by the *sishtya* at the initial stage, though finally often a *mouni* may suit

his purpose. *Brahma Nishta* is not a mere question of intellect or working up the mind and other phases or facets of the self. It is a unique experience and it comes from the grace of the *Guru*, God, and can come only in that way.

Gurum vinana jananti Mudhas tat paramaam padam.

Mere prayer to Siva and Vishnu will not suffice for knowing God. To know God even a Personal God properly the *Guru* must help the *sishya*¹¹⁵. Namdev's case is the best illustration of this truth. That is why prominent mention in the list of qualifications is made of these, *Tatvanishta* and *Adhyatma jnani*. This will suffice for the present, and later references amplifying the subject may be found in other portions of this book. The fourth qualification, *Sadhu* is a very wide term. But as it is fairly understood, it need not be discussed. *Nirmalamananas* refers to the purity of the heart of the *Guru*. *Scuchi* also denotes much the same thing, for in addition to external purity, internal purity also is implied by the term *scuchi*. *Kamakrodhajit* and *Indriyajit* qualifications are also practically involved in *Nirmalamananas* and *Scuchi*. Unless a person has conquered his lust and other appetites and his temper, he can never be a proper *Guru*. Any *sishya* who approaches him is apt to absorb his lack of control. Those who have not conquered their senses, *indriyas*, their lust, their anger, are generally given to sins and vices, and, therefore, will not only lose mental peace but would also be doing much harm to the very name of Religion and ruining their *sishtyas* and others approaching them. The Upanishads and also the *Guru Gita* point out the necessity for a person to avoid *Gurus* who are tainted with these faults.

Navirato duscharitat Naasanto

Na asamahitah Naascanta manaso vapi.

Prajnaneniva enam apnuyat¹¹⁶.

This means, a person who has not given up bad and evil courses, the man who has not reached calmness and quiet, and who has not gained peace of mind can never realise Brahman that is get *Brahma Nishta*. Amongst the disqualifications mentioned lack of these has been noticed. The last two, *Santi* and *Mitabhashana*, peace, paucity of speech in a *Guru* are patent external marks

of the calm, peace, and quiet that reign in his heart. The Guru Gita points out that at the very sight of a *Parama Guru*, one's heart is filled with *Santi*.

Eleven

Qualifications of Sishyas

This subject like that of the previous Chapter is exhaustively dealt with in the works mentioned therein including,

Dasa Bodha, a great authority not only in Maharashtra but elsewhere. The Guru Gita¹¹⁷, under disqualifications of *sishyas* say that a *Papakarmarata*, that is, one indulging in evil and sins and abuses is loose in his morals and who keeps company with the wicked, should not be given the position of a *sishya*. Other words like *Kulamavatantra* state that *Upadesa* should not be given to,

Arthalubdha, Piscuna, asthira

Bhakti sraddha vihina, Susrusha vimukha

that is, Instruction should not be imparted to the covetous, the miserly, the fickle minded, one lacking *Saburi*, the person without devotion or faith, and lastly to one who does not care to render service to the *Guru*. While on this subject we may take apt illustrations of the above from popular stories as well as from Baba's biography. As for covetousness, it is very well known that a covetous person would ever be thinking of money and the importance of getting it and keeping it, in every matter. The *Niti sloka* says, *Artha Aturanam, Na Guruh Na bandhuh*. That is, Those who are always hankering after wealth, will have no regard' for *Guru* or Kinsmen. A good description of an *Arthalubdha* is in Srimad Bhagavata¹¹⁸. An incident commonly narrated by *Bhagavatars* is as follows:

In a certain community, the caste *Guru* used to tour about and when he visited any place, the local adherents of the *Guru* would each have to pay ten *panams* Rs. 1-4-0. One such *guru* wanting to visit a village, where there was only one *sishya*, had a very unfortunate experience. The *sishya* though very well off, was an *Arthalubdha*, an inveterate miser. So he wanted to evade the hereditary *Guru's* claim for ten *panams*. When he learnt of the time at which the *Guru* would arrive, he went up to the *Tahsildar*, a friend of his, and prayed to be put in stocks and kept there till the time that would be communicated later on. The *Tahsildar*

obliged him and put him in stocks. The *Guru* came and learnt that the only *sisshya* he had was in stocks and so went away. Learning of the *Guru's* departure, the *sisshya* wanted to be freed from the stocks, but at that time the *Tahsildar* was not in office but had gone home. When he asked the peon guarding him to report to the *Tahsildar*, the latter declined, and said that he would not go to the *Tahsildar's* house. So, this covetous *sisshya* had to pay Rs.5 to the peon in order to make him go to the *Tahsildar* and get the order for his release. The man anxious to cheat his hereditary *Guru's* claim for Rs. 1-4-0 had to pay four times that amount to a peon besides having the experience of being in the stocks for some time. Amongst Baba's own followers, these are some incidents to be found in Baba's Charters and Sayings, and one or two of them will suffice here. Baba who read the hearts of every one approaching him, dealt with such visitors appropriately. Once a very rich man, having over Rs.250 in his pocket, had heard that Baba was a *Brahma Jnani* and could impart *Brahma Jnana* to anybody that he chose and would not ask for payment for the *upadesa*. Having a sort of momentary desire to acquire *Brahma Jnana* at the hands of Baba without payment, he straightway engaged a *tonga* at the Kopergaon railway station for a visit to Shirdi and back, fixing up a single fare for both journeys and stipulating that he would return in a few hours. He went up and told Baba that he had come for *Brahma Jnana* which Baba was so capable of imparting and wanted it immediately, evidently treating it as a parcel to be handed across the counter in a shop. Baba fell into the humour of the man and told him that his demand for *Brahma Jnana* was grand, for so many people came to him for other objects and none, for *Brahma Jnana*. Then turning to a boy, he told him to go and get for him a handloan of Rs.5 from a *marwadi*. The boy came and reported that the *marwadi* was absent. Next Baba went on similarly sending word to absent *marwadis* and thus nearly half an hour was spent. The rich visitor was getting impatient thinking that the *tongawallah* would raise his demand. He noted that Baba only wanted a loan of Rs.5, and he could easily give it. But he was oppressed with the fear that a loan advanced to Sai Baba might not be recoverable, and so he would not advance the money. The risk of lending Rs.5 was too great in his estimation for

obtaining *Brahma Jnana*. Finally finding that Baba was still not answering his question, he asked Baba, why he delayed giving him *Brahma Jnana*. Baba's answer was, 'Have you understood nothing. I have been all the while trying to impress you with *Brahma Jnana* even as you are. You see I want five things, surrendered to me, that is, *Manas, buddhi, ahamkar, chitta*. Unless a man thoroughly surrenders himself, and is free from the love of money and love of worldly things, he cannot attain *Brahma Jnana*. When the dawn comes, there will be light, and not earlier. The man then discovered that Baba read his heart thoroughly and that he was too avaricious ever to get *Brahma Jnana*.

In Baba's summary *Nishta* and *Saburi* are the qualifications and their absence the disqualifications in a *sishya*. But it is better to go into the full list given of such disqualifications after saying a word as to the importance of that subject. *Rudra Jamala* says

Vicharya yatnat vidhivat Schishya sangraham acharet
Anyatha Scishyadoshena Narakastho Bhavet Guruh.

This means, The *Guru* should examine and test the *sishya* as ordained by the *Sastras*. Else the *Guru* will go to hell by the *sishya's* taints. Such taints may arise in two ways. First the natural contagion of evil qualities especially in a powerfully evil *sishya* may corrupt the *Guru*. Secondly, even apart from that, the *Niti sloka* says,

Sishya papam Gurum Vrajat

that means, The pupil's sins fall on the head of the *Guru* the *Guru* being responsible for the good and evil done by the *sishya* who has surrendered to him. The phrase *Vidhivat* in the above verse refers to the rule and practice of a pupil going and serving the *Guru* at his place for 12 years after which probation, instruction would be imparted.

Samachara Tantra gives a long list of 27 disqualifications, which are specially mentioned. The first eleven are mentioned in *Rudra Jamala*. They are,

Kamukha, lustful, this being the greatest danger in youth.

Kutila, crooked.

Loka Nindita, notoriously bad.

Satya Varjita, given to lying

Avinita, stiff-necked.

Asamartha, too weak in nature.

Praja hina, issueless.

Ripu priya, a man dear to enemies, as a weak minded and weak bodied person is apt to be.

Sada papa kriya yukta, given to vice and sin.

Vidya scunya, unlettered.

Jadatmaka, dullard.

Then come the sixteen disqualifications of Samachara Tantra.

Body with *doshas-defects*.

Without *Vedakriya*, that is, not having been given the regular *samskaras* prescribed in the *Vedas*.

Without *Ashrama Achara* failing to perform the duties of his *Ashrama* or stage of life. Impure in heart. Lacking in faith.

Mean.

Passionate temper.

Bhrama confused.

Asat charitra, given to bad ways.

Without good qualities.

Adulterous, lecherous.

Deformed.

Samuhaugra, that is, anti-social. Without *bhakti* or devotion to God or *Guru*.

Dvaita cheta, ever doubting and tending in opposite ways.

Ninda Fond of scandal and blame.

Now let us turn to the qualifications of *sishyas* and begin with Baba's summary. Baba stated that his own *Guru* asked him for a *dakshina* of 2 pice and that he gave them to him, who was thereby satisfied. He added in explanation that the two pice demanded by the *Guru* who had no attachment to coins, or earthly objects were *Nishta* and *Saburi*. Baba wanted two things to be given to him. About the impatient Mrs. Khaparde, who was staying with her husband, who was

impatient of the prolonged stay at Shirdi that entailed loss of business and income Baba told Kaka Dixit to give her Rs.200, meaning only *Nishta* and *Saburi*¹¹⁹. Taking up *Nishta* first, one can see that no progress at all will be made by any *sishya*, who has no faith either in the particular *Guru* or in *sastras*, *Vedas* or *Mantras*, Atheists, scoffers, flippant persons, women hunters, combative persons, passionate natures, hypocrites, cruel hearted and wicked people in general, or those revelling in sin, are, as a rule incapable of pure and strong faith and so are unfit either to be *Gurus* or *sishyas*. And in the *sishya*, pride and stiff neckedness, *Susrusha Vimukha* lack of reverence, *Bhakti Sraddha Hina* will be fatal to all progress. No *Guru* in the first place would care to accept a *sishya* who lacks in the proper attitude and spirit and the above defects betray lack of faith, *Nishta*. In the *Guru Gita*¹²⁰, the warning is given that no instruction or *upadesha* should be given to one lacking in faith, for,

Naranaamcha phalapraprou Bhaktir evahi Karanam.

That is, To make the teaching effective, the *sishyas* faith in the *Guru* is a *Sine qua non*. Unless a man has the necessary humility, he cannot approach a *Guru*. *Gurus* have to test a newcomer to make sure that he has or will soon have sufficient humility and receptivity. If one has not sufficient faith in his *Guru*, he will not accept what the *Guru* says in the first place. Taking the case of *mantropadesa*, it may be pointed out that *mantras* do not bear fruit unless the *Japa karta* has faith in the *mantra*. The *Niti sloka* says.

Mantre Tirthe, dwije deve daivajne,

Beshaje gurow yadrasi Bhavana

yasya siddhir bhavati Tadrasi

which means, In *mantras*, *Tirthas* holy places, Brahmins or priests, gods, in astrologers and in the *guru* and medicine one achieves only to the extent of one's faith, which stresses the above point. Faith in God and *Guru* are equally stressed in this verse. See also *Vivekachudamani* stressing need of *Bhakti* faith and devotion for *Moksha*.

Moksha Sadhana Samagrat, Bhakti reva gariasi

that is, *Bhakti* is highly important among the elements that make for salvation. Unless a man has faith, he will not take the proper steps and persevere in following the *mantra japa* or the advice given. All sorts of persons came to Baba. For instance, one Valambi Station Master, who had no faith in Baba and fancied that Baba was unnecessarily honoured, was taken by Das Ganu Maharaj to see Baba at Shirdi. Baba was then washing pots and placing them on the ground mouth downwards. When asked why he did so, Baba explained his symbolical action. He said, Persons who come here are like this. That is, Just as a vessel with mouth turned down cannot receive anything, some persons come to Baba in an unreceptive mood. That was exactly the case with the Valambi Master, and the All Knowing Baba knew it. Persons with poor or no faith would easily give up their *guru* or his advice if any persons talked anything adverse to the *Guru*. When Dr. Mulky was trying for the first time to go and see Baba at Shirdi as advised by his sister, he came up to Kopergaon station. There, the railway personnel vilified Baba and described him as an immoral and dangerous character. Dr. Mulky at once turned back and went away to his own place without seeing Baba. Persons with wavering faith have first to develop stronger faith before they could get any benefit from Baba and Baba graciously helped such people in a number of cases. The above mentioned Mulky was persuaded by his sister again to go to Shirdi, and on that occasion, Baba revealed his All Knowing nature and narrated the above incident and thus helped Dr Mulky to get strong and unshakeable faith in Baba. The *Prarthana Samaj* is against paying any respect or worship to saints and *sadhus*. One of that *Samaj* got a little faith in Baba, but suddenly, he was asked by a disbeliever in Baba, if Baba had the qualification of a *Gunatita* mentioned in the Bhagavata Gita. When with faith thus reduced he came to Baba, Baba asked Shyama to tell him something. Shyama then told him facts to revive his faith. Tampering with faith also is part of Baba's *Lila*. He then understood just as Vittal or God might appear as an idol breaker. Similar help Baba rendered to S.B. Nachne, who also was greatly dampened in his *bhakti* to Baba by the Manmad railway station personnel and their vilification. When he approached Baba, the latter revealed his wonderful knowledge and love for

sishtyas by asking without any one's revealing the facts to him 'Why have you come without your *Mamlatdar's* permission? Do not do so again' and thus strengthened Nachne's faith. Baba's testing of faith is in strict accordance with the *sastras* as stated above, and sometimes the test is very severe. Shri M.B. Rege a double graduate had the great advantage of seeing Baba and Mahavishnu in a vision in his own place and Mahavishnu's direction to him that he should make Baba his *Guru*. He also had another vision of his visit to Shirdi, bowing to Baba, who embraced him and accepted him as his *sishtya*. When he actually visited Shirdi and prostrated before Baba, Baba tested his faith and humility by saying, Why do you bow to a man?. Usually English educated people will not prostrate to a *Guru*. Shri Rege was stunned and stayed at a distance for some hours, being determined to keep on to Baba, as he had shed his pride of caste and title and learnt that treating a *guru* as a man is fatal to all progress. He waited quietly and was then accepted by Baba with a fond embrace.

Gurow manushyata buddhih

Schishtyaya yadi Jayate

Nahi tasya bhavet Siddhih

Kalpa koti scatair apt

That means, that if you treat a *Guru* as a mere man, your *sadhana* will be a failure perpetually. Faith in the *Guru* is specially needed for God-realisation. The *Guru* who has himself realised his soul as identical with *Para Brahman* a truth expressed by *Mainm Allah Hum* of Baba works at the soul of his disciple and after seeing that it is duly prepared, and at the right moment, utters a word or uses a gesture or makes other effort, and the effect is instantaneous. The *sishtya* is drawn into the same state of *Satchidananda* resulting from the experience of *Jiva Brahma Aikya*. This is done in one minute or half a minute, as The *Guru Gita* says,

Nimishena Nimishardhena.

That is, In a moment, or half a moment the *Guru* and his disciple are in that realised state as a result of the *Guru's* action and the disciple's faith. This involves no doubt a previous preparation under the *Guru's* care of the *sishtya's*

soul for a very long time. But the final effect takes no time. It is instantaneous. As dramatically put, in the story of *Janaka* and *Ashtavakra*, the change may be suddenly and marvellously effected. The story goes that King Janaka asked the sage *Ashtavakra* whether it was true that the *Guru* could make the *sisya* have the realisation within the short space of time that exists between a man's putting his one foot on the first stirrup and the second foot on the second stirrup. *Ashtavakra* answered in the affirmative and was prepared to prove it. That *Rishi* spent some time with Janaka in preliminary preparation and then said, 'Bring a horse saddled up'. Then he asked Janaka to put his first foot on one stirrup and to put his second, foot on the other stirrup. Within that time the magic had worked. King Janaka had full realisation of himself as Brahman and went away riding, caring for nothing in the world. Similar instances of the magic effects of faith are found in Tukaram's,

Apana sarika karitat tatkal

Kalavela lagat Nahi tayachi.

As for the obverse, many have experience of the effects of lack of faith even in temporal matters. If a man takes a medicine without any faith, he will often fail to have any effect from that medicine. *Mantre, Beshaje Gurow*, quoted above is absolutely correct, in the experience of all. Persons with strong faith pronouncing certain syllables for curing cobra bite, scorpion sting, etcetra succeed in curing these ailments. If so much faith is needed, and useful in such trivial cases, how much more would be needed when the effort is for the soul to realise its highest goal of *Brahmanhood!* The only technique by which the *Guru* prepares the disciple and the actual means by which the grand denouement is effected are extremely subtle and peculiar to each saint. In Baba's case, these are highly concealed, and yet have been partly revealed. Some attempt will be made to disclose these and other interesting facts about his *Guruship* later on. Let us proceed to consider the authorities on other qualifications of the *sisya*. Srimad Bhagavata¹¹⁵ gives a list of them in these words,

Amani, amatsaro, daksho, nirmamo, drudhasou hridah,

Asatvaro arthajijnasuh anasuyuh amoghavak,

Jaya apatya griha kshetra svajana dravina dishu,

Udasinah samam pascyan sarveshu artham iva atmanah.

this means, The *sishya* must be not conceited, not jealous, tactful, devoid of the sense of possession, that is, ready and willing and eager to sacrifice everything and own nothing, that is endowed with perfect *Nishta* possessed of patience *Saburi* very firm and intense in his love to the *Guru* , not hasty, earnest in his desire to understand and reach the goal of life, free from envy, reticent-avoiding gossip and idle chat and free from attachment to wife, child, home, lands, kinsmen, and wealth, thinking and feeling that every object will serve his purpose. This is a fairly exhaustive list, but the essence of it consists in two items. The first and foremost is freedom from worldly attachment and the second is intense love to the *Guru*. One who has these will naturally be free from envy, jealousy, hastiness, self conceit, and unrestrained speech, and will not be too much attached to wife, children, kinsmen, or wealth. The attractions of the world reduce or even nullify one's disposition and power to love the *Guru* with one's heart and soul. If one loves God, he does not love Mammon, and if one loves Mammon, he does not love God. You cannot love both God and Mammon. In order to develop this unworldly love or to test the presence of these qualifications, *Gurus* not infrequently employ devices when a person first approaches them for becoming a *sishya*. Partly with this view Baba from 1908 established a threshold of *dakshina* for those approaching him to cross. It was a good test from several stand-points, testing reverence to Baba, freedom from narrow ideas and too much attachment to "mine". A man too much attached to wealth is frightened at the demand for *dakshina* and does not approach Baba. A trifler with too much of self conceit like Londa will not pay it. A person who is ready to pay *dakshina* shows his readiness to part with worldly things and may also be ready to part with his worldly avocations and attachments and thus be prepared for intense love towards and surrender to the *Guru*. The love of the *Guru* is the one thing needed, for *Guru* is the sole *sadhana* The key to the readiness to part with money and get indifferent to relatives in earnestness, and that in turn is based upon faith. If one fully believes the *Guru Gita dicta*¹²² that the

Guru is an absolutely essential prerequisite for one's attaining Bliss or wisdom and to make sure that at death there will be no faltering or pain and that a *Guru* would ensure success and happiness in life and a happy death with his help as *Sathee Akaraka*¹²³ then one would be ready to sacrifice everything in order to secure such a *Guru*, and he would also be free from the vices of envy, jealousy, conceit, hastiness, and neglect of the *Guru* for the sake of relatives. Such a person would be anxious to approach the *Guru* and do service to him. He would not be a *Susrusha vimukha*, that is, he will not be disinclined to serve or service-shunning. Even when a *Guru* is not highly esteemed or has defects, the fullest respect due to a *Guru* must be shown by the *sishya* who should not become *Susrusha Vimukha*. Baba set a good example in his dealings with, the *Guru* Javar Ali who was not morally his superior though he was very well equipped and learned in Koran and Shariat and who forced Baba to be his *sishya* taking advantage of his principle of Non-resistance to Evil. Baba whom numbers of people served as worshippers served him by carrying faggots, lighting up fire, cooking, sweeping, and doing all menial services in the presence of all and with sweet complacency. That was due to the fact that Baba had no attachment, no self-conceit, and realised himself as the pure soul that is not demeaned by such services.

Name Manapamanow Sthah

I care not for honour and dishonour¹²⁴ was his view. Baba set the above example and expected people who went to him or to other *Gurus* to show similar earnestness and Baba realised that no one could serve him like that. Once Baba asked, Is there anyone who would serve me as I served my *Guru*! H.S. Dixit, of all the persons mentioned in this book, was one of the best of the *sishyas* who could stick to the *Guru* and show his intense attachment to the *Guru* and non-attachment to worldly objects including wife, wealth, honour, and fame. Yet Baba kindly critical and watchful in order to develop his *Sthairya* and avoidance of *Asthairya* noted at times that Dixit was *Asthira* wanting in firmness though, H.S.Dixit. had more *Sthairya* than most devotees. Baba said on one occasion, *Vo-chalta*, that is, he is wobbling. He is not yet a full *Sthira*. Fullest faith and

surrender cannot easily get into a mans heart after he has spent 40 years, that is the best part of his life at the bar, in politics and in the world. Most people went to Baba without understanding that he was a *Guru* but merely out of curiosity or to get in a cheap way the benefit of serving a *sadhu* once in a way, and never thought of becoming his *sishtyas*.

Even in respect of some of these, Baba assumed the responsibility of a *Guru*¹²⁵. He once told D.V. Sambhare who had his foibles and faults, 'Once or twice I will warn. If the warning is not heeded, our end will be bitter'. Luckily Sambhare took the hint and dropped his vices. Most of the persons mentioned in this book failed to grasp the exact situation of mutual relations between a *Guru* and a *sishtya* and were not thinking of such ideal relations in their contact with Baba. So despite the very great sacrifices that Baba made, hardly one was found fit to become a thorough *sishtya* and his successor in point of spiritual eminence or at any rate possess a sufficient portion of his qualifications, to continue his mission and service from his *gadi*. As we have discussed at present, the question of a disciple's position to attain spiritual perfection and God-realisation at the hands of a *Guru*, we have to lay emphasis on each one of the above qualifications. If any readers are anxious to have such a *Guru* they will discover that the unseen Sai Baba is still such a *Guru*, and if one puts oneself into contact with him and adopts the fullest possible quantum of qualifications herein described, then he has the very best chance of being moulded by Baba into the perfection of sainthood, perfection of *Atma nishta* and *Brahma nishta sishya*. By his *vatsalya*, Baba is still going on, from his unseen position, undertaking the entire responsibility for the temporal and spiritual welfare of earnest devotees or disciples who get prepared and are eager to meet him.

This is the stage at which the question of the technique for getting a *Guru* may be taken up. The orthodox way of getting a *Guru* is slightly different in different regions. In the South, *Dakshinamurthi puja* and *upasana* are recognised as the best means and resorted to. In Maharashtra, *Datta Charitra Pothi* is considered the best means by which one can get a *Guru*. *Parayana* of *Datta charitra*, which is a description of the lives of the three *avatars* of Datta fills one with *bhakti* towards the *Guru* and has frequently helped

people to obtain a *Guru*. The *Guru* obtained is generally a *Guru* living in the flesh. But when Sri V.D. Bhave took a regular *Parayana* of *Datta charitra*, he got the vision of a tomb, and he discovered that, it was the tomb of Sai.Baba. But he was dissatisfied with getting only a tomb for the *Guru* instead of having a *Guru* living in the flesh. So, he went to Khedgaonbet of Narayan Maharaja who in a dream sent him back to Shirdi Sai Baba.

Twelve

Number and Change of Gurus

The number of *Gurus* is a question which can only be solved with reference to the particular subject involved and the circumstances of each case. With reference to secular education, though under the old system of *Gurukula* which involved both spiritual and secular education, there was only one *Guru*, still for those who desired varied education in several subjects, a number of *Gurus* was resorted to. The *Guru Gita* deals mainly with spiritual education, yet following *Srimad Bhagavata* it says that the number may be large.

Madhu lubdho yatha bhringah

Pushpat pushpantaram vrajet Jnana

lubdho tatha scishyo

Guror Gurvantaram vrajet¹²⁶

this means, Just as a bee anxious to have more and more of honey goes from flower to flower, so a student with a strong desire for *jnana* should or may go from one *Guru* to another. The Tamil translation adds here, in case the study is incomplete. Obviously this cannot have reference to the *Guru* who is expected to give salvation, that is, the *Paramaguru*¹²⁷. Verse 90 says, I bow to thee, *Paramaguru*, who is a combination of Siva and Sakti. The *Guru Gita*¹²⁸ set out the eminence of that *Paramaguru* who gives *Mukti* and who is the same as the Trinity. In *Jnaneswari*, the eminence of the *Guru* is said to be giving one everything. Such a person cannot and should not be given up. See *Vasishta's* curse of *Trisanku* who broke away from that *Kulaguru*. *Srimad Bhagavata*¹²⁹, also mentions the advantage of a number of *Gurus*.

Nahi ekasmat Guroh jnanam

Susthiram syat supushkalam

Brahma etat advitiam vy
Giyate Bahudha rishibhih.

This means, Verily, knowledge is not abundant enough nor strong enough, if only derived from a single teacher. God *Brahman* is One without a second. Yet so many *rishis* sing of it in so many ways. This is the statement of the *Avadhuta* addressed to King Yadu, after mentioning that he derived his knowledge from 24 *Gurus*. The 24 *Gurus* mentioned in *Ekadasa Skanda*¹³⁰, are earth, air, ether, water, fire, sun and moon, the pigeon, the python, the sea, the moth, the bee, the elephant, the honey gatherer, the deer, fish, *Pingala* the courtesan, the king fisher *kurara*, the child, the maiden, the arrow maker, the snake, the spider, and adding to the list lastly the body. These are not *Gurus* in the ordinary sense, but from their behaviour, lessons are derived by the *Avadhuta*. Of such *Gurus* twenty four are not sufficient. Even two hundred and forty may be insufficient. But really these are not *Gurus* having *Guru-shisya* relation with the disciple. They are *Gurus* only by straining the meaning of the term *Guru* and not actual *Gurus*. A *Guru* is one who is conscious of teaching and undertaking the duties of a teacher. But in dealing with the actual physical *Guru* at the head of a *Gurukulam* or *Rishi ashrama*, the *Guru* is the only head. In the *Ekadasa Skanda*¹³¹ Krishna advises resort to a *Guru*. He says,

Mad abhijnam Gurum shantam upasita mad atmakam.

that is, Serve the calm teacher who is in close contact and who has become identified with me. Under one such *Guru*, ordinarily the aspirant for salvation can advance sufficiently and attain his object. People like Narayan Asram who got a push or some slight help cannot be regarded as Baba's *sishtyas*. They should and usually did resort to other *Gurus*. Even Das Ganu who got marvellous help from Baba did not regard Baba as his *Guru* but went to *Guru* Islampurkar for initiation and treated him as his *Guru*. In special cases, a *Guru* might not complete a student's course and might direct him to go to others. Amongst *sadhus*, they seem to recognise some as forming a particular class or group. Members of such class or group send their disciples to other *Gurus* of the group. Following this principle, Akkalkote Maharaj, when his body was about to be dissolved, sent

some of his devotees Ramachandra Naik and another to Baba. Madhavanath Maharaj, Bhidekar Maharaj, Kusha Bhav's *Guru*, the Poona Bhimasankar temple Sadhu¹³² Kaka Maharaj of Dhopeswar¹³³ acted similarly and sent their devotees to Baba. Gajanan Maharaj¹³⁴ was recognised as *Gurubandhu* by Baba.

Guru Gita points out the absolute necessity for a change when one has had the misfortune to get under a *nishiddha Guru*. A *nishiddha Guru* is one who draws the pupil to *mantras* with lower aims¹³⁵ such as *mohana*, *marana*, *vasikarana*, and kindred sordid purposes. The soul is bound to get more worldly and *tamasic* under such a *Guru*. Srimad Bhagavata¹³⁶, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*¹³⁷ and Baba deprecated these *siddhis* and warned devotees against their meretricious attractions. When one realises his mistake in getting under a *nishiddha* and has had the beginnings of *vairagya*, Guru Gita¹³⁸ says that the *sisya* being a *vairagi*, a higher *Guru*, a true *desika*, will contact him and draw him to God realisation, that- is, *Brahmanishta*. Verses 288 to 294 describe the glories of this *Parama Guru*, whose very sight will fill one with joy courage and peace. Such a *Guru* is absolutely free from all attachment to *Kamini-kanchana*, that is, women and wealth, fame, *yoga siddhis*, and even the glories of Brahma and Vishnu. They are of two classes, namely the *Vagmi*, who talks, teaches, and trains, and the *Mount*, who spreads silent influence.

So there may be desirable and authorised changes of *Gurus* as mentioned above. Without such or similar pressing causes, a change of *Guru* should not be thought of. The loyalty of a *sisya* to a *Guru* must be more powerful than the loyalty of a chaste wife to her husband. A flagrant breaking of one's ties with the *Guru* may have a serious consequence on one's spiritual progress and in some cases may involve a curse as in *Trisanku's* case. *Vyabhichara* in both the above cases leads to ignominy in the eyes of all reasonable people and thorough wreck in every respect. The pangs of *Guru droha* may also render a sensitive *sisya* miserable. Sai Baba therefore dissuaded people from leaving their own *Gurus* and seeking contact with him. But mostly as Sai Baba was and is an all comprehensive *Samartha Sadguru*, and as most people had no intense attachment to a *Guru*, there was usually no

difficulty. People felt that Baba, the *Sarva Antaryami* was their own *Guru* and their *Ishta Devata*. The first real feeling of having a *Guru* came to most only from Baba. A very interesting case of change or supposed change of *Gurus* will be found in the chapter of P.R. Avaste. He had been initiated into *Siva panchakshari* of some sort by a lady *Guru* at Poona, and he was, with difficulty, persuaded to go along with Sri M.B. Rege and see Sai Baba and Ramakrishna Ayi who also had developed some psychic powers and was acting as *Guru* to some at Shirdi. At the first visit, the oppressive feeling that he was committing *Gurudroha* in going to Shirdi upset his mental balance and made him crazy. He was behaving erratically under strange delusions and fears. Sai Baba directed Sri Rege to take him away from Shirdi. Leaving Shirdi Sri Avaste regained his normal self. By Baba's grace, in his later visits, he was free from such obsessions and he was able to adopt Sai Baba as his *Guru*. As Sri Sai Baba was a *Samartha Sadguru* with vast powers¹³⁹ God has agents everywhere, they have vast powers, I have very great powers', and as he could clearly see the exact state of ideas, feelings, and emotions of everyone coming to him. he could ease difficulties like the above. To a *sisya* of Dolap Maharaj Guru Mule Sastri, he appeared as Dolap Maharaj wearing *kashaya*, and removed his fears of *Gurudroha*. Similarly beyond just loyalty to particular Gods being affected by appro-approaching Sai, to those who had particular fondness for particular Gods, he could show himself in those forms. To a South African doctor as to the Madras Ramadasini who was devoted solely to Rama, he showed himself as Rama. To a Datta *bhakta*, he could show himself as the three-faced Datta. Most Hindus cannot escape fragmentising and localising God, not merely at the start but for their entire life. They feel compelled to adhere to a particular place and a particular form or *Murthi* in their effort to contact God. This localisation and particularisation however necessary or useful to begin the God contact ought to be out-grown and true ideas as in the case of Namdev should replace the earlier ones. Sai Baba, the realiser of *Ekam Sat* with his perfection of power of *Samartha*, could include within himself and show within himself all *Murthis* as they are all parts of God, Bhagavad Gita¹⁴⁰ says,

Angani Anya Devatah

that is, From a part rise to view the whole. Being *Nirakara*, he could be *Sahara* at any time whether he was in the flesh or beyond the flesh that is, after *Mahasamadhi*. Thus he serves as the ideal *Guru*, though he is not in the flesh, as he can and does appear in his old form to deal with his old and new devotees. Several people felt and feel that a *Guru* who is not in the flesh does not suit them, as others feel in exactly the opposite way. But by Baba's grace, all these have been drawn by him to his feet.

In some cases a person is fully saturated with the doctrines of Srimad Bhagavata¹⁴¹

Yat driscyam tat Nascyam, or

Drashtam Vinashtam

that is, all things seen are perishable and therefore not the real Brahman and the Upanishad teachings are that *Brahman* cannot be seen,

Yat chakshusha na pascyati,

yena chakshumshi pascyati,

tadeva Brahma tvam viddhi,

nedam yat idam upasate

which means, *Brahman* is not that which is seen with the eye but that which makes the eye see and *Brahman* is not that which people in the world worship, to such as, no seen figure commands the belief that it is Real and God or *Brahman*. Such a person cannot therefore surrender himself to any God or *Guru* that is seen. To such a person, Baba is a great boon or blessing.

Sai Baba snuffs out of him the critical spirit which says, You are seen and not God. How can I bow to you? Baba's action is not external reasoning but internal unspoken and unseen working. That takes away and clean wipes off all traces of the critical spirit and substitutes for it a humility that says in effect 'I am a worm, Thou art all power and mercy. Protect me, shed light on my path. Take me as a helpless baby in your arm and deal with me as you like'. This is beginning of that person's feeling that the Unseen *Guru* is alive, is powerful and can lead and only he can lead him right on to the goal.

The former *Gurus* of such a person whether *Kula Guru* or adopted *Gurus* have never influenced him, as they were not *Samarthas*, interested in him. So there is no possibility in such a case of any idea of change of Guru or *Gurudroha*. Baba makes such a person feel that Baba is the same as the previous *Gurus*. Baba is *Sarva Antaryami* and makes persons like the above and like Upasani Maharaj, Mule sastri, feel that he is the same as the former *Guru*. Baba elevates the devotee and enables him to see Him as the one underlying force or personality appearing in various forms and called by various names *Vyabhichara* by resort to whom is unthinkable.

In getting Baba as a *Guru*, one is helped on to the Supreme realisation of *Jiva Brahma Aikya*. Those who refer to Baba as a single *Guru* or saint with a particular shape in one place are indulging in their tendency of materialism, localisation, and fragmentisation. The real fruit of Baba's influence is perceiving him as the All-every thing includes one's old *Guru*, one's *Ishta Devata* and oneself. When one has reached that stage, no question of the number of *Gurus* and justification for change of *Gurus* can arise.

Thirteen

Guru Sishya Mutual Relations and Conduct Rules

The nature of the *Guru-sishya* relation may vary from individual to individual amongst the *gurus* and *sishyas*. But on the whole there are certain well defined principles. We shall here take the best *Guru* and the best *sishya* to show what the mutual relations and conduct rules should be. Sai Baba was the best *sishya* and as *Guru* was the best *Guru* that we can think of. So his behaviour and conduct may be taken to establish rules for others. Guruship of a mere technical or commercial sort cannot lead us to correct behaviour or conduct. If the engagement of a teacher is a mercenary affair, then very few of the following rules would apply, though in any case a teacher must be treated with some respect, whatever his capacity or failings may be. But in respect of the ideal, that is, Baba's ideal, a *Guru* is loved heart and soul by the *sishya* and the *sishyas* forsakes everything including his kith, kin and property, and relies entirely upon the *Guru* for looking after his temporal and spiritual needs. The *Guru* responds

with equally strong love to the *sishya's* love. In such a case, it is not necessary to go to the *sastras* to find out what the mutual relations should be. Perfect love casts out fear and shows preparedness for any sacrifice and every sacrifice. A *sishya* like Aruni is prepared to give up even his life to save the water in the wet fields of his master.

Sariram vasu vijnanam
 Vasah Karma Gunan Asun
 Gurvartham dharayet yastu
 Sa shisyah Na Itarah Smritah.

that is, He who maintains his body, wealth or property, knowledge, residence, work, qualities, and life, barely to serve the purposes of the *Guru*, is called a *sishya* and others are not *sishyas*. The counterpart of this is the *Guru's* duty which *Rishaba* mentions to his sons in Srimad Bhagavata,

Guruh na sasyat Svajano na sasyat
 Pita na sasyat Jnani na sasyat
 Daivatn na sasyat svapatih na sasyat
 Na mochayet yas samupeta mrityum

that is, He is no *Guru* nor kinsman nor a father nor she a mother nor he a husband nor he a God, who does not save one's life when one is threatened with imminent death. The *Guru-sishya* relation is perfectly mutual. If the *sishya* must sacrifice even his life for the beloved *Guru's* property, the *Guru* also sacrifices his life and everything for the sake of *sishyas*. Baba's *Guru* saved him from being stoned to death by ordering the brick that came near his head to stand still in mid air, *Sthambhanam*, and it stood. Baba himself said he would give up his very life to save those who were constantly thinking of him and were absorbed in him¹⁴².

It is noted in G.S. Khaparde's diary that Baba pointed out to him that his body had got emaciated, his digestion impaired, and his food reduced to bare bread and water, due to worries of looking after innumerable devotees. Yet in spite of this, he must, up to the time of his departure from this world go on doing his duty whatever be the consequences. Baba put his hand¹⁴³ into the fire *Dhuni* at *Dwarakamayee* to save the life of a blacksmith's child that had fallen into a

blacksmith's fire elsewhere. And, when asked about the pain and the trouble caused by burning. Baba said that he had saved the child and that God would cure his burn. It is believed that when Baba passed away in October, 1918¹⁴⁴. Tatya Patel was lying ill in a critical condition, and Baba gave up his own life to save the life of Tatya, his much favoured pupil to whose family he was indebted all his life, especially in his earliest days, for sustenance. Giving up life is very dramatic. But what is more painful and requires greater ability perhaps is to devote one's life to constant service not minding any question of health or comfort. That is the real *Seva* referred to in the Bhagavad Gita¹⁴⁵, as commented upon by Baba himself. The *sisya* as stated by Lord Krishna has to render perpetual service to the *Guru*, having dedicated to him at the very beginning his *Tan, Man, Dhan*, and he must not retain any idea when rendering service to the master that he is free either to render or not to render service, but think he is only carrying out his surrender of body and mind by devoting every little power possessed by him to the service of the master. Instances may be found of *seva* in various parts of this book, and the instance quoted in the earliest Sanskrit authorities on the subject of *Guru-sisya* relation is generally the collection by the *sisya*, of fuel for the *Guru*. In ancient days forests abounded and fuel could be got by any one who went into the woods to collect sufficient dried branches. Fuel was wanted for maintaining the. sacrificial fire as well as the fire for cooking the food, and the third fire in each *Ashram*. Therefore, the *Mundakaupanishad* says,

Tat Vijnanartham sa Gurumeva Abhigachchet

Samit panih scrotriyam Brahmanishtam.

that is, For obtaining learning or wisdom, a student ought to go to his *Guru*, well versed in the knowledge of *Brahman* that is, a man of God realisation carrying a bundle of faggots in hand. This might be thought inapplicable to modern days by reason of our reserved forests, but in Baba's case, when he was taken by Javar Ali as a *sisya* to Rahata, Baba did such work, namely, carrying faggots, heating water and cooking the food for his *guru*. And the *Guru Gita* says that one ought to do menial service and stand like a menial servant waiting upon the *Guru* at all times *Nati Dure Nichavat*. That is, like a peon at the beck and call, he must wait

for the *Guru*'s orders. Baba did such work not minding the hardships involved. Baba always set the example in everything that he undertook, and his services to Javar Ali were a good example set to others for what they ought to do for their master. Many pupils however go out from life to *Gurus* as lawyers, retired teachers, and merchants, and they cannot be expected to carry faggots or cook food for their master. But even these are seen in several *Ashrams*, like those in the Himalayas and other hills, to be rendering service of various sorts suited to each one's capacity. The essence consists in self denial and a readiness to serve willingly a master from whom one expects the most valuable aid if not everything. That is why, the Gita lays emphasis on *sevaya* in the above verse. Incidentally it may be noticed that service is only one form in which the disciple chooses to help or favour his master. The master's interest must always be treated as the interest of the pupil and the master's reputation, property, good name and economic welfare, must all be the chief interest that guides the conduct of the pupil. This is the basis of the several rules we shall note below as laid down in the *Guru Gita* and other books. The pupil has to render service and this is both a gain and a burden. Physically it is a burden. Sentimentally it may be a burden, though it ought not to be felt as a burden by a really enthusiastic disciple. Such enthusiastic devotees take pride and pleasure in serving their master. The gain is chiefly the privilege of *Satsang* of being always in attendance upon and under the eye of a great and powerful *Guru*, a perfect specimen of purity, wisdom, courage and goodness. Such a *Guru*, a real saint, will purify one of taints, *durvasanas*. All previous traces of bad tendencies and habits would be burnt up by such contact. *Guru Gita* says *Dussanga* has to be avoided by a *sisya* in order to become fit to be a *sisya*. But the traces of *Dussanga* may still be there, and the *Guru* burns up all such evil traces. Apart from bad company and vices, there are a number of defects in the pupil, and the constant companionship and advice of the *Guru* will remove these and make the *sisya* fit to take further steps on to reach the highest goal of knowledge and perfection. The *sisya* has generally, in spite of himself, a tendency to be proud of his caste, his learning, his good qualities, his wealth and his family. These are called

Ashtapasas of the *sishya*, and the *Guru* has to bum up all these eight pasas or knots, obstacles or hindrances of the pupil. The *Guru Gita* says in verse¹²⁹,

Karuna Khadga patena
Chitva pasa ashtakam sisoh
Samyak Ananda Janakah
Sadguruh sa Abhidhiyate.

that is, The *Guru's* grace is the sword with which he cuts off the eight bonds of his child, the pupil and thereby provides for his happiness. Such a person is called a *Sadguru*. The eight bonds are stated to be,

Daya compassion wrongly directed like Arjuna's compassion for his foes in battle
Shanka doubts,
Bhayam fear,
Lajja false sense of shame and shyness,
Ninda tendency to scoff or find fault,
Kula pride of family, caste,
Seelam pride of high breeding and
Dhanam pride of wealth.

Of course, these are only some instances of the teacher's attention to his pupil's nature. The perfect *guru* has himself perfect freedom from all vices and defects, from all ignorance and delusions, and by constantly being with such a *Guru*, a competent *sishya* absorbs all the qualities of the *Guru* in himself. By intimate contact between two loving people, each absorbs the likeness of the other. They talk alike, they think alike, they feel alike, and they behave alike. In consequence they become of the same nature. A powerful fearless, ever self-sacrificing, ever luminous, and calm *Guru* turns his *sishya* into an equally fearless, self sacrificing, ever luminous and calm person. *Jnana* thus flows from the *Guru* on to the *sishya* through these moral traits as also by the *Gurus* direct action on the soul. The *Guru* engages in *dhyana* and *Atma Nishta* and the *sishya* by intently concentrating on the *Guru* gets his *Jnana Nishta*. He is able to shake off all attachment, become thoroughly *sattvic*, and to rise to the fullest understanding and appreciation of *Brahma Jnana* or *Brahma Nishta*. The *Mahavakyas* which

get not merely repeated but also embodied in the Guru soak into the *sishya* and he also becomes an embodiment of them. This is the highest achievement of the *Guru*. It is for that the *Guru* is approached by the *sishya*. But many other feats are achieved before and in addition to this final achievement. The *Guru's* grace is bread and milk to the pupil and the *Guru* is treated as the only *sadhana* by him. These are not merely the words of Baba but are also found in the *Guru Gita* written centuries ago in *Skanda Parana*. Baba though never taught reading, was an All-Realiser and did not require any study of any *purana* for his purpose, being thoroughly absorbed in his *Guru* who gave him all knowledge, wisdom, and realisation which is the goal of all discipleship. Baba never having touched a single book, so far as we know, in his life and was never taught even the alphabet of any language, knew languages, thoughts, had all achievements, intellectual, moral, mental and could interpret any part of any scripture¹⁴⁶. How did he get that knowledge? By *Guru seva*! That was his answer. So, *Seva*, though looked down upon as something menial and disgusting and as a thing to be avoided by fashionable people, is the potent means by which Baba achieved the highest goal of life. One of the disqualifications, noted in a previous chapter, for a pupil is *Seva Vimuka*, that is, Disinclination to serve. One sees what a fatal drawback it will be in a *sishya* to assert himself and say 'I will not serve'. Such a person lacks humility and can achieve nothing. Tasting the *pada tirtham* of the *Guru* is said to be the means of attaining knowledge.

Perfect faith in the *Guru* and treating him as God, enables a man to take the water used for washing His feet, either in his mouth or on his head, as being more valuable than all the *tirthas* in the world and thus derives the fullest benefit. That is, to get rid of all bad *vasanas* or evil tendencies and by purity of his heart to be fitted for perfect *sattva* and illumination.

Conduct rules are the result of very great respect and regard for the *Guru*. *Puja* is enjoined. Avoid familiarity. Avoid contact with the irreverent and avoid listening to *ninda*, that is blame or disrespect of *Guru* or of saints.

Kularnava Tantra says, If any talk ill of the *Guru* shut yours ears and go away very far so as not to hear the talk and then have *Guru Namasmarana* to restore *Bhakti*¹⁴¹. Baba endorses this view.

MUTUAL RELATIONS OF GURU AND SHISYA

We have already noted that the *Guru* has to be treated as not in the least different from God, but as identical with God, on the authority of the Upanishads and numerous other works. A proper *sishya* must have therefore *Para bhakti* and *Dridha Sauhruda*, that is, strong devotion and attachment to his *Guru*. The latter returns the love and proves it by looking after and undertaking to look after everything that concerns the disciple temporally or spiritually. Behaviour naturally follows this heart felt love. The *sishya* feels there is nothing higher than the *Guru*

Na Guror Adhikam Na Guror Adhikam,
Idam eva Sivam, Idam eva Sivam,
Idam eva Sivam, Idam eva Sivam
Viditam, Viditam, Vijanam, Vijanam Viditam,
Viditam, Vijanam, Vijanam.¹⁴⁸

this means, There is nothing higher than the *Guru*. This is God, This is unique, This is known and experienced.

By meditation *Guru jnana* dawns upon the pupil¹⁴⁹. The *Guru Upadishta Marga* that is, the direction of the *Guru* has of course, to be strictly followed for purifying the heart. The ever changing phenomena are fleeting and unworthy of attachment. Hence turn the mind away from them on to the *Real Brahman*. This advice of the *Guru* must be followed¹⁵⁰. Peace of mind follows by *Guru's* grace¹⁵¹. The numerous directions in the *Guru Gita* as to the propriety of behaviour follow from the above attitude and relationship. The conduct rules are as follows.

A *sishya* should not and can never be blaming his *Guru*, and should not feel pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, contempt or entertain any similar feelings towards the *Guru*. Of course, he cannot threaten the *Guru*¹⁵², nor treat himself as equal¹⁵³. But on the other hand, he must fall at the *Guru's* feet, drink the

Padatirtha water washing the *Guru's* feet and always think of the *Guru* as long as his body lasts.

Guru is the *Sathee Akaraka* that is, the last moment helper, the one person or force that can help to save the *sishya* at the moment of his death and make the end happy, which wife, children, wealth, fame, cannot positively do, which infact they render painful. If the *Guru* has been rejected or forgotten, then at the last moment, the *sishya's* mind will be greatly perturbed and agitated or frightened¹⁵⁴.

The *Guru's* orders must be strictly obeyed and carried out personally and not delegated to others. Nothing should be done without consulting the *Guru*.

In the *Guru's* presence, the *sishya* must avoid:

Playing the part of a master and giving *upadesa* or orders,

Drinking spirituous liquor,

Sauntering about jauntily,

Shaving,

Placing oneself on a cot,

Stretching one's legs,

Getting oneself shampooed or having other similar enjoyment,

Dressing foppishly or ornamenting oneself,

One must day and night attend upon the *Guru* like a peon.

One must not take the *Guru's* property.

What he gives must be respectfully received.

The *Guru's padukas, asana* must all be respected and not touched with the *sishya's* feet.

When the *Guru* moves, the *Sishya*, like a shadow, must follow him.

The *Guru's uchchishta* remnant of his eatings, must be consumed reverently as sacrificial offerings and not given away¹⁵⁵.

No untrue or harsh, proud word or command should be uttered in the *Guru's* presence.

The *Guru* must always be addressed as *Prabhu, Deva, Kulesa, Swami, Raja Maharajah* with reverence¹⁵⁶.

The *Guru* saves the *sisya* from curses of Gods and men and even from death¹⁵⁷.

The *Guru's* name must be used as the Supreme *Mantra*¹⁵⁸ which will work wonders. By bare service to the *Guru*, the import of the *Mahavakyas* will be absorbed by the *sisya*¹⁵⁹. The *Guru* is full of *Mahavakya* illumination and the *sisya's* torch is kindled from that flame and *Atma Jnana* is the result¹⁶⁰.

The *Guru* must be meditated on, *dhyana*, and bowed to *pranama*, as being the Universe and all Gods¹⁶¹ as *Paramatma Swarupam*, as *Satchidananda Bhavatita*, *Nitya Puma*, *Nirakara*, *Nirguna*, within one's own self¹⁶². This is illustrated by a mirror reflecting a mirror, *Soham* represents that state¹⁶³. The *Guru* must be treated as *Angushta Matrah purushah*¹⁶⁴, in the heart¹⁶⁵. According to *Bhramara kita nyaya*, *Srimad Bhagavata*¹⁶⁶ the *sisya* thinking of the *Guru* becomes That, *Tat*¹⁶⁷

Yatra Yatra manodehi dharayet
Sakalam dhiya Snehat
dveshat Bhayatvaapi
yati tat tat sarupatam.

that is, Intense thought by love, hate or fear on a form transforms one into that form

Guru dhyanam tatahkritva
Svayam Brahma Mayo bhavet
Pinde pade tatha rupe
Muktas tena nasamscaayah.¹⁶⁸

this means, The *sisya* becomes a liberated soul in *Pinda*, that is in *Kundalini Sakti*, in *Pada*, that is by reaching the *Hamsa padam* and in *Rupa*, that is by attaining .the *bindu* and finally becoming the *Rupatita*.

The above summarises the conduct rules for the *sisya* and the benefits he attains thereby. Whether these rules are contained in *Saivaite purana*, *Skanda Purana*, or in *Bhagavata Vaishnavite Purana*, the course of conduct prescribed and the fruits are the same.

Fourteen

Obstacles and Objections to Sai worship

The obstacles to Sai worship that have existed from the very beginning of Sai's rise to public notice and which continue up to now are numerous. Only some have been mentioned till now on account of the great and prominent part those obstacles played in the initial stages of the Sai movement. We shall notice, however, some more obstacles to Sai worship. Obstacles spring not merely from those who are against religion and who care nothing for saints or god, but also from those who are religious and professedly religious too and exulting in their orthodoxy as the special form in which God has to be approached and religion exercised. Orthodoxy in all religions played a great part in the resistance to the Sai movement. The Gita declares that all greatness is from God¹⁶⁹ and its worship is the worship of God¹⁷⁰, opposition to Sai worship is greatly toned down among Hindus in this century. Persons who have fixed ideas, a sort of straight jacket for religion, and who assume that everyone must bend to their views, or be considered irreligious is the best description we can give of Ultra orthodoxy. These look askance at anything new which they have not understood. In the case of Sai Baba, he was very little understood in his life time, and even now, after so much trouble has been taken to unearth all the experiences of many devotees, and to arrange them and see what light they throw upon Baba, his ideas, his methods, and the plan he had, still we are left in considerable doubt about Baba on many an important matter. No wonder orthodox people with self-assurance as to the correctness of their modes and as to their being in high favour with God, on account of their religious orthodoxy and proud of the position given to them in society, fail to understand Baba or his methods and work. Of course it is not all orthodox people that object to Sai. If Baba turned water into oil, several of these orthodox would not get convinced thereby, but explain it away as a piece of magic worked with the help of some inferior power and for some worthless purpose. Even Syama alias Madhav Rao thought so at first. They would not take the trouble of calmly studying all the facts and arriving at a conclusion as to how that particular *chamatkar* came to be exhibited, what Baba's motive was, and how Baba intended that the *chamatkar* should operate.

Baba was really anxious to humble the two *vanis* who uttered lies and said that they had no oil when they had it, and to make them realise that God has various ways of helping *bhaktas* like Baba, when people like the *vanis* should refuse their help. Baba used that occasion for teaching very good lessons to the offending *vanis* and perhaps incidentally realised that the effect upon large portions of the masses would be to make them no longer deal with him as a negligible *fakir* but as a person who enjoyed at least some of God's powers, if not all, and who is really a Godman. The very highly orthodox, however, would not draw these conclusions. They kept up their attitude and would not take any notice of Baba and his work. The immediate result of the *chamatkar*, namely, worship of Baba in the Mosque by some unsophisticated villagers, would and did stiffen the backs of several of the orthodox and make them abhor its result, a Mohammadan worshipped by Hindus in a Mosque. To treat that as a good act of religion was something unthinkable for them. They could only condemn this as being a great evil a doubly bad affair and the *chamatkar* that produced this as a still greater evil. This explains how the railway personnel at Kopergaon and various people like the Valambi Station Master and others continued lecturing to people that Baba was a dangerous and immoral man or at least not a person for any good work of God. Many of the orthodox also have a sort of group feeling and they hold on their ideas decade after decade uninfluenced by the progress of events. Unfortunately, in the case of Sai Baba, for a long time, there was no history or explanation of Baba like the present work, nothing that could enlighten even a fairly calm and impartial member of the orthodox group or help him to study Baba and arrive at correct conclusions. No wonder that Sai Baba was misunderstood by many in the regions around Shirdi and in Maharashtra. Even now a number of the orthodox in the various States, to which the Sai movement has spread, continue to be moving and thinking on the old lines. All sorts of flippant and frivolous objections to some act of Baba or some fact about Baba which comes to their notice are raised and considered important by them. Even in January 1955 some one ran up to the All India Sai Mandir and said that an objection was raised as to the inconsistency in Baba. He asked, 'If Baba was Venkusa's *sisya*

and Venkusa was a worshipper of Tirupati Venkatesa, then Sai Baba ought to have worn *Namam'*, that is, three perpendicular marks on his forehead, whereas several pictures of Baba exhibit him with three horizontal lines on his forehead. This person who raised this objection was a very well meaning and educated man. Yet the objection struck him as a forcible one. Then he had to be shown that.

Baba did not wear any mark at all on his forehead,

The pictures that the objector had seen were pictures drawn by worshippers of the present day who knew only that Sri Babu Rao Chandorkar and some other worshippers had put on Baba horizontal lines on the forehead to which Baba finally yielded assent and nothing more.

The whole thing was a mere external observance of very little significance.

That if Das Ganu and similar Vittal worshippers could put on Baba's head vertical marks, Baba would have raised no objection either. Baba's explanation for his submission to these forehead marks was, 'What am I to do? This worshipper believes that I am his *Guru*, Kaka Dhopeswar, and puts marks on me which he put on his *Guru*.' Therefore, it must be understood that Baba was neither *Saivaite* nor *Vaishanavaite*, either in his views or in his external observances as to painting his forehead, and that he took no interest at all in all this.

Baba was perfectly neutral and submitted to the peculiar idiosyncracies of his worshippers in order to avoid offending them. Left to himself Baba would have no mark on his forehead. Baba did not believe at all that there is a separate Siva and a separate Vishnu as Gods. To him, there was only one God, and that might be called Siva or Vishnu, Vittal, Rama or Datta, Khuda or Khandoba or Devi or Allah or Hari with equal justification, for a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. God is only one and not many. To him, God was to be pleased by the right loving approach from the heart, while the external marks and observances or names might be varied and be either indifferent or worthless. Another objection raised by a Hindu at Madras was that Sai Baba had no right to allow the performance of his worship by Hindus or for that matter by anybody.

This objection was raised also by a European Missionary at Rahata to whom the worship of Baba was a mortal sin. This worship shows that he puts himself on a level with God, so said that missionary. The missionary's objection was stated with reference to another Baba but that objection applies equally to Sai Baba or anybody else who is being worshipped. The orthodox objection is also the same that Sai Baba, being a man, ought not to be worshipped, and allowing himself to be worshipped shows that he is unfit to be respected even. It would take a very long time to convince each of these objectors and show how Baba's worship was first objected to by himself and finally acquiesced in by him in the interest of the vast masses and of the nation and of humanity and that his worship is the *Guru* worship ordained by the *sastras*. In spite of all our arguments, such critics would still continue unconvinced, because their heart is not convinced. A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. Therefore, wise Sai *bhaktas* do not wish to waste their time in trying to convince such hopeless opponents. But here we may point out the answer to such criticism. Sai Baba's agreeing to his worship, as has been stated already, was not because he wanted plantains, coconuts, edibles, camphor, *stotras* and all the rest. It was justifiable even according to Hindu scriptures and was productive of various benefits, individual, national and international. It has the remarkable support of every sacred book of authority amongst Hindus whether *Saivaite*, or *Vaishanavaite*. The *Acharya* or *Guru* is in every Hindu community to be worshipped with the same reverence as God¹⁷¹. It is only in that case the fullest benefit of divine influence can reach the *bhakta*, through the *Acharya*¹⁷². A powerful and pure *Vairagi* like Sai Baba gains nothing by anything done at the worship. Baba could command all wealth and all conveniences by his wonderful powers, but he did not care for any of these. It is not for these petty things that *Acharyas* like Sai Baba agree to be worshipped. They agree to be worshipped to carry out the divine plan that the vast masses of pious people should approach God through a Godman, and derive all the benefits which they wish to attain, temporal and spiritual alike. Such answers do not easily convince our orthodox friends. They continue to contend that the existing gods and institutions provide sufficient scope for one's religious

inclinations, and that the addition of an extra god called Sai Baba is unnecessary and wrong. In the first place, it must be remembered that Sai Baba is not an additional god. If you have reverence for him and treat him as God, he is God, and there is only one God. If, however, any one is accustomed to think always in terms of polytheism and wants additional gods, one after another, he is at liberty to manufacture out of Sai Baba an additional God if that suits his need. But really each person that is worshipped is not an additional God. The objection that there are 33 crores of gods and that there is no need to add one more to that very large number fails because the number of persons worshipped according to the Upanishads and *Sastras* is not 33 crores but more. Every *Acharya* is a *Deva*, just like every *Pathi*, husband and parent to the person concerned, and so if we count the number of *Acharyas*, fathers, mothers, husbands and who are worshipped or who can be worshipped, it will run into many hundreds of crores. This is a patently frivolous objection, because we are not concerned with the number of gods. No earnest man is bothered, when he is going on with his *puja* or worship of his own gods in his home or temple, about the existence of other gods whom others are worshipping elsewhere or their number. Why should not others go on worshipping their own forms of God? What harm does that do to any one? The objections are so patently frivolous to one who has real *bhakti* in Sai that we need not dilate on the subject. We may stop with this, that is, that there is no end of frivolous objections that can be raised. There is a saying in one of the southern languages that if you do not like a person, say a wife, any touch of that person's hand or leg or anything else is an offence. So, we may dismiss this objection to Sai Baba worship on the ground of adding to the number of gods worshipped in the country as due to prejudice and not worthy of further attention.

Another obstacle that arose to Sai worship was from the conservative set, who consider it wrong for Sai Baba's devotees to ignore what they insist on as the essentials of religion, for instance, the putting on of marks and the observance of ceremonies. It is not true to say that Baba discouraged the orthodox people from following the use of these marks or the performance of ceremonies, where the usage still lingers. He distinctly encouraged the

performance of the post funeral ceremonies, in the case of several of his *bhaktas*, for instance, of S.B. Nachne, S.B. Dhumal, and Upasani Baba. In fact when people were beginning to doubt whether there was any use in performing post funeral ceremonies for fear that they might never reach the departed or prove of any use, the fact that Baba rendered help in the above cases and assured all of post-mortem life has made some of the loving *bhaktas* follow the usual postmortem ceremonies with greater faith. Baba knew that the subtle body or *Sukshma sarira* survives the *sthula* gross and that certain benefits could be derived and would be derived by the recently departed soul by the observance of these ceremonies. Therefore, he never objected to these ceremonies. He, however, had the remarkable power of guiding and directing the departed souls at the moment of death and thereafter, and his advice and action in the matter are of special importance to Sai *Bhaktas*. Baba told S.B. Dhumal to perform the *Masik sraadha* ceremony for his wife at Shirdi and added that he would see that her soul was benefited. It is clear that Baba attached some meaning and value to these ceremonies. But the main interest in the case of departed people is not merely the feeding of the hungry *Sukshma* or *Linga sarira*, astral body. The main interest is the help one can give it to reach God, which is the goal of the above mentioned states or our present life. On this matter Baba said If a devotee should die even a thousand miles away, I draw the spirit to myself and see that it is helped. About Upasani's third wife he said to the greatly agitated Kasinath Upasani Maharaj that her soul had come to him. As Baba is identified with God, the statement can only mean that the departed soul had reached God. Such a solace is a very valuable solace and Baba gave it to several people, not only to Sri Upasani Maharaj known as Upasani Baba but also to M.B. Rege who lost his child. This matter is dealt with later on in another chapter. At present we shall only say that the objection that Baba interfered with the customary and orthodox ceremonies for the living or the dead is not true and sound. Baba allowed everyone to carry on whatever he considered proper unless there was any direct harm in allowing it. However objections are not always well thought out and based on reason. It is the conservative feeling that all is well with the objectors;

that they are safe with God and with men, that is at the root of the objections. If some one starts something outside the accustomed circle and groove of ideas, several at once condemn it as being totally wrong, for to them, only their ideas and their practice are right. When we realise that such is the nature of orthodox and other objections, we can see how orthodoxy and similar criticism failed to stem the torrent of the Sai movement. That movement is based upon very sound principles of religion, morality, philosophy and the fact that Sai Baba is a God realiser of the highest level working to benefit humanity itself, that he was a *Parama Bhagavata*, a *Parama Jnani*, and a perfect master of all *yoga*, whether understood from the Sufi or Hindu or Muslim stand point. Throughout his life he carried on a very noble mission and acted mostly unperceived as the *Guru* and protector of many souls, though expressly and avowedly acting as *Guru* to some. The basis of Baba's dealing as *Guru* with such *sishtyas* has to be explained and understood, and that is why a number of chapters in this book have been devoted to the headings of *Guru* Worship, Qualifications of *Gurus* and *Sishtyas*, their relations, number of *Gurus*, before a detail account of the *sishtyas* is given. For Baba has acted for many decades as the *Guru* and had plenty of instances which are covered by what has been said in these chapters. A small percentage of his earlier *sishtyas* were orthodox to some extent. The extreme opposition by the orthodox to such Sai worship would naturally fall blunted and made ineffective where the worship of and adherence to Baba was by such learned and eminent persons like Narayan Govind Chandorkar, Deputy Collector, B.V. Dev, *Mamlatdar* and so many others, all at the head of orthodox circles. As time went on, the number of orthodox men in eminent positions joining the Sai movement and treating him as their great Divine *Guru* increased, and that is what is going on even now in the twentieth century. It is clear that it was Baba's intention to overcome orthodox objections by mere lapse of time, allowing the Sai worship by its intrinsic merit to extend and overflow to all parts in India and thus make the orthodox realise that the great oceanic movement has vast force, Divine force, behind it. Even one of a very dull imagination would be forced to see that the movement which has covered the whole country and in so short a

time, say within the past 20 years, must be Divine as explained by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Yadyad vibhutimat satvam

Srimat Urjitameva Va

Tattat eva avagachcha tvam

Mama Tejo Amsa Sambhavam.

this means, Whatever has abundance of splendour or has all prosperity, or strength, know that as a manifestation of a small fraction of Myself. So, says Lord Krishna. The essence of the tenth chapter of the Gita is to point out that whatever is powerful and splendid in every class or genius in existence is a manifestation of God, like the lion amongst the animals and the ocean amongst the waters. Thus, the slowly thinking and slowly working mind of even the torpid ultraorthodox objectors at last comes to realise that this movement is of God and cannot be resisted, and that the best thing one can do is to make the best of it, for Sai *Bhakti* offers excellent chance of individual benefits to all and sundry, provided they summon up some faith and act upon the same.

Truth is one and falsehoods are many. The sorts of objections that are raised from time to time to Sai worship or that have been or can be raised are so varied that it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of them, nor is it worthwhile. All these have been washed away by the tide of the Sai movement and more of them are now being washed away. When the flimsiness of these objections is realised, the fact that the objections are so flimsy adds to the strength of the Sai movement. Objections to the Sai movement have been raised in some quarters with reference to *Sastraic* texts such as that *Brahmins Srotrias* are the highest class and others are lower and that *Brahmins* should not worship persons of the lower class or adopt a *Guru* from the lower class. This raises again the old vexed question about caste and class which luckily in the present state of Independent India is dying out. There is increasing recognition even from political or social standpoints that class and caste fetters are out of date, that the formerly accepted standards of class and caste are not being kept up by everyone coming under the group name, and that there is no justification for the limitations and

disqualifications imposed on members of the several classes. Above all this objection begs the question as to caste. As has been discussed amply elsewhere, if there is any caste still surviving. Baba's caste cannot be peremptorily fixed as being of this or that caste. Baba is to be treated as a *Brahmin* according to the definition given of that word in various scriptures¹⁷³. For instance, it has been said that he who has got intense *bhakti* to God is a *Brahmin*. Baba was the embodiment of God devotion, God love, and was preeminently, therefore, a *Brahmin*. Again only realisers of *Brahman* should be called *Brahmins*. Under this heading Baba is a person about whom we can feel confident in asserting that he had realisation, that he identified his soul with that of God, Brahman, and as a corollary, was the *Antaryami* of so many creatures. He was ever remembering God and was for many decades immersed in his concentration on God, and this could not have but produced perfect *laya* and perfect absorption in God. Therefore, being merged in God, he must be treated as *Brahman* and therefore, as a *Brahmin* if one wants that class name. We have elsewhere pointed out the absurdity of enquiring into the caste status of a *Parama Jnani* and *Parama Bhakta* like Sai Baba and quoted not merely Scripture but also latter day sayings of saints to the same effect¹⁷³. So the objection to Sai worship on the score of his caste position raised still by some of the orthodox section cannot be considered sound or worthy of further attention.

The objection to Sai worship did not come always from the orthodox sections. It came mostly from the inertia of human nature. People do not wish to move out of ruts into which they have fallen. It is so unpleasant to be called upon to realise new situations. The old lines of demarcation have all been washed away and new lines are forming. But still there are several Rip Van Winkles who have not awakened themselves to the fact that the world has marched on since they last took note of it. *Sai Bhakti* is now a fact of very great religious importance to millions of souls in this country and the Sai light is being carried across the waters to illuminate distant corners of the earth. There is no good blinking the fact that *Sai Bhakti* is a live force. It is operating and moulding the destinies of human beings here and elsewhere, and it will go on doing the same whether we

care to face the fact or not. It is much wiser to take note of facts as they are and to make the best use of the movement for individuals and society.

Sometimes persons turn up and ask, Do you ask us to give up our Rama worship and Siva worship? And if we have those worships, why should we worship Sai? Why should you go on promoting propaganda of Sai and not Siva or Rama? In the first place, one has to give up all hope of satisfying such curious objectors, because the objection arises not from reasoning of an earnest *sadhaka* anxious to advance his temporal and spiritual welfare by learning the truth but from the underlying mentality or emotional factors. It is these factors that have to be treated and not a reasoning to be met in these cases. Anyhow, the question having been put, the reader would expect an answer, and let us give the answer.

The first objection reminds us of the oft quoted illustration of a leading question, Have you left off beating your mother?

Answer yes or no. There is a vicious assumption which is patent in the question about the mother. It ought to be equally patent in the above mentioned objection. No respectable *Sai bhakta* ever objected, and this author certainly does not object nor did Sai ever object to people worshipping Siva or Rama. The truth is exactly the opposite. Sai Baba sent Appa Kulkarni to go and worship at a Siva temple Mohiniraj at Nivas before appearing to answer the charges framed against him by the Deputy Collector in a departmental enquiry. Similarly he sent Shama to worship the goddess Vani on a hill and Megha to worship Khandoba and all the other gods and he blamed Nana Chandorkar for avoiding *darsan* of Datta¹⁷⁴. Baba promoted faith in Gods¹⁷⁵. Sai allowed all legitimate worship, and his *bhaktas* do the same. So the question, Why do you object to Siva or Rama worship is just like the question about stopping the beating of the mother. As for the rider added to that question, namely, whether, when Siva and Rama are available for worship, they should be given up in favour of Sai worship, this again is a baseless assumption. Nobody asked, certainly Sai did not ask people to give up Siva or Rama worship and take Sai as a substitute. The question may be however referring to the fact that several hereditary worshippers of Siva or Rama

or other gods have taken ardently to Sai worship which at the final stage drowns all other worship in it. One ought to remember the *Na Hi Ninda Nyaya* which says; When one gets very fond of a particular form of worship, one is apt to ignore any other form of worship as a needless diversion of his thoughts and energies, which however involves no condemnation of other forms. On the other hand, Sai becomes finally the One God and so the same as the other forms of God, such as Siva, Rama and others. The *Vedas* thus praise God in One form only in each place. This is interpreted liberally by *Na hi Ninda Nyaya* but is called Henotheism¹⁷⁶, worship of one form at one time and another form at another by Max Muller. To that extent the above question may have a basis, and if an explanation is wanted for that fact, the explanation is furnished by such worshippers. They find enormous, unmistakable, and clear benefits accruing to them from the heartfelt Sai worship that they are going in for, and above all the presence of Sai as an ever present guardian with them, undertaking to safeguard and advance all their temporal and spiritual interests *yoga keshemam vahami aham* and carrying out the undertaking by most miraculous or remarkable means unavailable to such worshippers and undreamt of by them till they came to Sai Baba. This ought to be a sufficient answer. Unfortunately, the combatant mood still persists, and such objectors ask, Cannot the same benefit be derived by that worshipper by his proceeding with Rama or Siva worship instead of Sai worship? This is a hypothetical question which we must decline to answer. The worshipper also would be entitled to decline an answer. In the first place it is the feeling of the worshipper and this writer's feeling and that of many *bhaktas* that Sai is not different from God, that Siva, Rama, and other *Murthis* are not different from God as truly proclaimed by Baba himself¹⁷⁷. Therefore, when a person goes on sincerely and earnestly worshipping Sai with all his heart, feeling that he is worshipping god, the absence of one name or another, Siva or Rama, Allah, Khuda or Hari, in the particular process of worship is no objection to his persistence in his formula. Feeling alone counts. *Vishnu Sahasranama* gives a thousand names, and nobody should insist on every worshipper mentioning all these one thousand names. Some are satisfied with Rama alone, and say,

Sri Rama Rama Rameti Rame Rame Manorame
Sahasranama tat tulyam
Sri Rama Nama Varanane
Raghupati Raghava Rajaram Patita pavana Sitaram
Iswara Allah Tere nam Sabko Sanmati De Bhagavan
Rama Rahim Krishna Karim Sabko Sanmati de
Bhagavan.

This means, Siva tells Parvati, I repeat Sri Rama, Rama Rama, O dear one, I delight in that name Rama, That name Rama is equal to one thousand names, That is the unique power, charm and value of the Rama nama to a Rama worshipper. It might with perfect truth and sincerity be uttered about Sai also, by a zealous Sai devotee in which case it would run thus,

Sri Sai Sai Sayeeti Sayee Sayee Vadamyaham
Sashranama Tat tulyam Sainama Varamparam,

which has the same meaning, as the above *mutatis mutandis*.

This quarrel over names is very difficult to escape, as there is the law of association of ideas and feelings working in the region of language. Mahtama Gandhi in trying to effect a *rapproachment* between Hindus and Muslims started the formula noted above in which Rahim and Ram are put together, and made his Hindu and Muslim followers repeat the formula or *mantra*. But some fastidious and over zealous adherents of each group unable to overcome the effects of the above law started up with an objection. One set said, Why not omit all reference to Allah and Rahim and content ourselves with our usual Hindu names. The other set, equally tenacious upholders of Muslim or Arabic names, said, Why not omit all reference to Hindu names and retain only the Arabic or Urdu names. To both Mahatma Gandhi had to point out that the object of the compounded formula was to familiarise the ear of impartial and co-operatively minded Hindus and Muslims with the admixture of both so that both may get into use with an inclination to hear both Muslim and Hindu names without loss of equanimity. This would become easier and inspiring by habit for future generations. That was the great object of Mahatma Gandhi's formula. Our

objectors belong to the separatist fold and object to anything that seems new. Baba's standpoint on this matter was similar to Mahatma's and was 'Live and let live', to unite persons in using common joint formulas as far as possible. Baba added to Gandhiji's plan of work. He secretly worked on the hearts of all. But if each wants to get on in his own way, the way that suits him best, by all means let him do so; he should not be hindered. This is the only way in which all sincere worshippers can be drawn together; and worship of Sai by sincere *bhaktas* is in no way different from worship of God. That is their feeling and according to correct metaphysics and philosophy, there is no difference between the worship of Sai treated as God and the worship of God under any other name or any other form. Both achieve the same ends.

Ye yatha Maam prapadyante Taams
tathaiya bhajami aham

that is, In whatever form you surrender to Me, in that form, I respond¹⁷⁸.

As regards the objection to any propaganda being done for Sai, the short answer is this. The honey and flavour in the flower do propaganda for the flower to attract bees and carry on the work of reproduction of the plant so that the earth may be replenished and more fruits may be had. This is Nature. Similarly many a propagandist, who is perfectly sincere, is unconsciously a propagandist. His devout *bhakti*, having achieved various rewards and the supreme reward of getting Baba for one's powerful guardian, the all round guardian, to look after every interest, is so grand, alluring and contagious. The *bhakta* after achieving so much of his welfare desires, in his heart wants to share it with others, and therefore communicates his experience to others so that others may also have the same benefit following the well known principle or aphorism *Ekah Svadu Na Bhunjita* which means When you get nice things to eat, do not monopolise it, but share it with others. In the case of the author of this book, that rule has been his life principle for numerous decades. Having discovered the great benefit of approaching Sai, he cannot resist the desire to communicate it to others so that all in the world may have the same benefit. Perhaps our readers have been told of Sri Ramanuja's conduct. His *Guru* gave him a sacred *mantra* for *moksha*

consisting in the utterance of the holy name of God, and added the advice to him that he should not reveal it to others but keep it a profound secret, in accordance with the Stanza which says,

Ayur Vittam Griha Chidram Mantram Oushada
Samagamah Dana Manapamanascha
Navagopya Manishibhih,

that is, The wise men conceal these nine things, including *mantra*, or *Gurum prakascayet dhiman Mantram Yatnena Gopayet*. The wise men conceal that *mantra* but proclaim the *Guru*. What did Sri Ramanuja do? He got on the top of a tower and shouted the *mantra*; that is, the holy name of God, and said, 'If I have committed a sin, let me go to hell. But if this *mantra*, being heard by others, will save them, let all these innumerable people who hear get saved thereby. I am willing to be damned to save all'. That is exactly the feeling of this writer and of many other propagandists of Baba. The word Propaganda has, unfortunately, gathered a bad odour in English.

During the war the term propaganda meant downright falsehood. In our case propaganda is downright truth without the least tinge or taint of falsehood in it. Warlike propaganda was selfish and false. The present Sai propaganda is unselfish and absolutely true.

Fifteen

Stages of Baba's personality

Baba's direction to his biographer¹⁷⁹ is that he should be a humble chronicler of ascertained facts, but the demand of the modern, scientifically trained reader of a biography is that there should be a scientific presentation of even saints lives, showing the how and why of each part and how the parts fit into or grow out of each other. It may be difficult to reconcile these two. Still we are bound to attempt in this book, the *via media* presenting as much as possible of Baba's life in as scientific a way as possible without sacrificing the inspiring effect of a saintly biography or its truth. The predominant interest must be to note all the words, the sayings, the deeds, and moods, that indicate or prove the saintliness and form the super human or divine features of life. The subordinate

interest is to note if a scientific presentation of progress or development is possible of these parts of the sacred life, especially when such presentation may explain, sustain or add charm to the holiness or saintliness. The idea of development of personality is very widely accepted, and in the case of a number of human lives, even of saints, development is studied and noted, for development, after all, is mostly treated on the ethical plane and therefore there is ample material for study, and though the ground is hard, useful work can still be done. But yet to many, tracing the development or growth of the divine element in Baba looks almost hopeless as the inner life is hidden and there is very little information available about the earlier stages of his life. Personality is easily understood and dealt with in modern psychological or philosophical treatises by following the behaviourist plan. Take a personality as it is presented by each person and try to express what it is, namely the sum total of the various facets and portions that make up the man's personality as understood by himself and by his neighbours. That gives the current opinion of the man's personality. This is the behaviourist method of treating the self. This is mainly an external method. The internal is only to be inferred and cannot be easily got at. It is hard for a man even to observe the internal kernel of his own line of thought and action; and what is observed or felt is often found to be inexpressible. A good and full study of the Personality requires Baba's divine power of getting into and reading the heart of another, that is, getting to be *hisAntaryami*, the soul of his soul. Hence that cannot be expected here. So, we are left almost wholly where the behaviourist leaves us. But even so, there is something to present, and with the help of observations made by Sai Baba and other saints and the *Rishis*, we may try to present some sketch of the development of spiritual personality. After all, the development of spiritual personality must run on the lines prescribed for God-realisation or for reaching *Brahman* as set out in text books like *Vivekachudamani* and the *Bhakti sastras*, namely, *Bhagavata*. We shall see how taking the *Bhagavata* and *Brahma Sutras* and *Vivekachudamani* as our guide, what steps were being adopted by Sri Sai Baba from the earliest times and how

he progressed. That is an extremely interesting study, the materials for which, however are extremely scanty.

It is agreed practically by all that divinity is reached only by aloofness from the world's attractions, that *Asanga* and *vairagya* must be at the base of any course which leads to divinity, and contact with those who are in the light is necessary to kindle the torch within us to perceive the light within. Hence the study of such contact is the next course. Taking up the first course, in Baba's case, *vairagya* seems to have been centuries old and almost hereditary if not in the physiologists and psychologists sense, at least in the spiritualists' sense. Baba in his previous births, *janmas*, as reported by himself in his occasional references to his past births, was full of *vairagya*, thorough self-denial, and was working for the benefit of others and had conquered all his desires¹⁸⁰. He always sacrificed his own interest to promote that of other people, a brother, a step-mother or a neighbour. In all these cases he acted without any expectation of reward and purely out of regard or compassion for them. So, the readiness to work for others good, not caring for one's own pleasures or benefits, and its presumable basis the perception of the real nature of one's self as above the material body and its animal urges, were the leading features of his past lives; and these must have been so deeply ingrained in his soul that from his very birth, he must have had these elements at least potentially within him which later got the chance of fuller growth and fruition.

Purvabhyasena tenaiva hriyate hyavasco api sah.

Tatra tambuddhi samyogam Labhate pourva dehikamⁿ,

this means, The man not completing his *yoga sadhanas* in a particular birth is reborn in a *yogi's* or other suitable family and resumes the tendencies and aptitudes developed in the former birth. He is swayed unwittingly by the force of his former tendencies. Providence gave Baba the best stepping stones in the nineteenth century life also. Desertion by parents at a very early age and being brought up by a begging *fakir* who appears to have been a highly advanced *Sufi* and the fairly rapid death of both the original parents and *the fakir* and his wife, after arranging to leave him in the care of the Selu *zamindar* as an absolutely

helpless dependent having no claims whatever and no pretensions whatever; are all stepping stones. These are obviously the very best plot and manure for faith, trust, purity, *vairagya* and godliness, that is aloofness from the world and Love of God to grow, develop, and come to fruition. *Bhakti* is the best field or manure. Even for a *jnana* or *vichara margi*, it is highly important. *Moksha Sadhana samagiam Bhakti reva gariyasi. Bhakti marga* in the form of *Guru bhakti marga* was the whole course or sole *sadhana* of Baba's life. He fed on *Bhakti* alone, and by means of that alone became all that he was. For *bhakti*, which transformed itself into *Jnana*, after providing the *sadhana chatushtaya*, his absolute dependence served a very good purpose. As a child he must have been fondly loved by the *fakir* and his wife, and as a slightly grown up child or boy, he was loved and brought up by the Selu *zamindar*, Gopal Rao Deshmukh or Venkatesa. Here, therefore, we find the elements that make up a saint, absolute dependence or the fullest trust in the *fakir* and in a master, begetting no hatred but trust and deepest love, a love into which adverse elements like jealousy, envy and hatred, could not enter. The *sastras* declare that the qualification of a *sishya*¹⁸² is that he should be free from pride, jealousy, sense of possession. A child absolutely dependent upon the foster father and mother or the chieftain and getting everything needed through love is bound to be totally free from such defects. These negative virtues are mere trifles. Positive strength of love ensures the presence of the negative virtues and a great deal more. It is not a mere negation that can build up divinity. It is love that can do it. God is Love. As Sir Walter Scott says, 'Heaven is Love and Love is Heaven', not merely in the enjoyment of it, for it is so happy to be loved, but also in the ultimate philosophical analysis and its result. On examination of the nature of divinity, *Satchitananda*, it is Love, Bliss and its fullest expression is the perfect saint in the flesh who ultimately after *Mahasamadhi* is recognised as nothing but *Prem Rupi* or God. This positive development of love can hardly be traced stage after stage. The course of true love never runs smooth. However, in Baba's life, hindrances, came. These may be studied. Usually we find obloquy, ill treatment and unkindness, would interfere with love. In Baba's case, he met with everyone of these. As a protege of the

Selu *zamindar*, he had envious opponents hurling brickbats at him with a view to kill him. But what was the response of this loving soul? Not the slightest impulse to revenge or hatred. On the other hand he revived the villain whose stone hit his master, and who, according to ordinary notions and feelings, would be reckoned as a mortal enemy. Enmity had no place in Baba's soul. His soul was nothing but fullness of love. Love that neutralises and chills the fire of enmity hurled at it. Love that serves for *Vairagya*, *Viveka* and for *Sama*, *dama*, *titiksha*, *uparati*, *Sraddha* and *Samadhana*. He pardoned all and proceeded onwards in his own march of love not minding opposite currents. Again when he came to Shirdi, mischievous boys pelted stones at him. Did he revenge himself on them? No. Hatred and desire for revenge were not within him. On the other hand he recognised that even those who were molesting his body were really his father's children and therefore objects of love for him. He forgave them readily and into the tinyhand that hurled stones at him, he placed sugarcandy, and the boys and children were wondering what sort of creature this *fakir* was who returned sugarcandy for stone pelting. They found mango trees gave fruit for pelting, but no man acted like those trees. They had not seen such *Vairagya* and *Viveka* and other noble qualities before. Again when the *Vanis* were having their laugh at him for being a crazy fellow and whom they wished to see deeply dejected for want of light him, as they had refused oil for his oil lamps, what did Baba do after converting water into oil and when they were down on their knees praying for forgiveness and praying also that he should not curse them? Baba's nature was never for cursing. What does a mother do when her angry infant puts its hand into dirt and flings the dirt at the mother's face? She quietly chides the child, washes its hand and advises it to behave better in the future. Baba's loving heart was the mother's heart. These *Vanis* were the erring children, and with his divine loving heart, Baba behaved just like a mother. He gave them good advice warning them against the evils of falsehood and rejoicing in other's sorrow. He reproached such conduct and took promises that such bad conduct would not be repeated, just like a loving mother. The reasons for his conduct on the above and other similar occasions were seldom avowed or expressed by him. But they can

be inferred from the attendant circumstances and from the analysis of similar mental states found in the books. He frequently recommended for his devotees *parayana* or basic spiritual study and endeavour. Eknath Bhagavat XI Skanda, which Baba referred to as *Brindavan Pothi* when recommending its earnest study to H.S. Dixit and which, he declared to Uddavesa Bua, constituted his own teachings as Krishna to the *Dwapara Yuga Uddava* and as Sai Baba to the *Kali yuga Uddhavesa Bua* throws considerable light on the basis for his forgiveness and avoidance of anger or hatred. Hence we may proceed to examine the reasons given in that holy text as the basis of such forgiveness and avoidance of hatred though Baba did not state his reasons.

What is the effect of Love upon the various thoughts, feelings, desires, aversions, capacities, incapacities, and the tendencies or impulses found to be the main features of various personalities? Self-love and self-assertion, resisting and overcoming the efforts of other selves adversely disposed are basic urges for ensuring the safe maintenance and progress of the physico-psychical organism in the ordinary individual. But altruism or care for others, even adverse individuals, to the detriment of one's own material interests but in promotion of one's higher or nobler side is also found. It may be weak in many but in the saint it gets quickly developed and overshadows or overpowers the earlier self-love and self-assertion of the brute or lower level. This altruism and active care for others form the important facets of Love. Love grows stronger by exercise, by *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*. By constant altruism one becomes *Sarva bhuta kite ratah*¹⁸³ that is interested in the welfare of all creatures; all creatures get to be identified with oneself. Thus Love unifies, synthesises and strengthens one's self or moral nature, especially by the perception of unity of one's self with other selves. *Sarva bhutatma bhutatma*¹⁸⁴ becoming the self of all creatures, one becomes by love.

Atmoupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati Yo Arjuna!

*Sukham Va Yadi Va Dhukham Sa Yogi Paramo matah*¹⁸⁵

this means, The perfect *yogi* feels the joys and sorrows of other men and creatures as his own and treats them as himself. His identification with other

selves is so perfect. This perfection is wrought by love. It can stand the rough test or violent and cruel conduct of others towards oneself. The various considerations or reasons or ways of viewing others that would enable one to put up with vile and cruel treatment at the hands of others are amply set out in the *Bhikshu Gita*¹⁸⁶. Some of this reasoning or feeling may be quoted here, just as examples of the high level of thinking and acting that goes to make up perfect love or *Atma Nishta* even. The cruelly treated monk feels that the cruel tormentors and he are really one and the same or that they are parts of one universal system along with him. The teeth and tongue are parts of the same body. Sometimes it chances that the teeth bite the tongue. Then whom is a man to blame and quarrel with? He must quietly endure it with all placidity. Sometimes one limb hits against another. Who is to blame them? None. So the monk feels that the mind must be completely controlled and freed from all trace of hatred, blaming tendency eradicating the old and popular ways of reacting. Love is the best trainer and helper in mind conquest. By such conquest, it is easier for a person to raise himself from identification of himself with a narrow self with its needs and faculties confined to a particular body to identification with the universal self - the *Paramatma* or Divinity. By loving the *Guru* intensely, one achieves this result without going through all the arguments in favour of self-expansion or identification with the Supreme that are set out in this *Bhikshu Gita*, which Baba declared to be his teaching.

Are there stages in this expansion? Is there development from one level to higher levels? Probably there are. Acts first prompted by reason become habits and natural. The soul gets more and more mature, just as a small mango fruit emerging from the mango flower grows bigger, develops its parts, stores up acid, starch, and turns them all into sugar with an attractive covering or skin enclosing a hard seed. But it is not practicable, or necessary or possible to dissect Baba's self to see when he had the tiny size, the acid, and the unattractive skin and when the starch was stored and turned into sugar. Love generally beams out in action and very often the extent and nature of the love within is indicated by the extent and nature of the acts.

This is a general rule but in the cases of many and especially in the case of Baba, there are rules of conduct, principles and practice of secrecy, self-suppression and concealment which prevent the beholder from guessing the existence or the extent of the internal love. The popular maxim of Kabir *Jo paya unhe chupaya* which means He who has got something wealth, power and ability conceals it, may be taken with Srimad Bhagavata¹⁸⁷,

Budho balakavat kridet kuscalo jadavat charet

Vadet unmattavat Vidwan Go charyam Naigamah Charet

which means, that a *sadhaka* or saint should not betray his fullest development but though wise should sport like a child or boy, though clever should behave like a dunce, though learned should talk like a crazy or insane person, and though versed in the scripture should act like a brute, for thus, his concentration within himself will remain undisturbed by other. It is thus the *Avadhuta Jnani* behaved¹⁸⁸, that is *Jadonmatta Piscachavat* like a dullard idiot or obsessed man. Tiruvannamalai Seshadriswami feigned madness and advised a *sadhaka* to feign madness. A too open hearted man, one who reveals all the workings of his mind, is at the mercy of his surroundings and his soul development will be hindered. For instance the revelation of a little advance in virtue might evoke praise which in turn may raise up self conceit and vanity, and hinder further spiritual advance. Some error, some false step when confessed to outsiders might evoke severe censure, contempt or even hatred, and these may depress a man and even produce an inferiority complex. Just as solitude is helpful for spiritual practice, a screen of silence, a willful octopus like spread of blinding blackness preventing the idly curious from knowing one's inner working is useful or even necessary for one's proper attention to oneself,

Ayur vittam griha chidram mantram

Oushada samagamah dana mana apamanascha

Nava gopya Manishibhih

these are to be kept secret and *mantram* includes spiritual *sadhana*. Throughout Baba followed the rule of secrecy for himself, and except under strict necessity did not reveal his spiritual courses. For that matter he never communicated his

name, his antecedents, and only late in life, shortly before he passed away, he revealed his Brahmin parentage at *Patri* and his breeding by the *Fakir*, and even his *Guru's* name was rarely mentioned though the rule is

Gurum prakascayet dhiman,
mantram Yatnene gopayet,

that publish the *Guru* but conceal his teaching is the wiseman's rule. The course of instruction he obtained from his present *Guru* was revealed to Radhabai Deskmukh first and next to Anna Saheb Dabolkar alias Hemadpant. He revealed his dealings with his *Guru* and others at times, and several of those revelations are set out in the Gospel of Baba but they seem mostly to refer to former births of Baba. Of these former births, he mentioned a good number without giving dates and places. So we are often left in doubt whether Baba derived any teaching or other benefits in the last *janma* or previous *janmas*. Some of these trainings are remarkable and the experiences mentioned by him are always valuable, whatever *janma* they may refer⁹⁰. In reference to his making enquiries about realisation along with three other *sadhakas* and his determination not to rely upon bookish knowledge to reach the highest goal but to rely completely upon surrender to a *Parama Guru* called a Vanajari.

Ananaya prokte gatratra Nasti
Aniyan hyatarko Anupramanat¹⁸⁹

that is As the matter is subtle, there is no other way for realisation except another's teaching. His three friends and fellow *sadhakas* did not believe that a *Guru* was necessary and trusted to then-book learning to achieve spiritual progress, that is, *Atma Jnana* and *Brahma Nishta*. They came across the *Vanajari Guru* who offered to help them. The three companions disdained the help and went away. Baba alone went to the *Guru* and accepted help and nourishment from him and placed himself completely at his mercy. That *Guru* tested the extent of his trust and confidence by tying up his legs with a rope and making him hang down from a tree at the brink of a well just above the water. Baba stood the test. Four or five hours after the test began, the *Guru* who had gone away came back and asked him how he fared. Baba instead of fidgeting

and fretting, fuming and cursing, as some others might have done, was calm, cool and happy because of his complete faith that the *Guru* would not do anything except what was best for him. The *Guru* having thus sufficiently tested his faith admitted him into his school of love and confidence and enabled him by many years probation to reach perfection. This was without any reference to dates, but taking into consideration his probation under the *Fakir* and the *Selu zamindar Venkatesa*, this training was probably by a *Guru* of a former life. Anyhow the teaching is very useful for *sadhakas* for governing their own selves though it may not be easy to fix up this training in the present history of Baba. Even if it was in a previous birth, that *purva abhyasa* was deeply ingrained in Baba and served as a basis even for the latest life.

Some readers might however desire that the development of Baba in this last birth, with which we are mainly concerned with, should be dealt with as our main interest. Hence we shall proceed to consider that alone.

The proper way of dealing with such a difficult subject as personality appears to be after all the common sense way of treating a personality as viewed by the world. In the case of Sai Baba we have his earliest period with his original parents who had deserted him or had gave him away and with whom his stay was far too short for any noticeable development or change of personality. The next stage of life reached by Baba was the stage when he stayed with the *fakir* to whom he had been handed over. This appears to have continued for at least four or five years, almost from the first to the sixth year, the most impressionable period of his whole life. This *fakir* appears to have been a very advanced *Sufi* and he and his wife appear to have loved Sai Baba tenderly and brought him up with all attention and care. The events, if any, of that period are not known, but might be inferred from the fact that in later life when Baba referred to his *Guru*, he used the term *Fakir* to denote God or *Guru*, and hence taking it that the term *Fakir* referred to this *fakir* to whom he was handed over, it is clear that he regarded him as his All-in-All, as God, and as *guru*, and, therefore the relations must have been of the most perfect sort, that is implicit and thorough faith and confidence on the one hand and complete support on the other. That is the ideal

relation between God and his devotee. The life of Baba was to be a life of perfection which, after *Mahasamadhi*, should be fully recognised as the Divine operating without limitations of time or place, and for the benefit not of one individual or of one country but for all. Therefore the grounding for that must be in the earliest perfection of love towards God or towards anything regarded as God. The *fakir* having been regarded as God and as everything to Baba was loved with perfect faith and bliss. Baba had therefore, we may presume, a thorough grounding in love which is the positive side. The negative side that goes with it, rather the obverse of it is freedom from attachment to the world. Ordinarily love of parents, love of sisters and brothers, love of friends, wealth, and possessions crowd into one's soul and crowd out the idea of God or leave it as a faint outline just impinging upon the other items occupying the soul. In the case of Sai Baba, the Father and mother are the earliest gods. So the *fakir* and his wife must have given him the God idea and must have responded to his love and his need for protection; and thus the positive and the negative go together in this early period, namely thorough detachment from the world and thorough attachment to God or the *Guru* representing God. This epoch continued only for a short period of five or six years though it might be of great importance in making up Baba's life. On the death of the *fakir*, Baba was taken to the Selu *zamindar* Gopal Rao Deshmukh, who was a perfect lover of God under the name of Tirupati Venkatesa. So the next period of stay of ten or twelve years with that Master or *Guru* to whom the *fakir's* widow handed him over, was the most important in Baba's life. As part of Baba's destiny, the *fakir's* widow died soon after leaving him under the care of his master who had become All-in-All to him. Here again Baba's destiny was that his previous line of thinking, feeling and being should be continued and not disturbed. The love which began under the *fakir* became still more powerful, we may presume, under the care of Gopal Rao Deshmukh or Venkatesa. Gopal Rao treated him as the reincarnation of Kabir, himself having been Ramananda of Kasi, Kabir's *Guru* in a former birth of his. The love of Ramananda to Kabir, pure, perfect and unalloyed with any wordly taint, must have therefore prevailed between Venkusa and Baba. Baba had no care for

anything and was not distracted by any education or what is usually called education, namely, learning. He was perpetually attending upon Venkatesa Gopal Rao Deshmukh in a way which the *Guru Gita* aptly describes as the proper attitude. *Nati Dure* and *Nichavat*, That is, Baba was like a peon, ever ready at hand to carry out the Chieftain's orders. There was no distraction of games or playmates or rivalry or any examination to trouble Baba. His whole heart ran on to the Master. Baba himself gives a description⁹⁰ which applies here also, 'I loved to gaze at him all the while, and even for a few seconds if he were not there to see, I would not like to have eyes at all. I did not wish to go back. I forgot all things but the *Guru*. My life was concentrated in my sight and my sight in him. That was the object of my meditation. In silence, I bowed'. These words referred to a *Guru* of a former life probably. But the description of the contact with the latest *Guru*¹⁹⁰ is on the same lines and as follows,

'For 12 years I waited on my *Guru* who is peerless and loving. How can I describe his love to Me? When he was in *Dyanastha* that is love trance I sat and gazed at him. We were both filled with *Bliss*. I cared not to turn my eye upon anything else. Night and day I pored upon his face with an ardour of love that banished hunger and thirst. The *Guru's* absence for a second made me restless. I meditated on nothing but the *Guru*, and had no goal, or object, other than the *Guru*. Unceasingly fixed upon him was my mind. Wonderful indeed, the art of my *Guru*! I wanted nothing but the *Guru* and he wanted nothing but this intense love from me. Apparently inactive, he never neglected me, but always protected me by his glance. That *Guru* never blew any *mantra* into my ear. By his grace, I attained to my present state. Making the *Guru* the sole object of one's thoughts and aims one attains *Paramartha*, the Supreme Goal.

This is the only truth the *Guru* taught me. The four *sadhanas* and Six *sastras* are not necessary. Trusting in the *Guru* fully, is enough.

The above is a true narration of the actual facts by Baba, the soul of truth. It is by learning these facts that one can understand and appreciate texts like *Narada's Bhakti Sutras*¹⁹¹, for example

Having which, *Bhakti* or Love one relinquishes all desire, grief, hostility indulgence in worldly pleasures, and all efforts at selfish advancement.

Knowing which, one becomes ecstatic, quiet, and happy in oneself,

One renounces all worldly concerns and even *Vedic* rites.

Concentration on love, apathy towards everything, against it.

Giving up all other supports than love, that is, having no other *sadhana*.

Narada says Love surrenders all actions to God and feels extreme restlessness in being without Him.

God and his devotee are the same.

This is the highly romantic love which even between sexes and at very early ages is so hard to find. But in Baba's life, without any intrusion of any sex and without any incorporation of mere romantic stories, this love was at its height. Baba felt that the object of his love was flowing to him. It is under such circumstances that *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*, naturally flow on in one's soul and end in perfect *samadhi* or perfect *laya*. The lover gets absorbed in the object of love, and Nature works a unity between the two, the lover and the loved. *Apana Sarika Karitat Tatkai* is what Tukaram says about the work of the *Samartha Guru* towards his *sisya*. That is, the *Samartha* turns the *sisya*, without any difficulty and without requiring any period of time, into his absolute likeness. This process of love which Baba describes as subsisting between himself and Venkatesa was the one course calculated to carry out Tukaram's dictum, that is, the turning or transformation of the pupil into the perfect likeness of the Master. It is not as though it were the result of willing on the part of the Master though that also may have been the case. It is a purely natural process. The mutual attraction of soul to soul and the passing on of the nature of one to the other was the same as in the case of a huge magnetic dynamo and a piece of iron brought into contact with it. Therefore this long period of ten or twelve years at *Selu* sufficed, we may presume, to complete the course or training which Baba had to undergo for reaching perfection of Sainthood or Godhead to fit him for his life's work of transforming all that came into contact with him or that would come into contact with him decade after decade, and it may even be century

after century, into the model of his soul or his own likeness. Love is the one force which upholds the Universe, and love is that force which can overcome the innumerable obstructions to the manifestation of love which arise in our imperfect civilisation between individual and individual, group and group and nation and nation. All bitterness, hatred, rivalries and antagonism will melt into thin air at the contact of powerful love, and such love has to be directed to the world in existing conditions and in increasing measure to enable it to cast aside the darkening clouds that cover it and restore to it the blissful light of love. The ultimate future of humanity cannot be and should not be mere ruin and wreck. It must be an integrated whole, integrated by the force of love.

For that, the proper dynamo that can work upon the world is the dynamo that we call Sai Baba.

In the above three stages, we notice how the dynamo was prepared and fully charged and came ready for this work. It is after leaving Selu that the seeds so well sown in the three periods came to bear full fruition. *Vairagya* means detachment from the world. After leaving Selu, Sai had no one to contact himself with, The world was all before him, where to choose? He went on going through jungle and village hills and deserts, and after some time he came to Shirdi in obedience to the command of his Master that he was to go due west from Selu. Shirdi being due west of Selu on the banks of the river Godavari, Sai Baba came to this place. His first appearance at Shirdi was noticed by Nana Chopdhar's aged mother. In 1900 she declared that Baba came there when she was young. Baba came to Shirdi as a young fearless lad full of *Vairagya*, with a bright beaming face when she was there. After that first visit, Baba was frequently moving about from place to place, and this nomadic stage of Baba may be taken to have ended shortly after he returned to Shirdi with Chand Bhai Patel of Dhupkeda, who was his host for a time at Dhupkeda. Even after arriving with that Chand Bhai Patel's marriage party, Baba was rambling into the jungles as an *Aniketana*, a homeless person. Narada¹⁹² says Saints resort to solitude, sunder worldly ties, have no *mamata* or sense of possession and want no reward and¹⁹³ surrender all action to God. They have no homes. Finally Baba took up his

residence at the *Masjid*, later on known as the *Dwarakamayee* even then, If sleeping is the best mark of residence, Baba had no single residence. Baba slept alternate nights at the Mosque and at the *Chavadi*. A Mosque is identified with the Muslim faith. The *Chavadi* is open to all. So Baba even as denoted by his sleeping places was not a Muslim alone but was a Muslim and a cosmopolitan. That is, he could not be confined within the four corners of the Muslim faith. He had to take up his residence at the Mosque for the very excellent reason that the only other temple that he could occupy, namely, the Hindu Khandoba temple, was barred and banned to him by Mahlsapathy the man in charge of it. Baba's first idea was to stay at least for a time at the Khandoba temple outside the village, but when he remarked that it was an excellent place for a hermit like him to reside, Mahlsapathy objected and said that a Muslim as Baba seemed to be would not be allowed to put his foot into that Hindu temple and hence he was driven to choose the mosque. It was Hobson's choice. Here at the outset we find him faced with Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Baba's whole life was the conquest of this antagonism, which is best typified by what happened to Mahlsapathy himself. The very man who objected to Baba putting his foot into Khandoba's temple was the first to worship Baba and make him his *Guru*; so that Baba's feet far from soiling or tainting Khandoba's temple would be sanctifying it. And Baba did visit Khandoba's temple many a time thereafter, for example, when Upasani Maharaj was doing his *japa* or *dhyana* there. Baba had to stay in the Mosque as stated already, as temples are said to be the best place for hermits, and no other temple would accommodate Baba but the Mosque. Allah is the same as Khandoba in Baba's view. It was thus that the dilapidated Mosque became his residence, and perfected his aloofness from the world.

The extent to which the nomadic habits of Baba helped his development has only to be guessed. Such habits have the great advantage of preventing attachment and promoting independence and *Dhriti*, that is courage and self possession which are very essential for a great soul force like Sai Baba. And *Narada Bhakti Sutra*¹⁹² says, He who resorts to lonely places sunders all ties of the world, rises above the three *gunas Satva, Rajas* and *Jamas* and gives up all

sense of possession. *Bhakti* is gained by surrendering all sense pleasure and contact with the world¹⁹⁴. But Nature after all puts a limit to the youth and versatility of the human body. In Baba's case, the nomadic habits must naturally have ceased with his increasing contact with the villagers of Shirdi and with the development of his service to people and their *bhakti* to him. *Bhakti* has different manifestations in youth and old age, as is seen in the lives of many saints. Even in a great saint like Sai Baba, there is a marked difference between the thoughts and activities of youth and those of his advanced age. The exuberance of the emotional side in youth comes out in saints in a slightly different way from that in which it emerges from the worldly people. Baba's pure heart, quite as much as the young lover's heart, required some scope for its manifestation and exercise. Students of the *Chaitanya Marga* would note how in the earlier portion of a *bhakta's* life, the soul comes out in a highly emotional manner. Sobs, tears, raving, dancing, and knocking about in apparently lunatic fashion, are the characteristics of budding *Bhakti*. Srimad Bhagavata enquires¹⁹⁵

Katham Vina Romaharsham dravata chetasa vina

Vina anandascrukalaya seudhyet bhaktya vina ascayah.

that is, Without *the Ashta Bhavas*¹⁹⁶ manifesting the exuberant flow of love towards God, how can the heart get pure? The full force of youth will make the young *bhakta* dance about and give full scope for the inner *bhakti* to work itself through nerves, blood vessels, muscles, throat, and the whole frame. The *Bhagavata* verse means that it is only by yielding to such a complete manifestation of love, the heart can forget the lures of the world. Baba in the earlier years used to visit the *Takia* which was a place for travelling Muslims arriving at Shirdi to rest. At nights, he would tie *salangai* or tinklets to his feet and sing rapturous songs with *kanjira* in hand. He would sing songs of Kabir, Arabic and other songs, giving him full scope for expressing his overflow of love. This trait was in him for many decades after he had stopped his nightly dance at the *Takia* for, in 1910, when Rangari of Thana visited him, he mentioned that the singing of holy songs by the devotees the previous night, drowned him. He expressed that with the words, They abused me'. Rangari said, 'As music goes

on, the *bhakta* will be lost in joy and tears and in various other ways', which Baba entirely endorsed as what he meant by the words? 'They abused me.' Therefore, in the earlier preparation or development of Baba, music played the necessary part, and the many sided perfection of his soul, we may presume, was the one which great mystics have reached through music also. Tyagaraja says,

Geetartamu Sangeetanandamu Nita Ulo Unnadi

which means, O Maruti, the aim of the Bhagavad Gita or of songs and the bliss of Music are within your self, Rama remarks to Mamti. Baba was obviously completely absorbed in the God idea; and that idea takes at one time the form of the dancing and flute playing God Krishna, and at another the form of the fighting Rama. Baba had many of those aspects of God, and developed every power necessary for his life work. As for the subsequent development, it is enough to mention that some milestones appear to be indicated by Baba¹⁹⁷. Baba refers to his obtaining *Sakshatkara* of God and consequently giving up his practice of administering herbs and drugs for the cure of disease, and beginning the administration of only *udhi* and *Asirvada*. We may take it that the perfect *laya* trance of concentration that he enjoyed resulted in *Sakshatkara*. But that cannot be the only flower or fruit that *laya* or trance yields. In the Bhagavata¹⁹⁸, after describing how perfect *laya* is obtained by concentrating on God, Sri Krishna adds that, as part of the results of such *laya*, various *siddhis* accrue to the person enjoying the *laya* or trance concentration. *Laya* makes the human divine at least for the *nonce* and then the human having become divine, the divine powers, capacities and nature naturally stick on to the human. Thus Sri Krishna explains how the various *Ashtaiswaryasiddhis* or eight *siddhis* as part of divine nature pass on to the person who is enjoying the divine nature by *laya*. The other ten, the total number of *siddhis* is 18 are said to be the offspring of *Gunas*, that is various qualities of the *Jiva* and, therefore, their manifestation in the body of the devotee who is having perfect trance or *laya* naturally follows. Baba therefore having had one fruit namely, *Sakshatkara*, had also other fruits, namely, various *siddhis* such as the power of turning water into oil, which is called

Yatha sankalpa Samsiddhih

that is achieving all desires and *Swechcha Marana*, the power to give up life at will referred to in Bhagavata Skanda¹⁹⁹. This power was exhibited by him in 1886 when he told Mahlsapathy that he would leave the body to go and see Allah, but that he might return three days later or might not. The power to return to the body, Resurrection, is another *siddhi*. The power to be anywhere *Apratihatagati* and do whatever one wants are other powers mentioned in the same chapter and Baba exhibited several of these in his dealings with the devotees prior to 1886. Therefore, we may take it that *siddhis* or the extent of *siddhis* alone would not furnish a proper criterion for dividing Baba's life into different periods. It is rather the work which he sought to accomplish with the aid of those powers that ought to be the criterion. Baba upto 1886 was apparently not working for the grand aim of infusing love into all and turning out on a large national scale the approachment of all persons to promote Hindu Muslim unity and other unities. So, 1886 marks an epoch. We may call it the noticeable starting of his Mission.

Sixteen

Baba's Mission

Sai Baba during his sojourn on earth kept himself at various levels and devotees meeting him treated him as occupying various levels at one and the same time, a fact which is well brought out in Justice M.B. Rege's Introduction to Baba's Charters and Sayings. Those levels which might all occur on the same day in any order, included those of the ordinary *poor fakir*, the saint, and the *Paramatma*. And as M.B. Rege points out, after Baba left the body, his devotees' proper way of treating him is as *Paramatma* only, though those accustomed to other *Gurus* may keep on viewing him as a Guardian Angel, as a *Guru* as a good friend, or guide. There is however another level, hidden under these, that of the *Avatar* with a mission.

The term Mission is derived from the Latin root *Mitto* meaning send. So, a missionary is one who is sent with a message or direction by God, and as used in Christian literature, a mission was the most valuable characteristic of the lives of such great Prophets as Moses and Jesus. Jesus's mission was, to absolve mankind from hereditary or original sin, that is, the sin derived by being the

descendants of the first sinners and rebels, Adam and Eve. His death on the cross was considered a sacrifice on behalf of the entire humanity. Other's mission, for example, Moses, was to lead the Jews from captivity in Egypt on towards the Promised Land and also to make laws that the Jews should submit to, and so he proclaimed Laws of the 12 tables. The idea of a missionary is practically that of an agent. In the case of Sai Baba, he declared God has agents everywhere. They have great powers. Baba added, I also have great powers implying thereby, that he also was an agent of God. He also expressly told D.S. Rasane, 'I can do nothing except what God orders'. He did not give a *kupni* to G.G. Narke saying, 'The *Fakir* has not permitted me to give you a *kupni*' that is the robe of the *sanyasi* or *fakir* as G.G. Narke was to be a family man, an earning *grihastha* according to God's plan, and not a beggar. As an agent, he said that he had vast powers, that is, divine powers. The powers and the mission have a close relation. The mission has to be worked through the powers given and the powers are given only for carrying out the mission. Baba had by concentration on God practically every *siddhi* that one can think of, and Srimad Bhagavata²⁰⁰ says 'What power is there that cannot be got by concentration on God with conquest or control of mind and senses and breath?' So, his possession of vast powers both acknowledged and proved, was always utilised for the benefit of mankind, promoting individual benefits that were obvious, seen and well understood, and general benefits which were not so equally obvious or well seen and understood. Now we have to consider the mission of Baba based on the possession of his powers and notice what general benefits were conferred on the country or mankind, though these are not yet obvious to most people.

Proceeding further with the question of the stages in Sai Baba's life we see one marked difference between his life before 1886 and the life thereafter. Before 1886, the main stress of his activities and view appears to be on doing good to those who were near him and connected by *rinanubandha* or prenatal obligations. But *rinanubandha* cannot stop within definite geographical limits. By reason of that principle, people from afar had to benefit, and in working it out, he achieved other things also than doing good to the immediate comers. The

benefits derived by others consist in the development and spread of Sai faith intensively and extensively that is all over the country thus arresting the spread of Atheism and Agnosticism and the unification thereby of *dharma* and religion regardless of existing diversification and divisions of religion, caste and creed. The main benefit is the unification of the Hindu faith within itself and of Islam within itself, and, by purification and refinement of both, the building up of one common central religion or faith that is fitted to be the world faith which has been touched in a previous chapter. Incidentally, India's national problem of unifying conflicting groups is helped to solution. This is referred to as Baba's mission in the daily noon *arati* at Shirdi,

Avatarasi tum Yetam
Dharmatem glanim, Nastikanam
hi tum lavisi Nijabhajani
Bheda na Tatwim Hindu Yavanancha Kahim
Davayasi Jala Punariapi Naradehi
Pahasi Premanem turn, Hindu Yavanamhi
Dhavisati Atmatvanem Vyapaka ha Sai
Jayadev Jayadev.

this means, *'When Dharma* is ebbing, you incarnate. Even Athiests have faith in you. In principle there is no difference between Hindus and Muslims. To show this, you again came into the world with a human body. You look upon both Hindus and Muslims with equal affection. "This Sai shows himself as All prevading, as *Atman* or Soul of all".

There will be plenty of occasion in the following pages to fully establish the truth of the above. Baba did really promote Hindu Muslim unity, and a separate chapter also may be devoted to the consideration of that in detail. But for the present, we may note that it will be wrong to confine Baba's life to a single achievement and refer to that as the Mission of His life. Baba was a God realized soul, prepared by his *Samartha Sadguru* for the attainment of full divinity and the consequent establishment of himself as a *Samartha Sadguru* to continue the *Guru Parampara*. He had numerous *rinanubandhas* or connections with

innumerable people in former lives, and, when taking up a human body, he naturally had to give the benefit of the former connection to those formerly connected. But this cannot be said to be the main object of his life. The main object of any life is simply the unfolding of the life as part of God's plan. Innumerable benefits may follow from there in addition to the above two pointed out. But the unification of India's two faiths with the erection of a central world religion bulks large enough to make one stress it as the main object of divinity taking shape in a human body. The *Upanishads* followed by the Gita mention the main purpose of such an incarnation, or *Avatar*, as it is called in the *Puranas*. The Bhagavad Gita²⁰¹ says,

*Yada yada hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya Tadatmanam Srujami aham.
Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinascaya cha Dushkritam
Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.*

these means, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, Whenever righteousness and *dharma* fade and unrighteousness is on the ascent, then, I incarnate. I incarnate, age after age for protecting the good and destroying the evil, and for the establishment of *dharma* or righteousness in the world.

Dharma samsthapana or the establishment of righteousness is a very wide term, and the work of a *Samartha Sadguru* may well be said to be that of establishment of righteousness or maintenance of the universe. Baba was trained by a *Guru* with God realisation or self realisation and divine powers, and was equipped with those powers at the *Diksha*, a potentiality that is gradually to be developed or in full development, and he had to use them to find out who were to be benefited by him merely by reason of previous contact, that is, contact in previous lives, and who were to be crushed out as the oppressors of the good. But incidentally one thing would be clear, that is, when the good are being helped they do not attain merely worldly benefit but also spiritual advantages. They grow more into life, light and love and they absorb more and more of Baba's nature by constantly dwelling in their hearts upon him on account of their love or gratitude towards him. They get more and more like unto him, and, if any of them should

have the capacity, they might develop even into the fullest likeness of Baba. The incidental consequence of the development of such virtues and superior nature, is to attract others. Both good and evil are infectious. Persons who lead highly moral lives naturally affect their neighbourhood, and all persons that come in contact with them rise in their grade of morality and spiritually. Some of them may get into the position of *Gurus* for others. Thus, the line of *Guruship* would be continued from Baba through these on several grades, grade after grade, though none of the latter may be *Samartha Sadgurus*. It is exactly like a dynamo attracting some pieces of iron and thereby converting them into magnets. Other pieces of iron or steel come near the first mentioned pieces and get by contact their properties which are really the properties of the original dynamo. Thus we see one powerful magnet drawing to it needles in succession, and the central magnet is responsible for all the remotely attracted needles also. The *Avatar* saint may also be likened to the little leaven in the mass of dough or better still, to the powerful Sun. The *Avataric* rays are extended in all directions like the rays of the Sun. In this very process, He is establishing *dharma* and eradicating *adharma*. In the course of the eradication of *adharma*, meaningless hostilities and wicked hatred often cloaking themselves under cover of religion are removed and thus internecine fights between religion and religion tend to disappear when true religion like Baba's gets to be spread around. Every great soul working like Baba on principles of contact with the one loving, eternal Father of All must naturally diffuse such love and avoidance of hatred to even the remotest persons that come in contact with him. Therefore, Baba's influence tends more and more to the removal of hatred and the spread of mutual love between religions and groups, economic groups and other groups also. Baba's functions may therefore be well described as bringing the Hindu and Muslim units in India together by showing them that they are all working under one common loving Father, and that their differences are immaterial and undeserving of any stress. Baba has done this and is doing it artistically and artfully without drawing critics attention to it, and this will be described at length later on as a process that goes on generation after generation and age after age, very little perceived before fruition.

Baba's main work was that of a *Samartha Sadguru* who had to diffuse religion and help the good and remove the evil that oppressed the good. Even before 1886 he was possessed of vast powers used for this purpose. In 1886, he had a small body of worshippers who might all have been benefited both temporally and spiritually by reason of *poorva rinanubandha* or present contact. But was his life work to end with that petty group? One day in 1886 Baba told Mahlsapathy who was by his side, '*Arre Bhagat*, I am going to *Allah*. You had better guard this body for three days. If I return thereafter, I will look after the body. If I do not you may thereafter have this body interred in that place' pointing to something near the *gode neem*. After saying that, Baba reclined on Mahlsapathy and was soon a corpse. Breathing stopped. The body heat disappeared. The colour of the body also turned livid. Soon the rumour got round that Baba was dead. The village officers as well as the police came. An inquest was held. An inquest report was drawn up wherein it was said that Baba was dead. The Police Officers wanted Mahlsapathy to bury the corpse as it should not remain in the Mosque. But Mahlsapathy quoted to them Baba's own words saying that he might return in three days. The Police Officers and others who obviously did not believe revival possible tried to induce Mahlsapathy to change his mind. But he stuck to his guns and pointed out that Baba was a *Yogi* of wonderful powers and that it was possible for such persons to return to life after three days. The police thought ultimately that it was safer to leave the responsibility of keeping the body for three days with Mahlsapathy and other devotees of Baba. the body remained there for three days, a perfect corpse, no sign of life at all being seen. But after three days suddenly a finger of Baba began to move. Then his eyes opened. Then he sat up with breath and all. After this, for 32 years he led a normal life, and it was only in 1918 his life finally passed out of his body. His body was thereafter interred in its present place, the Buty Wada.

What did the passing away from earthly life and the return to it in 1886 mean? Baba evidently returned to the world because more of the *prarabda* of the Sai body that is the original intention of his coming into this body, his mission,

remained unfulfilled, and therefore he had to get back into the same body to work out the remaining portion of the present life. This is a noticeable or remarkable feature of his life, that is, leaving the body and returning to it, which we do not find²⁰² ordinarily in other cases. Now what was the main thing that he did after his return? By observing the nature and results of his activities after return, we can easily see why he returned to the body in 1886. If he had left the body finally in 1886, no person in India, certainly not in the South and in the other States, and not even in Bombay or Maharashtra, nor even in the other parts of Ahmednagar District, would have heard about him or felt his influence, and all the grand work of his that is being described in this book would never have taken place. The essential part of Baba's life is that which comes after 1886, perhaps that which is yet taking shape though this is grounded upon the earlier part, especially upon the training he had and the work he went through in the earlier stages. The *Guru's* training and the further concentration of his entire soul upon the *Guru* in solitude all ripened this plant called Sai Baba so that it might produce an exuberance of flower and fruit. That flower and fruit we have partly and roughly described in this book already and more of it is to follow. We shall now point out, after careful study and observation the first prominent flower or fruit that the Sai tree *Kalpataru* produced, ignoring for the present the earlier petty pioneers like Gopal Rao Gundu, Revenue Inspector. That first flower or fruit is Narayan Govind Chandorkar. He may be termed appropriately the first apostle or Saint Peter of Baba. We shall see how Baba sent for him. Sri N.G. Chandorkar was Personal Assistant to the Collector of Ahmednagar, and was camping at Kopergaon for *jamabandi* that is Land Revenue Settlement work. All *karnams* of the taluk had to attend at the *Jamabandi*, and the Shirdi *karnam* also had to attend. No one left Shirdi without permission of Baba, as the experience of everyone was that by leaving with Baba's permission he was safe, and leaving without permission he ran into many dangers. So the Shirdi *karnam*, Appa Kulkarni, went to Baba and asked him leave to go to Kopergaon for *jamabandi* work, as the Personal Assistant to the Collector Narayan Govind Chandorkar was there.

Baba gave him leave, and added, 'Tell your Nana to come here'. Nana is the contracted form of Narayan which can be used only by equals moving on intimate terms. Appa Kulkarni was astounded at the message. He considered that he was too insignificant a person, and that Baba also though a Weird Being of the village was too insignificant to invite the Deputy Collector, a high Gazetted Officer of the Government. But Baba insisted and told him that he might inform the Deputy Collector that it was Baba who invited him. With great diffidence the *karnam* at the close of the day approached the Deputy Collector and told him that Sai Baba, a *fakir* of Shirdi, invited him to come to Shirdi. Chandorkar was astounded. He thought that it could not possibly be, and told the *karnam* that he was a stranger to the *fakir* and the *fakir* was a stranger to him, and that he, the *karnam*, must have some purpose of his own to invite him to his village. In spite of the *karnam's* protests, Chandorkar would not believe him and sent him away. When the *Karnam* reported his failure to Baba, Baba repeated the invitation, and again the *karnam* with considerable diffidence approached the Deputy Collector the second day and repeated the invitation. The second invitation had the same fate and for the same reasons as the first. That again was reported to Baba, and like the Prophetess Sibyl of Rome, Baba tried a third time and with success. Baba pressed the hesitating *karnam* to repeat the invitation for the third time. This time the invitation had effect. Nana Chandorkar thought that there must be something in it, and so he told the *karnam* that he would visit Shirdi but not immediately. Chandorkar did keep his promise. Sometime after going to Ahmednagar, he did go and pay a visit to Shirdi. After making a present of sugarcandy and almond with some reverence to Baba, Chandorkar asked Baba whether it was true that he sent for him, and when that was admitted, why had he sent for him. Baba said, 'There are thousands of persons in this world, and do I send for them all? Should there not be some special reason why you alone should be sent for?' Chandorkar said that he was unable to see any special reason. Then Baba made the solemn statement, 'You and I have been connected with each other in four former births. I now invite you to come and again have your contact. When leisure serves, you may come'.

Chandorkar was surprised by this statement, and in any case was not fully impressed. He left the place with the impression that he need not return to Shirdi. But he did come, details of which are found elsewhere and began his grand work of carrying on propaganda for Baba. With that, Baba's mission and life, and personality enter on a new stage.

Seventeen

Nature and functions of Baba

When discussing the personality we found it a very nebulous though familiar term used about both saints and ordinary persons. When we talk of nature, that is, nature of particular beings, we appear to have something more definite than when talking of personalities. But the difference is rather elusive and nominal than real. The word nature is very broad and is applied not merely to personalities, human or other, but also to everything else in the Universe. We talk of the nature of the elements, of various entities and objects dealt with in the material sciences, for example the nature of hydrochloric acid or of sulphuric acid or of oxygen, when what we really mean is the way in which they act in matters of chemical combination, and we talk of the nature of our judgements. Anyhow nature is applied to inanimate objects and abstractions. We shall now exclude the vegetable kingdom and even the animal kingdom. Monkeys, cats, birds, have their nature but we are just now concerned with the nature of higher beings namely, men, angels, and God or gods. *Satpurushas*, that is powerful God Realisers, for instance, are said to have a particular nature. Here we notice the constant confusion between power, modes of action due to power, and nature of a being. Power is not the supreme feature in nature, though part of it, that is, though nature might largely depend upon the possession or absence of power, power is the first item we think of when talking of *siddhas*, for instance. But from the bare possession of power, the nature of all *siddhas* cannot be determined, as power may be used for good, evil or indifferent purposes. But a *Samartha Sadguru*, who is a *Satpurusha* undertaking the duties of a *Sadguru* is not merely clothed with power but with other attributes and functions, and the nature of a *Samartha Sadguru* can be and must be discussed in dealing with a life of a

saint like Sai Baba who was undoubtedly a *Samartha Sadguru*. The nature of angels, of gods and goddesses, is constantly mentioned in Hindu religious literature, and resembles the nature of saints. Nature depends upon power first, upon position or relation to other entities next, and thirdly upon the attitude of any particular self towards the surroundings, in which term surroundings we have to include God also. The nature of men in general has been discussed in books of Ethics, Theology, Sociology, Anthropology and Biology. On the basis of general humanity, one might begin to form an idea of the basis of a particular species of human beings known as saints and amongst them, a further subdivision known as *Samartha Sadgurus* like Sai Baba.

Nature refers to the way in which a particular being acts and is understood by others. Kindness, cruelty, serviceability, tolerance and sympathy are said to be parts of nature, and these refer to the relations between a self and its surroundings. In the case of saints, the relation is generally that of a beneficent superior entity dealing with inferiors that may crave contact with a view to protection. In developing one's contact with externals, it is not merely one's nature that decides but also function. Any entity along with others forms part of a joint whole or a system, and functions are assigned by Providence to each part. So the saint has some functions to fulfil in society and the question what these functions are naturally arises. These functions are closely connected with and in fact dependent upon the nature of the saint, and his surroundings and as a rule the greater the power, the greater and wider the responsibilities and functions.

So far we have been dealing with general statements, but what is more important to us here is the application of these general statements to our particular case, namely, Sai Baba. The question is asked, What was and what is Baba's nature? People considered that he had one nature, when he was in the flesh, and now that he has passed away from the flesh, he has another nature. Let us first take for consideration the nature of Baba as understood by those who came in contact with him when in the flesh, that is before his *Mahasamadhi*. Here there is a puzzle, persons with a crude understanding took him to be a mere

man, an odd *fakir*. See what happened to Sri Krishna. He says in the Bhagavad Gita,

Na mam Dushkritino Mudhah
 Prapdyante Narathamah
 Mayaya apahritajnanah
 Asuram bhavam ascritah II³⁰³

Here it is pointed out that men following evil courses are obviously fools with an *Asuric* nature. They can neither understand divinity in Krishna nor surrender to him. Their *Maya* is too strong for any clear vision.

Avyaktam Vyaktim apannam
 Manyante maam abuddhayah
 Param Bhavam ajanantah
 mama avyayam anuttamam²⁰⁴

It is explained that they can only take superficial views and can see in Krishna merely a human personality and cannot dive within to see that He is the unborn and unique *Para Brahman*.

Na aham prakaschah sarvasya
 Yogamaya samavritah
 Mudho ayam na abijanati
 Loko maam Ajam avyayam²⁰⁵

The same is stressed here. *Maya* of God, by which the Krishna form was taken is a screen, the mass can not see through. They cannot know Him as the Unborn and Undying, that is the Supreme beyond birth and death²⁰⁶.

It is in Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁷ that mention is made as to who can know Sri Krishna to be the Supreme. It is the refined lofty souls, of *Daivi Prakriti*, that is divine nature as fully described in Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁸.

Avajananti maam mudhah Manushim Tanumasritam
 Param Bhavam ajanantah mama Bhuta maheswaram²⁰⁶

Sri Krishna says,

Mahatmanas tu maam Partha
 Daivim Prakriti masritah

Bhaajanti ananya Manasaa

Jnatvaa Bhutadim Avyayam II ²⁰⁷

that is, That the deluded persons treat him as a mere man, because *Param Bhavam Ajantah*, they were ignorant of his real essence and his identity with the Supreme Self or *Paramatma*, and²⁰⁷, that great souls recognise him as the Imperishable Source of All and worship Him solely fixed on Him, and that is due to their *Daivi Prakriti* that is godly nature. What happened to Sri Krishna is what happened to Sri Sai Baba also. The vast mass took him to be a mere man, a begging *fakir* who was putting up in the Shirdi Mosque. And his nature was deduced from the premise that he was a beggar intent on getting his food and was wasting his time doing nothing useful to anybody. This was the exact opposite of the truth. But the mass did not know the truth at first. Others more refined and sensitive who came into closer contact and had eyes to see the truth were the hermits like Devdas who noticed that Baba was a saint of rare merit. Persons like Ganga Gir Bua of *Punthamba* treated Baba as something very precious, a gem without expressing in what way he was precious. Good souls like Mahlsapathy began to perceive the high moral and spiritual position that Baba occupied through his perfect selfless acts, his equal minded beneficence and freedom from ordinary reactions like greed and anger, and began to serve him and wait on him. Other classes of persons came to him finding that he had certain powers of discovering the truth, that is powers like clairvoyance, clairaudience, television, omnivision, knowledge of the past and future and wished to benefit thereby. Each of these understood his nature differently from others. The biographer of Sai Baba has to give a gist of a fairly correct understanding of Baba's nature by all these classes.

The first point, the point of greatest interest and importance in the history of Sri Sai Baba is the mass view point, that is of the impulsive, unsophisticated souls who learnt of his excellence and powers, began to worship him as God, and placed utter and absolute reliance upon him for all their needs. These expressly declared him to be God and would not brook contradiction of that view either by Baba or by anyone else. A Bandra youth was asked by Baba to attend a *pothi*

scripture study class where saints were discussed and dissected and some were declared to have a few definite powers which, however, would not make them God. That youth was greatly disgusted and went to Baba and complained that the *pothi* readers were defaming Baba by saying that he was not God. Baba then said, What is the harm in that? I am only a *fakir*. I am not God. Who can compare with God? The question or simple issue therefore arises Whether Baba was God or not. Many acting upon the rules of procedure or Law of evidence would say that an admission by Baba that he was not God, being an admission against one's own interest is conclusive proof against him that he was not God. But the Bandra youth was not a lawyer of that description. He waited awhile, and suddenly Baba blurted out when talking to some one thanking him, for the marvellous rescue from a very serious crisis or accident, 'What am I to do? I spread four, four hands at a time to save my devotees. I will not allow any harm to befall them'. The youth at once said, 'Baba just now you said that you were only a *fakir*. How can you have four hands?' Baba gave him a smile of approval. Four hands is typical of Godhead. The youth, therefore, was more firmly convinced than ever from this admission of Baba that he had four hands and therefore he was God. Godhead is not easy to define. So when the question is put point blank, 'Is Baba God or not God' the answers are quick, varied and depend upon the answerer's stock of information, attitude towards life, and contact with higher beings including saints, angels, and gods. For our purpose, we may take it that when a person is worshipped with the fullest feeling that God is in him or that he is God and when benefits ensue as they should, the procedure is obviously right. Baba has stood this test for scores of years and on innumerable occasions and to use a very expressive but vulgar argument, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Baba must be treated as God, for by treating him so, persons found and find that they derived and derive adequate benefit, the same benefit as they would derive by worshipping God. This is sufficient proof that Baba was and is God. Many acted and act on that faith. A vast number have acted on this faith and derived confirmatory experience during his life time and are acting now also, that is proof. Myriads affirmed and reaffirm, Baba was God

and Baba is God. This is the unmistakable position, and yet what are we to do with the other statement made by Baba that he is not God? Baba made a very similar statement when one Mr. G.S. Curtis, Revenue Commissioner of Bombay, wanted to do Shirdi and do Baba, just as people do Rome and do the Pope because Shirdi and Baba had got well known to the public by that time in 1917. Baba expressed utter contempt and said, Why do these rascals come? I am only an ordinary human being with normal limbs and organs. Baba said, 'What is there to see in me? I am only a *fakir*'. Here Baba was referring to the attitude of Mr. Curtis and his set who thought only of Baba's and Shirdi's external appearance and that he was something like a Lion in the Zoo to be seen out of curiosity. Baba was not a monster or a fit subject for idle curiosity. There was nothing special to be seen in him with the ordinary eyes. The special features of Baba should be seen not with the ordinary eyes but with the eye of devotion and love. Seen with ordinary eyes, Baba was a man and a poor *fakir* living in a dilapidated Mosque, but seen with the eye of devotion, Baba was God or a guardian Angel.

Soda Sannihitam Gudham,
bhaktya maam drakshyate Bhavan

that is, the eye of devotion will see him as an unseen but ever near guardian of the *ankita* devotee.

It is exactly the same with God in other forms and other names also. Take for instance Tirupati Venkatesa which is but a localised and particular form of the Supreme. A person who goes to Tirupati and sees the holy image with the eye of geologist absolutely without any touch of devotion, would only note the species of rock to which the Tirupati Venkatesa image would belong, and would certainly deny that there is any God in that stone. But to the mass of highly devout persons who pour out their souls in love and devotion to Tirupati Venkatesa in the presence of that image, Venkatesa is not a stone at all. The stone is wholly forgotten. Venkatesa is God, the fullest embodiment of mercy and love ever anxious and ever ready to help His devotee and this alone is the true devotee's

feeling. It is not sanctified images alone that thus serve as symbols of the Divine. Saints also are such symbols.

God is not one of the terms found in the material sciences and is not capable of exact definition. It is a term used by persons dealing with emotion and unseen entities and acting in ways which are not the ways of material science. Hence whether anything is or not God, cannot be demonstrated scientifically to the satisfaction of anyone who insists upon satisfaction on the lines of science and logic. But for practical purposes, the term God has a definite meaning and for purpose of this, we must depend upon the reader's popular idea of God. On that basis we proceed. Subtle distinctions as to whether a person with a few powers, usually termed divine powers or *siddhis*, is to be treated as God or not, we shall avoid. In the Bhagavad Gita²⁰⁹, Sri Krishna recounts various embodiments of power or greatness which signify Godhead to the worshipper and which may be used by him for purposes of meditation and worship. But Gita also adds that every soul is a fraction of the Primordial force called God, that is an *Amsa* of God

Mamai vamso Jivaloke Jivabhutah Sanatanah
that is, Every *Jiva* or soul is an eternal part of myself²¹⁰. Therefore, every creature having consciousness of a Self is a spark of God and may therefore be treated either as God or as an *Avatar* of God. *Taittiriya Upanishad* commands or recommends the worship of God in the Parents, the Teacher *Acharya* or *Guru* and the Guests. Very often however term the *Avatar* is restricted only to *Vibhutis* that is, entities wherein there is a superabundance and exhibition of power, greatness and splendour as that term is used in the Bhagavad Gita²¹¹ Lord Krishna says:

Yadyad Vibhutimat Satvam

Srimad Urjitam Evava

Tat Tat Eva Avagachchatvam

Mama Tejo Amsa Sambhavam

that is, whatever is superb and excellent and powerful, know it to be a part of My splendour.

In practice, it is the latter usage that prevails. Referring to all creatures as God or *Avatar* causes only confusion, however useful it may be for the practice by serious *sadhakas* to see God in all creatures. Though it is good for children to worship parents and wives to worship husbands, the parents and the husbands are not God to the public. In this chapter, we shall use the term God to mean *Vibhuti* of God that is, one who can be worshipped with benefit by any one, unlike parents and husbands who are to be worshipped by their children or wives only. Using it in that sense, the question, Is Sai Baba of Shirdi God or not, can only have one answer, which is, that he is certainly God or a *Vibhuti*. Those who know enough facts about him find that he knows everything everywhere at any time, that he has power to do anything everywhere, that he has power to control the movements and the hearts of creatures, and even the elements of nature like rain and fire, that he had a mastery of the knowledge of the past, present, and future, even innumerable centuries away from the present, and that he had the highest moral principles of selflessness, service and love to all including the meanest beings. So they treat him as God, for our notion of God is one with vast unlimited power equally listening to the prayers of all and responding to all as a Universal Mother should do. God is the Universal Soul and the Universal Mother. Therefore, Sai Baba was and is rightly termed God and worshipped as God by those who noted his *Antaryamitwa* which means acting as the soul of various creatures. And he was not termed God by those who did not have such experience. So Baba was both God and not God, just as Tirupati Venkatesa is both God and not God. Venkatesa is God to the vast mass of Hindus but is nothing to an Australian or to a Chinese.

A biography of a saint like Baba must be highly illuminating, elevating, inspiring, and in every way practical. Taking the question of practicality, we note the fact that a very wonderful and unique personality like Sai Baba is yet unknown even to many parts of Maharashtra and Southern India, the two States where he is best known, while he is hardly sufficiently known to other States or Countries outside India. There is absolutely no reason why this state of affairs should continue. It is not the wish of Baba to hide his light under a bushel, but to

place it on a hill top so that everyone all around may share the benefits and have light, life and love. The natural course of things, the *Asuric bhava* of people prevent their understanding Sai Baba, has made the progress of knowledge of Baba very slow, but henceforth there can be no reason why those who have higher and refined natures in all parts of the country and elsewhere should not immediately be apprised of all the facts about Baba, atleast of the important fact throwing real light upon his *nature* and the benefits that it confers on those approaching him. Just as in the mango season, mangoes go around the whole country, similarly this is the Baba season and everyone can benefit by Baba. This season is provided by Providence for greater knowledge about Baba so that all people may approach him for benefit either individual, political, social, spiritual, or of other sorts. There is a very vast field for propaganda, though unfortunately that term has fallen into bad odour on account of the absolute lack of conscience in the manner in which diplomacy is carried on and propaganda is another name for deliberate, unjustifiable, and selfish lying of the worst sort in order to delude and ruin others. But the original sense of the word ought to be restored and everyone must feel that he has a duty to propagate and publish all useful and inspiring facts such as those that have been already set forth about Baba herein and may be set out in the latter portions of this book. A great soul like Baba appears in this world in order that his life, light and love, may be absorbed by all and not only by particular sections or classes or individuals. Hence the question we have set out to discuss in this chapter as to the nature of Baba may be easily dealt with for purposes of propaganda. Baba is undoubtedly a beneficent universal power responding to prayer, responding to appeals of every sort by those who are sincere, true, loyal and faithful. This is our conception of our God and Baba answers to that conception and stands the test at the hands of every sincere and honest soul. He will prove himself to be divine and the bestower of innumerable divine blessings to everyone that approaches him. Therefore without further discussion of the question as to whether Baba is God or is not God, we shall deal with it as Sri Krishna dealt with the question of his being viewed as God in the Bhagavad Gita²¹². Low natures deluded by *Maya* and driven by their own low

impulses to a life of sin and vice, can never see beneath the surface, and are content to know the outside or the external and treat Baba or Krishna as a mere human being. But persons who have a fraction at least of *Daivi Prakriti*, who can put down the impulses of their lower nature and yield more and more of power to their altruistic and other noble impulses, will get their natures more and more refined and will be able to perceive Krishna's and Baba's real nature. As stated in *Srimad Bhagavata* nothing more is needed as a *sadhana* to achieve this purpose than mere listening to accounts of Sri Krishna and Baba. Sri Krishna's in *Bhagavata* and Baba's in this biography and in the numerous books on Baba which can be got in any language²¹³.

For purposes of fuller treatment of this subject, let us take the alternative that any particular reader is not able to treat Baba as God. Still, is there any use he can make of the facts about Baba contained herein or in other books? The answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative. We are not interested in Theology or in development of religions as religions. We are concerned solely with souls as such and with benefits to humanity at large. That is a grand enough object for anyone to concentrate all his energies on. Baba's great purpose in life was to benefit humanity. Many a person who for some reason or other is unable to treat Baba as God is still able enough to perceive some of the highest elements in Baba such as his miraculous power and beneficence and approach him either for aid or for any other purpose, and will undoubtedly derive all round temporal and spiritual benefit. We should certainly not dissuade any person who thinks that Baba is a sort of powerful saint though not God from approaching him for obtaining various temporal benefits, for example urgent relief from various troubles that make life bitter. There are numerous persons of this sort who want very urgent relief and Baba is the person who will grant the relief to them. The method of obtaining such relief can be easily discovered by going through books on Baba. Generally by reading about Baba, more information is obtained, as also faith, but such faith need not be faith, in him as God, but faith in him as a *Sadguru* or as a *Satpurusha*, or simply as a *Mahatma*, will suffice. That will benefit the public. Such is Baba's nature.

From the above one can see that the nature and functions of Baba can be viewed in so many different ways. First, those who are able to view him as God have one set of ideas about his nature and functions. This set may be all embracing, as God's nature and God's functions are so vast and all embracing. If God is defined as *Brahman* in the *Upanishadic dictum*

Sarvam Kalvidam Brahma

that is, All this in the Universe is *Brahman* or God, then the functions of God are the functions of everything in the Universe and, therefore, infinite and undefinable. But many may object to such a wide definition of God, especially our Christian and *Madhva* brethren for example, who wish to contrast and restrict God, who would say that God should not be demeaned and identified with so many low, worthless, and meanest things in the world. God is excellence, purity, and all nobility, the height of *sattvic* quality, and should not be degraded to the level of highly *rajasic* and highly *tamasic* entities, such as the devil or *Satan* is in Christian conception. These friends of ours would say that God is inside or immanent in all such low creatures but is not identical with them. This may puzzle others. But whatever is the correct theological view which we need not discuss here, we can take even our Christian and *Madhva* conceptions of divinity and find an almost unlimited field for our sketching out the nature and functions of God or of a divine person like Sai Baba. In a treatise like this, it is impossible to attempt even a rough outline of all the excellences of divine personalities, and we must content ourselves with just sketching out a few prominent features, just as in the *Bhagavad Gita*²⁰⁹ where Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, 'What are the excellent manifestations of God', Sri Krishna gives two or three dozens of illustrations and then says that a complete list is impossible, and He winds up with the stanza

Yadyad Vibhutimat Satvam

that is, Wherever there is nobility, splendour, success, fortune on an unprecedented scale, feel God is there.

We appeal to persons with such qualities, for help in our difficulties. Sai, being clothed with such divine splendour, is appealed to for aid by persons in trouble and badly in need of help. We may, therefore, close this chapter about

nature and functions, with the remark that such nature and functions will be beaming out almost everywhere in this book, especially in later chapters, where we sketch Baba's dealings with a few prominent devotees and refer to his achievements in various fields including the occasion of death and provision of *Sadgati*.

Sadgati is deemed to be almost the highest help which any one can have. What is this life for? What are we to do with it before Death's icy fingers wipe out our life, and at the moment when the actual wiping is going on? This is a matter of supreme interest dealt with in a special chapter devoted to it, and the function of Baba in that matter would be regarded as his most important function by many. After all according to *Guru Gita*, that help is only one of the items of help which the *Samartha Sadguru* like Sai Baba confers upon his surrendered devotees. All persons do not think alike and persons especially with a phlegmatic or sanguine temperament steeped in the world's quest of joy and success may consider various other matters as of greater interest than *Sadgati*. Highly advanced souls, unruffled by loss and gain also may take the same view. To them also we may point out that other matters also are dealt with in this book, though not arranged in a strictly scientific fashion. We may wind up this chapter on nature and functions of Baba with one observation.

Ye yatha mam Prapadyante

Tam Stathaiva Bhajam Yaham^{2U}

This means, In whatever way people approach Me, in the same way I respond to their appeals, says Sri Krishna. Baba's many-sided nature enables him to deal suitably with an infinite variety of people of all castes, creeds, ages, and mentalities approaching him for their various purposes. This suiting to their needs and answering their needs, is by no means the least important function of Baba. Baba's infinite possibilities cannot be exhausted by human science and skill. Let us each bite off only what we can chew and digest.

Eighteen

Baba's Love of Devotees and Appreciation of Prema

Baba has stated that he loved devotion *and prema*, that is, devotion at its highest and intensest form. This has also been shown in action by him²¹⁵. In this chapter we may deal with these. But as a preliminary, the question may be raised whether this love of devotees and *prema* may not be conflicting with His *samatva* or equality. Students of the Gita would have been puzzled by Sri Krishna's statement²¹⁶

Samoham Sarva Bhuteshu
Name Dweshyo Asti Napriyah
Yebhajanti tu mam bhaktya
Mayi te teshu cha Api aham

this means, I am the same to all creatures. There is no one whom I hate as my enemy and no one who is dear to me. Those who devoutly worship Me, they are in Me and I am in them. Now with reference to the statement that Sri Krishna has no *priyah* or dear to me, *Priyo Asi me*²¹⁷

Manmana bhava Madbhakto
Madyaji Mam Namas Kuru
Mameva Eshyasi Satyam te
Pratijane Priyo Asi me.

this means, Let Your mind rest on Me. Have devotion to Me. Worship Me. Prostrate to me. You will come to Me. This truly I affirm. You are dear to me. Again, in the same chapter, the words are,

Nacha Tasmad Manushyeshu Kaschin Priya Krit tamah
Bhavita Nachame Tasmad Anyah Priyataro Bhuv²¹⁸

this means, There is no one dearer to Me than one who repeats the Gita to others. These and other stanzas in the Gita show that Sri Krishna repeatedly says, Arjuna is dear to Me. And yet he has said, There is no one dear to Me, and there is no one hateful to Me. Is there any conflict here, and, if so, is the conflict only apparent or real, between the above said statements? The answer to this question is obtained by examining the words of each verse. Sri Krishna first states the general proposition that He as God is equally inclined to help all and

favour all. But as for an enemy, there is no one who can be styled his enemy, because, to be an enemy, one must be in a position to stand against Sri Krishna. Yet, there are persons who fancy they can stand against Sri Krishna, and in their fancy they may be enemies, but in reality, they cannot be counted as enemies. A person who begins to hate Sri Krishna like *Kamsa* ends being absorbed by Him, just like the dear ones and *bhaktas* of Sri Krishna. The primary proposition that at the outset, all are in the same position towards God, gets modified by the subsequent actions of various people,

Ye Bhajanti tu Mam Bhaktya

Those who with deep devotion direct their minds to Me, they are in Me and I am in them, says Sri Krishna. If He is in them and they are in Him, they are certainly His *priyas* or friends. Yet this is not a contradiction of the earlier statement. It is a natural law that the human mind partakes of what it dwells upon. If we dwell upon love for Sri Krishna and view him as a friend and protector, then the ideas of love, friendship, and protection of Sri Krishna, all roll up into one and seize the thinking soul. The *Jiva* immerses in those thoughts and loses hold of other thoughts, especially, thoughts in a contrary direction, and, therefore, the *Jiva* turns into what it thinks of. This is a fact of psychological science, and there is nothing in it which contradicts Sri Krishna's statement that he has no loved ones and no enemies. Sri Krishna is the *Antaryami* or soul within and *Prakriti* nature of all, and acts like a mirror. If you laugh at a mirror, you get back a laugh. If you turn a frowning face at a mirror, you get back a frowning face. If we indulge constantly in hatred, like *Kamsa*, and hate Sri Krishna, then we constitute ourselves into Sri Krishna's enemies. Ultimately, however, hatred does not survive. It is swallowed up in the general law of love. That is how *Ravana*, *Kamsa* and others got quick salvation and became part of God, may be earlier than many weak-willed persons. What has been stated about Sri Krishna applies also to Sri Sai. He was once asked by a *Prarthana Samajist*, 'Shall I ask you a question?', 'Yes', said Baba. The *Prarthana Samajist* asked, 'Do you look upon all people equally?' Then Baba said, 'Yes, I look upon all equally'. It requires some sense to ask a question. The point is that Baba had several persons to whom he

showed great consideration, for example Nana Chandorkar, Tatya Patil, M.B. Rege and others just as Sri Krishna showed special affection for Arjuna. Baba distinctly stated that he was anxious to help Chandorkar, Patil and Rege, and did actually help them. Yet, Baba has said that he is impartial and does not prefer one to another. What is the explanation? The same as in Sri Krishna's case. If any one has previously been loving Baba and getting attached to him with repeated efforts, the natural law of psychology and of ethics makes Baba respond to him more vigorously and constantly than to others. Thus he seems to favour those persons who have been constantly drawn to him in the past. Nana Chandorkar had been his *sisya* for *fourjanmas*, and the affection of four *janmas* cannot go for nothing. That is why he sends for Chandorkar when he has not sent for any one else in the world. Similarly he takes the *naivedya* of Mrs. Khaparde first without touching any of the previously offered ones, because for several *janmas*, one after another, she has been anxiously and lovingly taking up *naivedyas* and giving milk and food to him²¹⁹. Baba said, The food she gives me is sweet, with her love. Similarly towards Tatya Patil, Baba showed considerable concern, and helped him to get a large income on which income-tax was levied. He was well known to be the pet of Baba. The reason was what Baba himself gave out and what everybody knew. Tatya Patil's parents were greatly attached to Baba from the very beginning of Baba's visit to Shirdi when he had made no name and exhibited no powers. Tatya Patil's mother would run into the jungles taking food in her hand to feed Baba, a self-forgetful *fakir*, who did not care for his food. She was looking after Baba with so much love even in this *janma*. Baba's nature like *Bhisma's* nature had gratitude as its bedrock, and he could never forget such ardent and loving service. He also explained that Tatya's mother was his sister in several previous *janmas*, and she was always feeding him. Therefore, Tatya, being a son of his sister of so many *janmas*, was expressly called by Baba his Nephew, and Tatya always called Baba his *Mama*, that is, maternal uncle. The effects of so many *janmas* cannot be forgotten or brushed aside, and that is why Baba paid so much attention to Tatya. Tatya's own conduct towards Baba was also one of great surrender and attachment.

Tatya used to sleep in the Mosque along with Baba and Mahlsapathy for many years, that is as long as he was a bachelor, and Baba used to attend to his body and soul. Baba would massage his legs, make passes over his head and see that he did not come to grief. Tatya was a person of no education, and would ordinarily get easily ruined in the countryside. But Baba's company kept him up to a pretty high mark of culture and morality, and thus saved him from spiritual and moral shipwreck. There were also factions in the village, and bickerings of various sorts were common. Baba occasionally helped Tatya even in those bickerings where he had sufficient reason. He would help him even with *chamatkars*, that is super normal powers. Some men of Tatya's faction like Raghu were charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate for outraging the modesty of a *Marwadi* woman. On the evidence of six eye witnesses, Raghu and his set were all sentenced to imprisonment. This was the result of faction. The case was not true. When Raghu was crying in the Ahmednagar Jail, Baba appeared to him in a dream and told him that he would be released quickly. Tatya took up the appeal papers first to some lawyers in Ahmednagar who thought that the case was too strong to have any success in appeal. But when the papers were taken to Baba, Baba ordered the papers to be taken to Bhav, S.B. Dhumal, Pleader of Nasik, to be presented by him with an appeal memo before the Ahmednagar District Magistrate. Baba by a wonderful *chamatkar* gripped the mind of the District Magistrate and made him acquit Tatya's whole set of men, Raghu and others without sending for the papers or reading the judgement or the appeal memo, or issuing notice to the respondent. This might be considered to be a very strong piece of evidence showing Baba's love of Tatya leading to the disregard of Law. That is true. But still, if Baba secured justice without caring for and observing the formalities in a special case, there seems to be nothing wrong in it, for in the annals of civilian trials, there may be several extraordinary instances showing disregard of laws of evidence and procedure. Coming back to the question of Baba's love for his devotees, his love for Rege was the return of a powerful love by the young Rege to him. In Rege's vision, Sri Narayana appeared and pointed out the figure of Baba to him as his *Guru*. In a vision Baba

had told Rege that he was bound to him and that he Rege, need now bow to Him. On the first day of Rege's visit at Shirdi, Baba appeared to give Rege a rebuff, but told him in the afternoon that Rege was his child, and embraced him. He loved Rege and encouraged Rege, because Rege's *bhava* was *Putra*, that is, the child of Baba. Baba offered to give any promotion that Rege wanted or anything else that he wanted. But Rege wanted only that *janma* after *janma*, Baba should be with him. He cared for nothing else. That is the proof of his strong affection. *Aham bhakta Paradenah* that is, I am subjugated by the love of my devotee is a statement not merely of Narayana but also of Sai. Baba also said, If one ever dwells on me in his mind and will not even taste food before offering it to me, I am his slave. So also if he hungers and thirsts after me, and treats all else as unimportant.²²⁰

I am *bhaktaparadheena* the bond slave of my devotee. I love devotion²²¹. He who withdraws his heart from wife, child, and parents and loves me is My real lover and he merges in Me like a river in the sea²²².

Sai Baba was merged in God and, therefore, his reactions to *bhakti* are exactly the reactions of God as shown in Srimad Bhagavata and Bhagavad Gita. Baba's consideration for his devotees, made him exercise all his powers their behalf. He underwent considerable personal trouble and undertook to risk his health and even life for the sake of his devotees. He drew plague to himself to save Balwant Khaparde, son of Mrs. Khaparde, He drew also a Superintendent's plague at Goa to himself. He offered his own throat to Mir Jaman, who wanted to cut the throats of all the Hindu *bhaktas* at the *chavadi*; in order to save his *bhaktas*. As stated by Baba to G.S. Khaparde, a fact noted in his diary, Baba was steadily ruining his health for his devotees' sake. He could not but respond to every appeal made to him by night and day from every place, and, in consequence, his digestion gave way, his general strength gave way, and he knew that this would continue up to the time of his leaving the body. But, he told G.S. Khaparde, 'I do not care for my life. I care for my *bhaktas*.' Therefore, love towards loving *sishtyas* is not a detraction of any general principle or moral law, but enforcement of the general principle that every action produces a reaction,

that good begets good, love begets love, and Baba wanted his devotees to make use of the general principles and laws of nature for developing themselves. Baba's sacrifice for the masses and for the public, has been characteristic of him, *janma* after *janma*, as we see from an account of his recitals of his own past *janmas*. In every *janma* we find that he was self sacrificing and working wonders, and always helping people, especially those who put their trust in Him and were attached to Him.

Nineteen

Ankita Children

The use of the term children for the pupils or disciples of a master is very ancient and very common. *Guru Gita*²²³ says, that the *Guru* removes the eight bonds of the child by cutting them off with his knife of mercy, the bonds being *Daya, Lajja, Bhayam, Ninda, Kulam, Vidya, Dhanam* and *Seelam*.

Karuna Khadgapatena

Chitva Pascashtakam scisocoh.

this means, Having cut off the eight bonds of the child that is the pupil by using his mercy, which may be viewed or termed as the knife. We have earlier referred in this book to the intimate relation between the *Guru* and the *sisya* that prevailed in ancient days in the *Gurukulas* and which must still prevail in the case of very ardent *sisyas* who get everything from the *Guru*, and who hope to achieve all that they want from the *Guru*. The *Guru* and his wife were father and mother to the pupil and fulfilled or more than fulfilled the functions of the God-father and Godmother. This was specially easy in those days, because the pupil left his parents, home and village and went as a tender child into the care and custody of the *Guru* remaining there till he attained majority, his interest being identified with the interest of the *Guru*. As an excellent illustration, it was pointed out that the pupil Arum gave up his life to save the water, needed for irrigating the fields of his master, from being lost to him. It has also been shown that the *Guru* himself should give up his life for the sake of his pupil. Baba expressly stated²²⁴ that he was giving up his very life for the sake of his devotee who is constantly dwelling and relying entirely upon him. In *Srimad Bhagavata*,

Rishabha says to his sons that a person who hesitates to save the life of his *sisya* is not fit to be called a *Guru*. Such being the intimate relation between *Guru* and pupil, one can easily understand that every possible facility is afforded to the *sisya* to rise to the full height of his stature, as the *Guru* himself being a man of perfect realisation, the *sisya* attains to the same. There being mutual love between the two and no sense of rivalry, everything known to the *Guru* is imparted. In more selfish persons, for example a father partitioning property between himself and his sons, the former conceals something and does not give a share to the son. Worldly *Gurus*, fearing that the pupil might eclipse their reputation, withhold sometimes part of their knowledge or power from the pupil. It was however recognised as part of the work of a perfect *Guru* that he should turn the *sisya* into his own likeness. The contrast between *Chintamani* and the *Guru* is that *Chintamani* or *Kalpataru Kamadhenu* gives only what is prayed for, but the *Guru* gives more than what is known and what can be prayed for, such as altering the nature and being of the *sisya* who knows not what he is and needs, and gives himself away to the *sisya* by converting him into his likeness. God-realisation or Self realisation is not a thing given, but the pupil is given the necessary preparation and facilities to attain the state. Then, the saying of Tukaram becomes true.

Apana Sarika Karitat Tatkal.

this means, The *Samartha Guru* turns the *sisya* immediately into his own likeness. Allowing some latitude for hyperbole for purposes of effect, there is substantial truth in this saying. Hence one may recognise that the highest use which any sane man can make of a *Guru* is to get the very highest benefit possible, namely, Self-realisation and God-realisation.

This is the highest but in the vast circle of *sadhakas* and of our readers, there are many who would not think of the highest at all, but would have their own hankerings or longings, which are by no means to be treated with contempt. For instance, the achievement of the position of an *Ankita* child may be referred to as one of the smaller or preliminary gains of the *sisyas* when approaching a

Samartha Sadguru. What *Ankita* means will be seen by the following stanza, which is part of Narayana's daily *Arati* song sung in places like Sakori and Shirdi.

Jo Saducha Ankita Jiva Jhala

Tyacha Ase Bhara Niranjana.

this means, Where a *sadhu* has earmarked a pupil as one for whom he undertakes complete responsibility for both spiritual and temporal welfare and for the entire period of his life or lives, there every responsibility concerning that pupil's welfare rests upon the shoulders of that *Nirajan*, that is, one who is almost God in respect of his power and nature. This appears to be a truism or platitude, but is really a revelation of the existence of *Nirajans* and their *Ankitas* in present day life. *Nirajan* strictly means having no *Maya* or having crossed the borders of *Maya*²²⁵.

Daivi hi Eshaa Gunamayee Mama May a Duratyaya

Mameva Ye Prapadyante May am Etam Tarantite.

that is, This three fold *Guna*²²⁶ constituting My *Maya* is hard indeed for anyone to cross. But he who takes refuge and surrenders *Tan, Man Dan* to Me Iswara crosses this *Maya*. So, *Nirajan* is one who has crossed the three-fold *Maya* who has identified himself with Iswara and is possessed of *Ashtaiswarya* divine powers that can bear every responsibility of another soul without regard to place, time, or extent of time, that is, whether it is generations or centuries. One may be aghast at the idea that any responsibility can be undertaken indefinitely or for centuries. But Baba, being a *Nirajan* expressly undertook such responsibility. When Mahlasapathy was afraid that the Muslims would come and beat him for worshipping Baba with, sandal paste after he left the Mosque premises, Baba assured him that neither those nor any other persons could molest him either in this life or in any future lives of his. Baba told the Bandra youth, who prayed to him that he should be always with him in future lives, that he had already been along with him in previous lives and had been looking after him, and that for the three more lives that were necessary for him to be born to work out his remaining *karma*, Baba would be reborn and be with him. Similar assurances were given for indefinite periods to M.B. Rege. One reading the

Gospel of Sai Baba²²⁷, would notice that Baba referred to ten thousand years back, saying 'I was here ten thousand years ago'. He told Shama that for 72 *janmas* or births he had been with him and that he had never touched him at all till then. That is, he recalls events of 72 *janmas*, and knows he has been protecting his devotee all these *janmas* that is, over 2,000 years. Especially in this *janma* when Shama, an almost illiterate and helpless villager was obliged to depend entirely upon Baba, Baba looked after all his interests and provided him and his children also with means of subsistence, with comforts, with safety, and position as he provided so many others. When G.G. Narke was introduced to Baba, Baba declared that he had known him for 30 *janmas*. If a *janma* is roughly taken to be even 30 years, this takes us nearly a thousand years back. Hence, to give an undertaking which appears to be indefinite in point of time, is nothing for a *Niranjana*. The undertaking is also unconditional and indefinite in respect of the sort of attacks that may befall a *sishya*. Sri Rama said,

Sakrudeva Prapannaya Tava Asmi Iticha Yachate

Abhayam Sarva Bhutebhyo Dadami Etat Vratam Mama.

this means, If a person once surrenders and takes refuge with me saying, I am yours, I undertake to protect him from all creatures. This is my vow. Sri Rama does not limit either the time or the nature of the attack upon his dependants seeking protection. Similarly Baba, who is nothing but Sai Rama, gave undertakings indefinite in point of time, persons, or things, attacking devotees or the place. As far as we are able to see, both Ayodhya Rama and Shirdi Sai Rama kept up the promises that they made. See how Baba protected Gown and the coward Basappa, birth after birth²²⁸.

Some people thought and some may think even now that a *Niranjan* or God realised soul is wasting his time and attention in attending to such trifles as looking after the needs and comforts of the body of persons age after age and in place after place. In Baba's Gospel, it is pointed out that a devotee named Damia Rasne objected to people going to Baba for temporal benefits, employment, money, children and cure of disease²²⁹. Baba said in response to a devotee who

objected to people going to Baba for temporal benefit such as employment, money, children, cure of disease.

"Do not do that. My men first come to me on account of that only. They get their heart's desires fulfilled, and comfortably placed in life, they then follow me and progress further. I bring my men to me from long distances under many pleas. I seek them and bring them to me. They do not come of their own accord. I bring them to me".

Things like health, employment and other such concerns may appear to be trifles to outsiders but to the concerned devotees, they bulk so large as to shut out all idea of spirit or spiritual progress, and therefore great *Gurus*, *Samarthas* like Sai make use of the devotees' necessity to turn them into highly grateful devotees and persons prepared to march on under Baba's guidance towards the goal through the way that he may chalk out. In fact he said truly that though devotees thought that they themselves were going to Baba for such relief, it was Baba working unseen with them that was pulling them like a boy pulling a bird with a string. Baba, "However distant, even thousands of miles away, my people might be, I draw them to myself, just as we pull birds to us with a string tied to their foot".

Baba recognised no doubt the importance of *Paramartha*, that is, reaching the goal of life²³⁰, proclaiming that taking the devotees to their goal was his function, and incidentally for that he might take so many other steps. Baba having assumed responsibility for his *sishyas* regarded them as his trust and himself as their trustee. He said²³¹, 'I will not allow my devotees to be lost. I will account to God for all those that have been given to me', that is, all his *Ankita* children.

When the position of an *Ankita* child seems to be so grand and excellent, it is a wonder that people brush that idea aside and run after trifles and gewgaws. Baba said about himself, to Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar of Poona²³². This is a *Brahmin*, a white *Brahmin*, a pure *Brahmin*. This *Brahmin* will lead lakhs of people to the *Subhra marga* and take them to the Goal right up to the end. This is a *Brahmin's* masjid.

To this *Ankita* child, the author, Baba gives many high and precious gifts and gives them even unasked. The mother does not wait for the child to say that the child is hungry but at the appropriate time gives it excellent food. Similarly acts the mother Baba. The wish of serious minded people is,

Anayasena Maranam Vina dainyena Jivanam

Dehi me Kripayo Sambho Raksha Raksha Maheswara.

this means, O Maheswara Siva, graciously grant me two things, first, a life lived without misery and secondly, a painless death at the close. Sri Sai without waiting for such a prayer from H.S. Dixit assured him soon after he went to Shirdi of both. As for life and the things of life, he told him, '*Arre Kaka, Tula Kalji Kasli, Maje Sara Kalji Ahe*'. That is, 'O Dixit, why have you any cares or worries? All care and responsibility are mine'. As for the second, Baba said that he would carry him, *Kaka*, in a *vimana*. Usually happy souls who go to Heaven after leaving the earth are said to be carried in a *vimana*. Tukaram who went with his human body to heaven is said to have got into a *vimana* that came to him. Srimad Bhagavata²³³ say that by *vimana*, happy souls are taken up to Heaven and enjoy in Heaven. In the case of Mr. Dixit, no visible vehicle arrived at his death, but his death was extremely happy and absolutely without pain. He had spent long hours in blissful communion with Baba along with Hemad Pant alias Anna Saheb Dhabolkar. Both went to board the train at Ville Parle, Kaka to go to Bombay and Dhabolkar to go to his own station. Looking at their watches they found that they were three minutes late, but luckily for them, when they went to the platform, the train also was three minutes late, and they were able to board it. Having got into comfortable berths, Kaka remarked to his friend, How gracious Sai Baba is! We ourselves are late and Sai has made the train late for us, for if it had already arrived in time and gone away, we would have to be stuck up for long hours. Shortly after that Dixit got into a comatose condition, and his friend thought that he was trying to sleep and put bolsters behind him. But the friend discovered that there was no breathing and no sign of hearing or of life. Thus the actual death was so peaceful, so quick and so happy. If this is not being carried in a *vimana*, what else is it? If one gushes with joy and gratitude to Baba at the

time of death, one reaches Baba. Such a happy death Baba has given to others also. But talking of *Ankita* children, Dixit is preeminently a model of the *Ankita* child. About the death being painless, we must add that it is not merely the question of absence of pain at the particular moment of death. What precedes and what follows must all be lumped together. What is that which follows death? Life in the hereafter. The Gita²³⁴ says,

Yam Yam Vapi Smaran Bhavam Tyajati Ante Kalebaram

Tarn Tarn Eva Eti Kounteya Sada Tadbhava Bhavitah.

this means, Whatever form or object a person thinks of all the while and at the moment of death, he is transformed into that object after death, that is, in the next life.

Tasmat Sarveshu Kaleshu Mam Anusmara Yuddhyacha

Mayi Arpita Mono bhuddhih Mam Eva Eshyasi Asamschayam

this means, Therefore at all times, O, Arjuna, think of Me and carry on your fight. With your mind and reason resting on Me, when you die, you will surely reach Me without doubt. These are highly important stanzas of the Bhagavad Gita, and people at the close of their lives are naturally very anxious to see that they attain the goal of life by thinking of God at the moment of their death and thus reach Him. As this concerns the ultimate object of being, one cannot overestimate any help that can be rendered to the devotee to gain it. Some superficial people might fancy that the whole thing is very easy, that at the moment of death, to think of God at once. For instance, keep a friend *Sathi Akaraka* by at the moment of death to remind one of God! They may be sustained in such a view by what happened to *Ajamila*. *Ajamila* was once a noble and pure soul studying the *Vedas*, thinking of God, and living righteously. All of a sudden his ways changed, and he discarded a virtuous young wife for no reason and took to a mistress of low caste, and was living with her and got several children from her, the youngest of whom was named *Narayana*. When leading such a degraded life, death overtook him. At the moment of death, he suddenly out of affection, called out for his youngest child saying, *Narayana*. Then his breathing stopped. Naturally he ought to have been taken to Hell for punishment for all his degraded life.

Therefore, *Yama dhutas* promptly appeared on the scene. Just at the same moment, angels appeared by his side in order to take him to Heaven. *The Yama dhutas* wondered and argued with the angels stating that the dead person was a sinner fit only for Hell. But the angels pointed out that the last word that he uttered with his breath was *Narayana*, a name of God. Then *Yama's* messengers said that was only the name of his child that he called out and that he was not calling out for God. Then the angels explained.

Ayamhi Kritanirveso janmakotyamhasamapi
Sanketyam Parihasyam va Sthobham Helanam eva va
Vaikuntha nama grahanam Asceshagha haram Viduh²³⁶

this means, That the name of God whether uttered involuntarily by a man merely as a sort of token for some worldly thing or out of joke²³⁷ or fun or for purpose of an oath or for any other reason, still has its value and being uttered at the moment of death, all his sins are wiped out and the utterer must go to Heaven. Therefore *Ajamila* was ultimately taken to Heaven. But all are not *Ajamilas* and all have not his luck. Sai is the best *Sathi Akaraka*. Therefore a verse in Pandava Gita²³⁸ says,

Krishna twadiya Pada Pankaja Panjarantam
Adhyaiva Me Viscatu Manasa Raja hamsah
Pranaprayanasamaye Kapavata Pittaih
Kanthavarodhanavidhow Smaranam Kutaste.

this means, O Krishna, at the time of my death, when the three humours of the body that is wind, phlegm, and bile, choke the throat, where is the chance of my uttering your name?²³⁹ So, immediately now, let my mind, which is a *Raja Hamsa* enter the cage of your lotus feet, This is the same in effect as²⁴⁰ and means, Let us remember God now and be in Him at once.

Sri Sai Baba made and makes His *Ankita* children remember Him and pronounce his name constantly by giving them frequent opportunities so many times each day by perpetual provision of comforts and necessaries, pain and trouble, enough to compel frequent or constant prayer, humble supplication and

providing *satsang* and surroundings of various sorts serving as reminders of his gracious, powerful yet merciful and many sided personality.

One preliminary question may be raised by some as to what exactly *Ankita* children denotes and how they are different from ordinary children. Has Baba got ordinary children and again *Ankita* children? It looks a somewhat crude notion to have children for whom you have no responsibility. Of all persons, Baba will be the last to avoid responsibility for children. Baba recognised that devotees in general were his children, and he also affirmed his determination to protect them. Baba said²⁴¹, You devotees are my children. 'I am your father. You have to get everything from me. You should not say like that and say Sai is not God'. This was addressed to Narke's friends who went and complained to him that Narke was saying that Baba was a man. Baba was pointing out that those devotees who were relying upon him entirely for all their benefits were getting those benefits merely because they were feeling that they were children of Baba, *Babacha Lekhru*, and that his responsibility was there in respect of those who felt that they were his children. Baba may create that feeling no doubt, but one must begin with some sort of rudimentary feeling at least that he is Baba's child and begin to make efforts to love him as the father and provider. Therefore we may say that as a rule, normal children who feel that they are children and look to their father for help and provision, do get such help and provision, and in the spiritual field, those who feel that they are children of Baba, especially by total surrender to him of all their interests and activities, time, trouble and wealth to him, are especially His children²⁴². Baba says, 'If any one casts his burden on me and thinks of me, I look after all his concerns'²⁴³. Here is the undertaking of the responsibility of looking after all the concerns of the devotee, and the condition of it is that the devotee should cast all his burdens on Baba and think of Baba all the while as the provider. Baba says²⁴⁴, Look to me and I look to you. 'Trust in the *Guru* fully'²⁴⁵. He adds, If one devotes his entire mind to me and rests in Me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one sees Me and Me alone and listens to talks about Me, and is devoted to me alone, he will reach God, *Chaitanya*. This is the modern paraphrase of what Sri Krishna said,

Man Manabhava Madbhakto madyaji Main Namaskuru

Mameva eshyasi yuktva Evam Atmanam Mat parayanah.

Complete responsibility is undertaken by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita in respect of any one who treats Sri Krishna as his *parayana* that is, the be all and end all of his existence, and who turns his mind, worship, observances, and prostrations all to Him²⁴⁶. He says²⁴⁷, Repeat my name. Seek refuge in Me. This refuge is *Prapatti*. The Gospel closes²⁴⁸, with

Ananyasachintayantomam Ye janah Paryu Upasate

TeshamNityabhiyuktanam Yoga Kshemam Vahamyaham²⁴⁹,

this means, If one thinks of Me and Me alone and resorts to Me completely, and is ever attached to Me, I look after his interests in obtaining and securing benefits. This is the same as Baba's undertaking. Now so far we have referred to the declarations of the *Dvapara Yuga* Krishna and the *Kali Yuga* Sai showing that where there is a divine protection offered to any person and it is accepted, then, as Narayana says in his *Arati* song, the devotee becomes *Ankita* and the entire responsibility for him is undertaken by the *Niranjana*, Divine. It is quite obvious that if any person feels that he is a child of Baba and that he has sufficiently surrendered and is making every endeavour to make the surrender complete, Baba²⁵⁰ comes forward to undertake all his burdens, and that makes the devotee *Ankita*. For all practical purposes, a real devotee who really surrenders himself or tries his utmost to surrender himself, will surely be an *Ankita* child, that is, a person for whom Sri Krishna will bear responsibilities. These declarations of undertaking were in the Gita already before Baba appeared in the flesh, but how few came forward to surrender and ask for the undertaking to be fulfilled by Sri Krishna? This is a great defect in humanity. What is freely preferred is not appreciated. Faith is not vigorously forthcoming at the time it ought to be forthcoming. The consequence of lack of faith is that there is no readiness to take up the position of a child or devotee, to surrender oneself, and to await with confidence the performance of the promises made in the Bhagavad Gita and the Gospel of Sai. As pointed out in the Chandogya Upanishad, prayers in order to be effective, must be believed in. When you pray for any object, believe that you

are getting it. That is the surest way of getting it. If you are really a surrendered child, you will feel that the parent is there ready to confer it. Numerous previous experiences would strengthen that belief. This is really as it ought to be. Unfortunately, what ought to be is not always the fact. People do not surrender, do not believe that they are getting benefits, and consequently there are a few cases reported of *Ankita* children of Krishna, but when the season comes, belief comes, and there is a large number of surrendering and believing persons. The lack of faith that is prevalent even after hundreds of cases of super human, miraculous aid being given by Baba to his *Ankita* children, is something astonishing. Of course there are parallels. We find one example in what Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa quotes, that is, the story of belief in the efficacy of Ganges water to wash away sin. The following is the verse,

Ganga papam sasci tapam Dainyam Kalpa taruh tatha

Papam Tapamcha Dainyamcha Hanti Sadhu Samagamah

this means, the Ganges water destroys sin. This has been repeated millions of times, and yet how many people believe in it? That is illustrated by the following account. Siva, wanting to show Parvati how little belief, people had told her to take the form of a very old *Sumangali* lady and to sit on the banks of the Ganges. He himself took the form of a very old husband of hers just now dead or dying. Parvati was crying out to all the people who gathered round, that her misfortune was making her a widow, but that some great wise man had said, 'Your husband will have a sudden death, but if somebody that is sinless puts in a drop of Ganges water into his mouth, he will revive'. So, the lady cried out and asked the crowd of people who had been taking bath in the Ganges, 'Is there no one who is sinless and who will put a drop of water in my husband's mouth?' No one was forthcoming. Each man was fully conscious of his sins and could not believe that the Ganges bath had absolved him of his sins. One young man came up and said, 'Mother! Wait. I am a sinner. But I shall have a dip in the Ganges. My sins being absolved, I will come with a drop of Ganges water and revive your husband'. And as he had the faith, his bath and the water he brought, revived her husband. This shows how rare is faith in the purificatory potency of Ganges

amongst vast masses of Hindus even though the praise of Ganges is sung by almost every Hindu and is known to every Hindu as washing away all sins, but not accepted with powerful faith.

Development of faith is a very large question, and if one arranges all the facts known to him, that is, after careful observation, he would notice first and foremost that faith develops where necessity makes one develop it. If it is to my interest to believe that a certain prayer will save me, I begin to believe in the efficacy of that prayer. If somebody thinks some practice is harmful, whether it is really harmful or not, he will certainly avoid that as he thinks that his interest is imperilled thereby. This is a far reaching principle and may be very largely utilised by those who make arrangements for the development of faith amongst large classes that approach them. Just as success begets success, faith begets faith. In order to develop faith in the *Guru*, the *Guru* must show himself to be expecting faith and deserving of faith. No faith will be placed in a person with patent defects, who is loose in his expressions, who is otherwise unworthy of trust or confidence. If a *Guru* commits such mistakes, faith is not likely to develop towards him. If, on the other hand, the *Guru* shows himself ready to do everything that a powerful *Guru* should do, and actually demonstrates his ability to do what faith expects and demands, then faith is readily placed in him. This is mainly the method by which faith in Baba has spread and is spreading now. We shall give one illustration. A propagandist went to Velappadi near Vellore and after his delivering an enthusiastic lecture about Sai's greatness, his wonderful powers of cure, and his uniform kindness to the poor, the wretched, the high class and the low class, at the close of the lecture, faith had been roused in some of the audience. One of them brought a young child of ten months and said that for eight months that child was having fits and God alone knew how it was to survive. Then suddenly the lecturer had the inspiration or the idea that in the name of Baba, he should take some *udhi* and apply it to the child and say 'hence forward, no fits should attack this child'. That was done. This was a prayer and an assertion. He returned from the village, and it was noticed that the child was really free from such attacks, thereafter. Henceforth, the whole village began to

believe in Sai Baba. Similarly where an educational officer's wife had hysterical fits and requested the propagandist to go and give her Sai Baba's blessings, the lecturer took up a picture of Sai Baba, made a very brief worship and offered *Kalpura Arati* to the Baba picture, and offered it to the patient telling her that she was Sai's child, that Sai was all powerful and that he could keep at bay any hysterical or other attack, whatever may be the source of the attack, and then he returned. So long as the lady remained in that place Kakinada, she had no recurrence of hysterical fits. This naturally roused faith in a large number of people all around. These are very common instances, and in fact it is such instances that partly explain how Sai Baba, who was not known outside Maharashtra twenty years ago, in 1932 A.D. is now known throughout the length and breadth of India. Coming to practical methods, if any one should ask, 'What is the actual step I am to take in order to develop enough faith to become Baba's *Ankita* child', the first answer is remove all influences adverse to faith. For instance, association with scoffers, with flippan persons, with violent and wicked persons should be avoided. Close association with highly respectable and eminent philosophes and thinkers who complacently declare that they have no faith in Sai or in Rama is dangerous. Pride in being a philosopher adopting the principle of Descartes namely, 'Doubt all things' ad libitem or ad infinitum is ruinous, The Gita says,

Samscaayatma vinascyati

that is, The perpetual doubter perishes. The opposite of it, namely the company of *sadhus* or ordinary believers in Sai, should be sought. Gatherings of *bhaktas* either for *bhajan* or worship or study or lecture should all be attended as far as possible. There is one supreme rule. Repetition strengthens every habit, and faith is a mental habit. If for example, at the beginning I have no faith in Sai Baba's doing something that is prayed for, then I must force myself to have that faith on the first occasion, next a second occasion, a third occasion, and so on. If I profess or compel myself to have faith often, say a dozen times, faith will become a habit with me, 'I do believe, I will believe, that Sai will help me'. He always helps the poor and wretched even the scoffing *Akkalkote vakil*. Here one

is taught an important psychological law. People despise external observances thinking that they are excrescences in religion, and that it is only the spirit or essentials that are wanted. But this is ignoring one very important fact. The external and internal are closely associated. You hardly ever get at the internal without an external. For instance, if I want nectar or coffee, there must be a cup or vessel carrying it to me. Words and meanings appear to be external and internal. Yet they are so much imbedded in each other. *Vagartha viva sampriktou*. Above all, the association of the external and the internal operates in a very powerful way unseen and unnoticed. Let us take hypnotised subjects and sleeping or dreaming subjects as best instances for exemplifying the working of this law that the external and the internal have a very close connection and that the one draws the other with it. A person is hypnotised, and though nothing at all is said to him, his body is arranged in a pugilistic attitude with his fists stretched out ready for fighting and himself ready to deliver and receive attacks. Though nothing is said, the man if asked to speak, speaks fiercely and in a mood of attack. He is bellicose. Similarly, if a hypnotised patient is made to kneel down or fully prostrate, and his palms are arranged in *Anjali* fashion, that is invoking the grace of God, then though nothing is said, the man at once becomes humble and prayerful in mood. If asked, 'What is this?' he would say, 'I am praying to God'. It is the attitude of prostration and invocation that brings on the ideas of invoking God. These may be multiplied and infinite, but the present instances will suffice to show that the external and the internal have a very close association, and any one who is anxious to develop his faith should see that in himself, in his surroundings, in his library, in his company, and in everything around him, the externals are always suggestive or productive of faith. Above all the mind must be directed to faith, and how is that done? The company that we keep, our reading, practical details of *puja*, prayer, acts of service, preaching, then meditation, then yogic concentration, and above all a steady habit of prayer for the growth of one's faith and of another that one is interested in these will work wonders. Faith is a cultivable plant and requires proper selection of field, seed manure, and irrigation. One can develop, this subject at great length. Suffice it to

say that those who are desirous of developing faith in Sai Baba to become his *Ankita* children should begin with an ardent desire to become such, to repeat that resolve to themselves time and again, often and often, and they should make use of every opportunity that advances their eligibility for becoming his *Ankita* children. And above all, the extent to which they are prepared to make sacrifices to please Baba so that he may adopt them as *Ankita* children, will be a very important factor. Make reverent *parayana* or daily study of the Gospel of Baba²⁵¹ which deals with that subject. That will change even a stony heart.

Twenty

Baba's Samsara

The term *Samsara* is used by almost every Hindu and is supposed to be fairly understood. *Samsarati* is the derivation of the word; *Samsara* is that which perfectly cycles round and round. The whirl of births and deaths for each *jiva* is denoted by the term *samsara*. The generally accepted idea of a life from birth to death is that it is predominantly overladen with sorrow, and, therefore, it is the common desire of persons to escape *samsara* that is, to escape a very large round of sorrows in birth after birth. The question might be raised as to why stress should be laid upon the sorrows of life when in point of fact, if we examine honestly the life of any person or creature known to us, the predominant part of each life is joy or happiness. It is not correct to say that any body or child or any other person that we see is for the major portion -of the day mourning and in gloom. Life has been so arranged that the proper fulfilment of every function necessary for the maintenance and growth of the organism is attended with a feeling of pleasure. Pleasure is the index to the person or *Jiva* that it is properly functioning and guides it to the correct course which will enable it to maintain itself, prolong its existence and reproduce its kind thereby ensuring the continuance of its species. So, Providence seems to have dowered animal existence with an abundance of joys. There is joy in eating, joy in sleeping, joy in resting, joy in working, and joy in almost everything that we can mention. Yet it is the human tendency to emphasize that which is painful. And there are undoubtedly pains especially in the case of some people either on account of

their inability to find out how to manage their conduct in life or an account of extraneous circumstances. There might be a preponderance of pain, for some periods and for special reasons in the life of a good number. This appears to be the basis of pessimistic dicta in the *Sastras* which say that life is full of sorrow,

Anityam Asukham lokam

Imam prapya bhajasva mam.

This means, Having come into this ephemeral existence which is unhappy, worship Me. This is the saying of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita, and may warrant, in the view of some, the conclusion that life in the world means sorrow. But with reference to the principle that every statement should be referred to the context, and the circumstances in which it is made, we see undoubtedly a very good justification for Sri Krishna telling Arjuna that life is unhappy because the whole Gita begins with Arjuna's deploring his wretched lot. He said, 'Whichever way I turn, I find only sin, sorrow and trouble, and I do not find happiness. Whether we win or lose this battle, that is equally a painful event'. It is in that plight when he could see no gleam of light in his situation that Arjuna surrendered to Sri Krishna and said, 'Please order me what to do. I am unable to see any course that will lead to happiness'. To Arjuna at the time of the Gita, life was full of the prospect of pain and, therefore, the statement that life is *Anityam Asukham* was correct in the circumstances in which it was made. But if we take up any child who is romping and playing about practically all the hours of the day and having 10 or 12 hours of happy sleep, and say that its life is *Asukham* or unhappy that would not be correct. But all this apart, we may note in what sense the word *Asukham* is used in the *Sastras*. In the *Sastras* they say that everything is *Anityam* and *Asukham* compared with the ideal *sukham*. Sri Krishna says²⁵²,

Duhkam Kamqsukhapeksha

Sukham Duhkasukhatyayah

that is, Depending on sense enjoyment leads to unhappiness. Happiness is raising oneself above the ruffling caused by pain and pleasure. And he says²⁵³,

Asca hi paramam duhkam,

Nairascyam Paramam sukham.

that is, Desire is the cause of the greatest unhappiness, Freedom from desire is the cause of the greatest happiness. The ideal *sukham* described in *Taittiriya Upanishad*²⁵⁴ is that of *Brahman* which is pure, unalloyed bliss and perpetual bliss. Tables of happiness are given therein, the quality and duration of various joys are arranged, beginning with the unit a human or royal bachelor's happiness and proceeding in that way, the last in the table is said to be *Brahma* that is, the four-faced Creator's happiness. That may be suggestive of the happiness of God which is *Satchitananda*. It is a multiple of human happiness by a number which is hardly imaginable. And every sort of happiness, including that of *Brahma*, is said to be enjoyed by a *Scrotriya* that is Knower of the *Vedas* and therefore a Realiser of *Brahman* or God who has conquered desire. It is this desire which runs through life that consequently renders, according to the *Upanishad* and *Sastras*, life miserable or sorrow laden.

Now we may go back to the question as to what *samsara* is. We find that Nana Saheb Chandorkar on one occasion told Baba²⁵⁵, I do not like this *samsara*. I do not even want to touch it with a pair of tongs. Please let me get rid of *samsara*. This is similar to a lady's statement to Baba that he should be pleased to enable her to escape from *samsara*, that is, the round of births and deaths. To both, Baba gave the answer which is suggestive of the fact that these two questions were laying undue emphasis on the sentimental sorrows of life and the powerlessness of the human being to escape the miseries of life or the implied effects of life. To that lady Baba said, 'Have you come to die? Because *samsara* means round of births and deaths²⁵⁶. The lady was startled and then asked Baba what he meant. Baba asked her to think who she was, ordering her to make the enquiry, 'Who am I?'. That is, he asked her to make *Atma Vichara*. Her husband explained to her that *Atma Vichara* would lead her to the conclusion that her idea that she was a separate individual *Jiva* and not the Universal Soul or god, as declared by the *Sastras* and also by Baba, to be incorrect, that she should constantly identify herself more and more with *Satchitananda* and merge in it, and that was the only escape from *Samsara*. That is, if we are the Supreme Being above all creation, maintenance, and withdrawal, then there is no *samsara*

for us. Otherwise there is *samsara*. That seems to have been the teaching to that lady. To Nana Chandorkar, Baba went into more details and gave him the answer that *samsara*, that is the perpetual cycle of births and deaths, is the result of the law of *karma*. As long as there is the -body, which is the result of *Prarabdha Karma* one cannot escape going through the results of previous *karma*. Merely running away to a forest or leaving the family will not enable one to escape the series of events which must make up the present life. Baba said that even he himself was not free from *Samsara*. As long as there is the body he said, there must be *samsara*. Now, we shall go into the question of Baba's *samsara* in connection with Baba's body.

Baba's body had previous existence in previous states and lives, and Baba has given various accounts of himself in previous times and his connections with his *bhaktas* in previous *janmas* with some, even for *12 janmas* or 10,000 years. So Baba declared that *samsara* was binding him also. Now in a sense, that is obviously true. But still there is the counsel which Baba himself gives that one must behave properly in *samsara* and thus escape the effects of *samsara* that is *samsara* need not be painful if one acts properly. One may escape trouble, sorrow, and difficulties, and thus lead a life of *Asanga*, which is prescribed by the *Sastras* for escaping *samsara*. The *Sastras* order every one to worship God, in any form and thus get identified with God and lose oneself in God. As the Gita puts it,

Bhaktyamam Abhijanati
Yavan yachcha Asmi tatvatah
Tato mam Tatvato Jnatva
Viscate Tad Anantaram

this means, By *bhakti* or devotion, one knows Me, what I am and to what extent, and in what forms, I am truly. Then, having known Me correctly, he enters into Me, that is merges in Me or becomes part of Me. So, *samsara* is a necessity for a soul that recognises itself as *a Jiva*. The *Jiva* may realise itself ultimately as God as Sai Baba did. Then it is identical with *Paramatma*, or in the words of Baba, *Analhaq, Aham Brahmasmi, Main Allah Hum*. The Supreme that is bound by the I

am the body idea is the *Jiva* and a *Bandha*. The Supreme without that idea is the *Paramatma*. Therefore, according to one's modes of being a *Jiva* or not a *Jiva*, one is in *samsara* or out of it. In Srimad Bhagavata²⁵⁷ Sri Krishna says that the ideas of bondage and *moksha* are merely mental concepts and that in reality there is no *bandha* and no *moksha*. That is, when one reaches this state or Krishna or *Parabrahman*, there is no notion of *bandha* or bondage or *moksha* that is liberation. One fact has been mentioned above, namely, that treating various states of pleasure in life as important parts of one's life, life may be viewed on the whole as a mass of happiness preponderantly happy, and to meet this view, Srimad Bhagavata says, 'Let alone human happiness. Even the happiness enjoyed by the gods in the various worlds, is ephemeral'. Even the four faced god has to end his life at the fixed time. Kala, Time is to destroy even that Brahma, and therefore, all the joys of all the persons, celestial or human, are treated by comparison with *Satchitananda* as misery. It is only by our merging in *Satchitananda* that we get free from this state of misery. This is found in Srimad Bhagavata²⁵⁸. Hence one thing is clear, that is the course of one's conduct must be to get farther and farther away from the 'I am the body idea *Dehatmabuddhi* or the narrow notion of oneself as body, and expand oneself farther and farther so that one may realise that one is *Sarvabhutama Bhutama*. That is, the soul of all creatures, *Sarvantaryami*, Baba had achieved that position, and he declared that he was the *Antaryami* of all creatures. He was coaching up his best disciples to view him as the *Antaryami* of themselves and of all others, and gradually to deem themselves also the *Antaryami* of all, just as Baba is the *Antaryami* of all. By constantly thinking of Baba as the *Antaryami* of all, the devotee becomes the *Antaryami* of all. This is in effect the highest coaching that we find both in the Bhagavata and in Sai Baba's teaching.

Baba in giving advice to N.G. Chandorkar gave him practical directions and details as to the rules of morality that he had to follow and other precepts taking him on higher and higher in the scale of happiness. It is the exclusion of others from the self that is the source of misery. It is the inclusion of more and more of the excluded set so as to make it part of one's life that is the way to

happiness. In this programme, moral rules such as gratitude and love play an important part. Gratitude and admiration take us out of our narrow selves. And love binds us to the object of love. There is a narrow sort of love in one's saying, 'I love my child and will beat any one who interferes with my child'. This contains the germ of the crude principle of love, but has also much dross which hides and taints that crude principle. Ordinarily in human circumstances with people's narrow views of themselves as bodies or body bound souls, love of one excludes love of others. But the correct view of the soul, that is as a spirit unattached will enable one to see that love of one need not and should not exclude others. Love of one should be the love of all. If our centre be the body self as understood by ordinary beings, persons farther and farther away from the body self are thrown out of it and will not be loved. But if in imitation of great souls like Sai Baba, we fix our centre not in one place or body but in all places, then we shall have a figure for our soul with centre everywhere and circumference nowhere,

Ayam Nija paroveti gananalaghu chetasam

Udara charitanam tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam²⁵⁹

which means, Petty minds discriminate between their own and strangers. High souls view the entire world as their kin.

In this connection one may note the *Maya* theory that has been referred to in *Srimad Bhagavata* and in Baba's teaching.

In Baba's teaching, the word *Maya* is clearly indicative of darkness. That is, what binds one to darkness is *Maya*. It has *Avarana* and *Vikshepa*; the *Avarana* portion of it covers up our consciousness and knowledge and *Vikshepa* creates fictions over that *Avarana*. For example, a person who is a cooly dreams that he is a king, forgets his coolyship and assumes kingship and the whole thing is a miserable fiction. Therefore *Maya* does exist, and is a thing to be avoided. But *Maya* has another sense, namely that it is the creative power of God. Even in this sense it creates fictions and makes the world run on the basis of those fictions. But the conclusion drawn and acted upon by some people that everything in this phenomenal world is fiction is not to be accepted as its logical conclusion. Baba said no doubt that *Maya* is a covering over *Chaitanya*,

but he did not follow it to the logical conclusion that everything that is seen is merely a fiction and therefore to be disregarded. As long as we are in this phenomenal world with its rules and principles, we have to follow it. Therefore Baba gave many directions to his pupils and never treated his relations to pupils and to others as mere fictions. He was a realist quite as much as any other that we have seen, and he asked people to stick to truth, the truth understood in the phenomenal sense and not in the sense of *Advaitic* Philosophy, that is a reality which is not sensed but is merely conceived of in philosophy as beyond all time and place. Baba gave advice to Chandorkar as to how to behave in society. Baba himself behaved excellently in respect of every relation in society. What are the ties of Baba and what were the ties also of Baba in previous *janmas* and what would be his ties in future? Baba recognised in his accounts of previous births and of the present one that he had parents, and that he had to help and support his mother or his father, and his brothers and sisters. He recognised that sisters of his former *janmas* gave him support and took birth in this *janma* again to continue the support. Taty Patil's mother, Bayaji Bai was a sister of his previous birth and by that strong tie she took immense pains to see him fed, especially in his young nomadic days at Shirdi, when he used to wander into the jungles not caring for food. She would run up into those jungles and feed him wherever he might be. From the beginning of his life, this sister made it certain that he would have his food and not starve. For such a provision one must be indeed highly grateful, and Baba was grateful. Baba could never forget even the slightest offices done to him. On one occasion when he climbed up a house and wanted to descend and a ladder was brought to him, he paid Rs.2/- to the man who brought the ladder, saying that services should not be accepted gratis. Similarly when a Muslim applicant for dynamite, who had been twice improperly refused licence by the Collector, came to Baba for his intercession, Baba told Chandorkar that he Chandorkar must help that applicant with licence for dynamite for deepening his well. Baba said, this time let him present the application to the Collector, and the Collector will grant the licence. Baba added, This man has left a box with us, and it is not proper for us to say no when he

asks for its return. Chandorkar explained that statement to mean that applicant had done in a former birth some good service to Baba or to him Chandorkar or to both, and out of gratitude, he must be helped on this occasion. When Baba was so full of gratitude even for such slight services, he would be the last person to forget a life-long support for food such as Bayyaji Bai gave him. He never forgot it. In addition to that, her son Tatya Patil was attending upon him at the Mosque and spent his nights for many long years with Baba, serving Baba and sleeping with Baba. Baba, remembering all that, was very affectionate towards Tatya. Tatya would call Baba *Mama* that is maternal uncle, and Baba would refer to Tatya as *Puthna* or nephew. Baba would not get up from his bed till Tatya came up and lifted him and lit up his pipe for him to smoke. He was watching over all devotees no doubt, but especially over Tatya, and he gave him frequent advice based upon his own superior knowledge. When there was the danger of his valuable horse getting damaged by a journey, Baba warned him. Tatya did not mind the warning and went on the journey, and nearly lost his horse. Similarly on other occasions Baba gave him the use of his *Antarjnana* or super-sensual knowledge. But what people mostly judge by, is the extent to which one gives them worldly goods. Baba gave plenty of the world's goods to Tatya. During the last ten years when Baba was getting a Provincial Governor's income, Tatya was paid daily a fixed sum on which income tax was levied. With his funds, Tatya was able to build three storeyed houses for himself and also purchase lands. He grew rich and respectable, and was looked up to as a person who was the pet of Baba. It is even said that in 1918, when Baba said that Tatya would die, Tatya was saved. Some people believe that Baba gave up his own life in order to save Tatya's life. A dictum in Srimad Bhagavata is,

Grunasasyat Svajano na sa syat

Namochayet yah Samupeta Mrityum

this means, If one does not save the life of a person in peril of death, he is unfit to be called a *Guru* or Kinsman, Baba has said that he would sacrifice his own life for his *bhaktas* who concentrate their affection on him. This certainly applied to Tatya. Baba's concern for Tatya Patil's family did not stop with mere provision of

funds. Unfortunately amongst the Patil families, all of whom were devoted to Baba, there were divisions and factions. Baba was watching over them. On one occasion in the Mosque, he suddenly said, 'Don't beat, don't beat'. When G.S. Khaparde's son asked Baba why he said so, Baba explained that in the quarrels between the Patils, there was imminent danger of clash, and to prevent it he said 'don't beat, don't beat'. That is how Baba has been safeguarding and helping Tatya and his people. He helped Tatya, by a *chamatkar* in his criminal appeal against the conviction and sentence of Raghu, and others. Baba has helped Tatya in so many other ways also. So, it is clear that Baba recognised the bonds of kinship with Tatya as binding on him and exercised all his powers for his benefit. He has rendered similar help to a number of others. These ties of kinship are called *Rinanubandha*. Baba has stated that *Rinanubandha* has to be respected. That *rina* may be due to kinship in past births or in the present. Baba stated his kinship to Kondaji, G.S. Khaparde and others. He recognises *Guru bandhutva*, that is, being under the same master, as a powerful bond or tie or *rina*. Once, he said that Dada Kelkar, G.S. Khaparde, Bapu Saheb Jog, H.S. Dixit, Shama, and he Baba were all under one common *Guru* in a previous birth, that is, as *Gurubandhus*, and therefore, he had brought them together in this life so that they might renew their contact. He helped each of the above in very remarkable degrees, as set out fully in other chapters of this book. To Upasani also he revealed the fact that the ancestors of Baba and Upasani were for centuries closely connected, and in consequence Baba was under a very heavy obligation to help Upasani to lever him up, so to speak. Baba said to Balakrishna Sastri, Upasani Baba's brother, There was a tree or a log of wood. There were two on it, evidently one at each end, and by pressing oneself down, the other would be levered up.' Baba said one of these went down and the other went up. Sri Upasani Baba explained this to mean that it was something like see-saw and that Baba had levered up Sri Upasani in this way. That is, by his powers he had raised the spiritual level and the happiness of Upasani Baba, vesting him also with considerable psychic power or *siddhi*. Baba recognised even a playmate of his who was dead and buried in a tomb, and found her haunting that tomb. So,

he went and remained there a little while, and afterwards brought her to a *Babul* tree at Shirdi and kept her there, evidently for further spiritual elevation of her soul. Baba recognised his *rinanubandha* even to animals in the present or past. Mrs. G.S. Khaparde was once a cow that gave him plenty of milk, and on account of that *rinanubandha*, after becoming human and the daughter of a gardener, she was levered up into a *Kshatriya* family, a rich *Vaisya* family, and finally a *Brahmin* family. In all her *janmas* she renewed her contact with Baba and gave him food. Baba in his turn helped her, and in *this janma* Baba gave her *Rama Mantra*. He not only massaged her, but asked her to repeat *Rajaram, Rajaram*, as that would ensure her *Sadgati*. Baba recognized two goats as having been his former human companions, who, by their misfortune, had been degraded to the level of animals. He bought those goats and fed them. He recognised a snake and a frog as his former human companions who had the benefit of his company in a previous birth. He had made promises to Channa Basappa that he would save him from his enemy Veerabhadrapa. When actually Veerabhadrapa was born to continue his hatred and revenge as a snake and had gripped the frog that Basappa had turned into, Baba was there in time to keep his word, and saved Basappa the frog from being swallowed up by Veerabhadrapa the snake. This is *Rinanubandha*. Baba also recognised a certain kinship among saints. Some people say that there is a group or *Panchayatana*, that is a group of five of which Baba is one. In the Ahmedabad *Vakil*, C.C. Manikvala's statement, we find reference to the fact that Baba appeared to him and said that he was one of the nine gems into which Datta had turned himself in modern days. The nine included Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur, Akkalkote Maharaj, Dondi Bua, Palus, Madhavanath Maharaj. These saints sent up several of their *sishtyas* on to Baba, and they were recognised by Baba as coming from a saintly brother. References to these are to be found in Baba's Charter's and Sayings. Many other saints like Bidkar Maharaj, master of the Sub J Garde and Kusa Bhav's Master and Poona Bhima Sankar Sadhu, master of Chidambar K. Gadgil and others recognised Baba as their spiritual companion or helper and were sending their men on to Baba. These are his contacts in the

present *janma* of Sai Baba. But these do not exhaust the question of *rinanubandha*. Baba has made several promises. For instance to M.B. Rege, he promised that *janma* after *janma* when Rege takes birth he also would be born to keep company with him. To the young gentleman of Bandra, Master T, Baba said that he would have three more births, and that he would be with him for these three births just as he had already been with him for many previous births. It is the duty of the *Guru* to follow the *sisya* birth after birth, and Baba says, I will account to God for every pie he has given to me. He said that it was his duty to take his disciple to God and not to leave him in the middle. When Baba makes a promise, he keeps it, just as Rama said,

Apyaham Jivitam Jahyam,
Tvam Va Site SaLakshmanam,
Natu Prascrutya Me vakyam,
Brahmanebhyo Visceshatah.

Rama said to Sita, Once I made a promise, I will keep up that promise. I would rather give up my life, yourself, and Lakshman than give up my plighted word, especially, when it has been plighted to *Brahmins*. That is why Baba's re-birth is looked for by several people. That would be *samsara* of Baba to fulfil his promises of re-birth. Baba is not one who is afraid of re-birth. It is only one that has attachment to earthly objects that is to be afraid of re-births. If one wishes to carry out his promise and takes birth merely for carrying out promises with detachment, keeping himself in the *Aham Brahmasmi* state, that is, without detriment to his soul realization, there is nothing to regret. That is not *samsara* to regret²⁶⁰.

Twenty-one

Baba and Maya Theory

Sai Baba of Shirdi has, if we may rely upon Das Ganu's earliest chapters about him, referred to *Maya* expressly and taught his devotee Nana Chandorkar and others important truths about the place of *Maya* in God's work. Nana Chandorkar finding it difficult to understand the place of *Maya* in a universe

created by god or *Suddha Chaitanya* questioned Baba, Who is the *Maya!* and elicited interesting answers. Baba had first talked about *Suddha Chaitanya* referring to *Poorna Parabrahman* by that phrase, and incidentally referred to *Maya*. Baba said, Just as there are degrees in regality when we consider the extent of respect or reverence paid to the king, his deputy, and his peon, we find similarly that there are degrees of *Chaitanya* in the world. There are three grades of persons, the *Paramartika* stage person sees truth as truth and acts according to sastras that is without observing differentiation. The next is the person in the *Vyavaharika* stage, called the good who follows the *Sastras* but goes on differentiating between good and evil, rejecting the latter and preferring the former. Thirdly, there is the person in the *Pratibhasica* stage, called the ignorant who does not see the truth either entirely as it is or with the addition of differentiation merely, but sees it quite inverted that is seeing the good as evil and evil as good. *Atman* or *Brahman* is common to all the three. It is to illustrate this position that Baba referred to the king, his deputy, and his messenger. He gave another illustration also, namely, the infinite *Akasa* or Space, then the *akasa* which is in a big pot, called *Kumbhakasa*, and thirdly, in a small pot, called *Ghatakasa*. In all the three *Akasa* is common but it is in different degrees. Baba therefore said, Just like that, *Brahman* appears in different forms in this world which is the play of *Maya*. It, is the union of *Brahman* with *Maya* that causes *Brahmanda* the universe. Then Chandorkar put the question, 'who is this *Maya!* Who created her, and what is she like?' You just now said that the root of the whole world is *Chaitanya*. Then where does *Maya* come in?' Baba's answer was, 'I will describe to you where and how she comes. *Maya* is the name given to the *Shakti* or Power of *Chaitanya*, which makes *Chaitanya* appear in the different forms. Can you separate *Chaitanya* from its *Shakti!* You cannot, just as you cannot separate jaggery from its sweetness and the Sun from its brilliance. The separation from *Chaitanya* comes only at the end of all existence, that is, when there is a final merger of the Universe in *Brahman*. *Maya* ends when *Chaitanya* is realised. *Chaitanya* is endless. Both *Chaitanya* and *Maya* are beginningless. Then Baba added, *Maya* and *Chaitanya* are also named *Prakriti* and *Purusha*.

And these are fully described in *Jnaneswari*. He referred Chandorkar to *Jnaneswari* to get full *Atma Jnana* that is, knowledge about this *Maya* theory. He added *Maya* is *Karya* and has wonderful qualities. I am such and such a person. You are such and such are all the result of *Maya*. All these are unreal differences. You see if you are under *Maya*, undifferentiated Reality does not appear. *Maya* has two aspects, namely, the *Avarana* covering up the consciousness of the soul I or *atman* and *Vikshepa* producing illusory appearances over the covering. A cooly dreamt that he became a king. Thereby he forgot his coolyship. That coolyship was covered up, that is, by *Avarana* and kingship was produced by *Maya* over that cover, that is *Vikshepa*. *Maya* covers up *Brahman* and produces all worldly appearances! Baba then added the words, In reality, the world does not exist. Only one Real *Sat* exists, but these appearances are taken to be real. That causes the mischief *akalyan*. So kick out *Maya* and regain *Brahman*. How is it to be done? Regard yourself as Pure *Chaitanya*. Water when relieved of impurity is pure water. Similarly remove impurity of *Maya* from this world of appearances. Then that appearance becomes reality. This is the *upasana* of the Real *Sadvastu*. Think of this always. This is my advice to all. This constant thought of the *Sadvastu* or *Atman* is the *Adhyatma*. You should realise this *Atman* as yourself and become *Mukta* in this life. This is the summing up given by Das Ganu on this very important matter of what Baba said about *Maya*. We may very well sum it up by saying that Baba referred to all manifestations through the power of God or *Brahman* as the work of *Maya*, and the highest goal of spiritual endeavour is to go back to God crossing this world of appearances which keeps us away from God. This is another way of putting the grand verse in Bhagavad Gita²⁶¹,

Daivihyesha Gunamayi
Mama maya Duratyaya
Mameva yee prapadyaru
May am Etam taranti te,

this means, This *Devi* who is composed of the three *gunas* is my *Maya* and impossible to get over. Those get over it who surrender themselves completely to

me, they can cross *Maya*. is the effect of this stanza and Baba's sayings? One thing is patent. If a person wishes to be completely identified with *Parabrahman* and lose his personality or individuality in the Universal Self then the course for him is to think of *Poorna Parabrahman* only. That is to think of nothing else, not even to think to himself as an ego, or if the thought of ego comes, he must at once crush it by regarding it as only one of the appearances of the same Supreme *Brahman* and therefore, in no way different from the Supreme *Brahman*. Now, the thought of one's own personality is accompanied by a sense of difference between the self and the nonself; I am here, you are there and these things are elsewhere. In that way there is the idea of a self or personality distinguished from the surroundings. There is no personality without contrast to the surroundings. By reason of this differentiation, the world of manifestation gets on. Various individuals strive for their individual benefits. Hence comes mutual conflict between individuals and groups and nations. Therefore, if one wishes that there should be no conflict at all, the basis of all difference must be removed, and that basis is 'You are in that body; I am here in this body; The two bodies are different bodies by difference in space, time and characteristics. As long as we regard these differences of time, space and causation as real and essential, we think of ourselves and proceed to work out what we think is for our benefit and happiness. But if our work turns useless, and instead of happiness, unhappiness is derived, we have to reverse the process. Reversing the process is done by removal of the distinctions in our minds that we are different from each other and from our surroundings.

The difference between persons is based upon the identification by each individual or himself with the body. If that identification goes, it will be easy for each to regard himself as the *Paramatma*. All differences will then perish, because all parts of *Paramatma* are equally *Paramatma*. In that case, there is no one troubling the other and no cause of unhappiness. The state of the *Paramatma* is *Satchitananda*, that is, Supreme Bliss, not positive joy like the tasting of sugar as contrasted with the tasting of chillies, but an ineffable state of peace, which is said to be the very nature of *Paramatma*. Therefore Baba's

advice and the advice of Sri Krishna may be taken to be a practical prescription. Regard everything in the world as part and parcel of or as really *Paramatma*, including yourself, and thus achieve your supreme goal or supreme peace and bliss. About this conclusion, it is not likely to be a serious dispute or discussion, at least by those who believe in monism. Even those who believe in Dualism or pluralism may agree in treating all egos as part of God at the final stage, and thus practically agree with the above conclusion.

So far there is little reason for quarrel or dispute, but the serious difficulty in this matter arises when persons try to put forward the theory of *Maya* as a proposition for intellectuals to agree to as the result of enquiry and reasoning. Persons are asked to regard everything about them as mere unreality and proceed to deal with the world's affairs on that footing. Now here comes the difficulty. It is patent that if I really regard others and the difference between myself and others as fiction of *Maya*, I cannot be talking with another about this fiction. The very contact itself is fiction and the talk is fiction and the person addressed in order to be convinced is also fictitious. So, there appears to be an apparent absurdity in that position. This is the frequent subject matter of attacks against *Advaitism* and the question is whether Baba ever intended to convey the idea that for purposes of philosophy or for wordly conduct, one can proceed to deal with others in actual life on the footing of the *Maya* theory? Baba was never concerned with maintaining philosophical conclusions never debating various conflicting philosophical theories. He was a *Guru* intent on practical guidance of those who sought him for guidance. So, when he talked about *Maya* to Chandorkar, he made it clear that what he said related to the *sadhana* to be adopted by Chandorkar for purposes of God realisation and self realisation. It was not an attempt to make Chandorkar accept one intellectual conclusion about the *Maya* theory to be kept along with a number of theories and hypotheses and rules for guidance in worldly affairs. The whole mischief arises only if the latter course is adopted. Baba can never be considered to have given any decision of his regarding the correctness or incorrectness of *Monism* and *Dualism*. *Maya* has thus been referred to as the power of God to manifest himself, and when so

viewed, no serious objection can be raised to references to *Maya* for the limited purpose of undertaking God's work and manifestation, the way in which the *sadhakas* should work in order to get *moksha* or liberation, that is, God realisation. To this extent, we may say that Baba's positions stated in the beginning of this chapter as to *Maya* are fairly good and clear, and most readers can accept it and proceed upon it. With Baba's view of *Karma* we shall next proceed to deal, and see what position was put forward by Baba. Baba was explaining Hinduism to Hindus and *Dvaitism* to the *Dvaitins*. So, Baba had no separate position of his own. In the matter of *Karma*, almost all Hindus are agreed that the doctrine of *Karma* does apply to human dealings and even dealings amongst creatures. Baba has applied the law of *Karma* even to dogs and other creatures and which may be said to be nothing but this, namely, a cause produces an effect. Every action done with a certain mentality tends to strengthen that mentality and produce not merely the results worked for but also a tendency to continue that mentality further and further with greater and greater strength. If a man begins with grabbing, against all scriptural injunctions that we should not have greed, the result is greed grows upon one. The more we think of the objects coveted, the stronger is our affection for the objects, and if there are other persons who obstruct or stand in the way, greed turns into anger.

Says the Gita²⁶²

Sangath sanjayate Kamah

Kamath Krodhobijayate

that is, From attachment to objects anger springs up.

Krodhat Bhavati Sammohah.

that is, From anger arises confusion or delusion. A person in a state of anger fancies all sorts of things as being true or essential to his happiness and acts under those delusions.

Sammohat Smritivibhramah.

that is, The power to perceive moral truths and the way in which events progress and affect one's own welfare and that of others, is lost. No clear perception remains.

Smriti Bhramsat Buddhi Nascah

Buddhi Nascat Pranasyati

That is, By reason of losing one's memory, stored wisdom is lost, with the loss of wisdom, the soul is lost. Thus, the Gita describes the chain of consequences resulting from attachment or desire. The law of *karma* points out how causes and effects follow each other and affect the future of every *Jiva* that is conscious of its separate individuality. Therefore, the law of *karma* is a mere statement of moral law and no person can seriously complain of the operation of the law. But often we find an expression of confused opinions about *karma* by persons who misunderstand the law of *karma*. None should complain that causes produce effects. But the complaint is often heard, that by *karma* a person is greatly hampered, and the tendency of everything to aggravate itself and carry one on to a bitter end cannot be a good law. This, however, is to confuse tendencies with actual facts. In actual life persons have various tendencies and have also the principle of variation. When a person goes on in a downward current from sin to worse sin, from crime to worse crime, some former touch with holy persons or places comes suddenly as an element of variation to interrupt the chain of worsening consequences - the chain of evil to greater evil and thus stops him. Ajamila is one instance. For another instance, the Veerabhadrappa and Basappa case may be cited. They were two persons who bowed to Baba in one *janma* and had bitter differences. Veerabhadrappa by reason of his greed for money with considerable power and personality was wrath with Basappa for claiming the property which came to Gowri, the wife of Veerabhadrappa. Basappa, greedy enough to get at that property, had that loathsome quality called cowardice, and lack of strength, and Veerabhadrappa vowed to drink the blood of Basappa. Basappa sought refuge with Baba, and Baba agreed to protect him. Before the revenge was carried out both died, and Veerabhadrappa to carry out his hatred and to kill his opponent was born as a cobra and Basappa was born as a frog. The cobra was in the next *janma* proceeding to catch that frog, when Baba in that *janma* intervened and told Veerabhadrappa, 'Cease from your hatred. Give up your attempt to harass your enemy Basappa. Then Veerabhadrappa the

snake gave up the frog. Baba said, 'One's evil *karma* will continue till one's contact with *Satpurushas* saves one from further consequences'. From hatred to murder was Veerabhadrappa's natural downfall. But Baba came in and gave him a warning. So, the working of the previous evil *vasanas* was suddenly stopped and a new element got into Veerabhadrappa's life, namely, self-control, giving up of hatred and these would lead to good results. So, the law of *karma* for good persons promotes good, and for evil persons promotes evil. So, in itself the law of *karma* is not a matter for regret. One must always remember that there are laws of one's own being and God's plan for all creatures. Any one who wishes sincerely to achieve his own soul's welfare would pause to study what his duties are and seek the help of great ones and *Gurus* to guide him in his path, then by surrendering himself to great ones, allow his evil *vasanas* to be crushed out and good *vasanas* to be developed, and ultimately to get both sets of *vasanas* which are part of one's personality to be drowned in the contemplation of the Guru-God. This is the teaching about *Karma* by *Sadhakas* to Baba. The law of *Karma* is decried by people who do not understand it. Some say that *Karma* can never be got rid off. There is an element of truth in that statement. But the way in which it is put as above is misleading and wrong. The law of *Karma* is merely the law of cause and effect. To say that an effect cannot be rectified or modified is absurd. If cause A produces the effect B, it is absurd to say that B must always continue to be B and nothing can change it. Just as cause A produces effect B, cause C impinging upon B may make changes in the effect. The fact is that most acts done with a purpose are producing certain tendencies and certain other results. One should not confuse the actual result or reward earned by an act with the tendency. The tendency can and should always be met if it is an evil tendency. To say that *karma* is inexorable, and nothing can change it, is positively absurd. Generally people think of tendencies when putting forward that proposition, and one can be positive that all tendencies may change by stimuli producing opposite tendencies. Sinfulness is a tendency and it can always and should always be met by virtuous actions, virtuous contacts, holy readings and *Satsang*. As for the rewards, it is often said,

Avascyam Anubhoktavyam

Kritam karma scubha Ascubham.

that is, What one has earned as a reward or punishment for one's act, good or evil must of necessity be endured. This is generally speaking true. But it is not true in the way in which it is baldly put. A person who commits murder is liable to be hanged. But he may also have other forms of punishment either immediately or later on. The sentences may be altered, reduced, and even completely condoned on such occasions as the King's Birthday pardons. Therefore, it is not correct to say that the reward or punishment earned by conduct is unalterable. Everything on earth is liable to change or mitigate and if we remember this, we shall be able to meet the objections sometimes raised to Sai Baba's statement about *karma*. In the very opening Charters of Baba's Charters and Sayings, we find Baba's statement. 'If one puts his foot on Shirdi soil his *karma* is abolished'. Many a man wonders whether that is possible especially in view of the dictum quoted above, *Avascyam Anubhoktavyam*. Baba also told Chandorkar that certain broad decisions arrived at as to the birth and death of people are treated as facts resulting from previous acts of individuals. Regarding birth of a child, death of a son-in-law, about which Chandorkar was anxious to make Baba work on his behalf, Baba declared that they were the result of previous *karma* and could not be altered. In a sense that is true. Certain births and certain deaths are all fixed by series of antecedent events, but yet Baba is able to mould these and shape these, at certain stages and modify these for the benefit of the concerned devotees. When talking to Dr. Chidambaram Pillai, Baba explained the correct doctrine. Dr. Pillai had been suffering intensely from guinea worm. He told a friend to go and report to Baba that his sufferings were intolerable and to request Baba to transfer these sufferings to some ten later births of his and leave him free from the sufferings in this *janma*. When this was reported to Baba, the latter sent for Pillai and told him, 'What, you want ten *janmas*! What has to be endured in ten *janmas* can be crushed into ten days by the power of *Satpurushas*'. So, Baba ordered him to remain with his legs outstretched at *Dwarakamayee* and he told him that a crow would come and peck at his wound

and cure him. In a few days, Abdul, Baba's permanent attendant, carelessly put his foot down upon Pillai's wound and crushed all the guinea worms out of it, merely by accident as, he Pillai, would have thought. But nothing done at the Mosque to Pillai could be considered as an accident, and Baba said that Abdul was the crow, and that no further crow was wanted to peck at Pillai's wound. Pillai was then asked to go home, and in ten days, the entire suffering from guinea worm was cured.

In another case, that of Bhimaji, who had serious chest diseases such as asthma and tuberculosis, Baba first told Shama, 'In bringing this thief to me what a load of responsibility you are placing on me. Baba meant that the tuberculosis and asthma from which Bhimaji suffered were the result of Bhimaji's *karma* in a previous *janma* consisting of theft. Bhimaji felt Baba's declaration a blow. At once he surrendered himself to Baba and said, Helper of the helpless! I am helpless. Pray show pity and grace to me. Then Baba's tone changed, Baba told him, The *Fakir* is merciful, and your disease will be cured. He was suffering from the results of a *karma*, but that could be mitigated, and so the man was sent to live and sleep in a wet verandah. Bhimaji did so. There, he had two very dreadful dreams: In one dream, he was mercilessly birched by a school master. For, in the dream he fancied he was a boy and the master was birching him. So, he felt the pain in the dream and roared out. In the second dream, it was even worse. He felt that some one was placing a stone roller and rolling it over his breast. He suffered all the horror of instant death approaching him. All the pain of a hanging sentence and whipping sentence were endured by this man in the course of one night. Baba thus changed the punishment which he had earned by his previous *karma*, and told him that he was thus free from *karmic* effects. He then recovered his health. The above instances go to show that most of our conceptions about *karma* are nebulous and ungrounded, and that the safest course for us to follow would be to be guided by the dicta of *Satpurushas* like Sai Baba.

Twenty-two

Shirdi Village Life

Shirdi was in the last century such an obscure hamlet of the Ahmednagar district in the Bombay Presidency that even in the district the village name was not well known. It was in those days a mere group of about 80 or 100 mud houses interspersed with narrow lanes between them and surrounded on all sides by an abundance of *babul*, prickly pear, and other wild growth. There was hardly a single respectable building fit for occupation by any gentleman visiting it from the town. There were no shops except the tiny village shops where grains or oil were sold, and there was no respectable temple barring perhaps the Maruti temple which also was a tiny dilapidated structure next to the Mosque dilapidated. Its rafters were coming off one after another and falling down. That was the condition in the middle of the last century. The villagers led a quiet life absorbed in their usual agricultural operations, and as for shows and conveyances, these were seldom had there, and a weekly village fair was the grandest sight and comfort for the villagers. If once a *tonga* came into the village, the village children and elders would stare at it as a rarity. This was because it was but a hamlet of the main village Rahata, which is three miles away. Even Rahata is a place of very little importance known only to those who are accustomed to the road map or to constant travel on roads. But the distance of three miles from Rahata was sufficient to keep the Shirdi people humble and contented with their lot, and the place was so wretchedly poor that with very little income or none, one could pull on with his life there. Some hermits or *fakirs* would occasionally visit the village and kept the people in touch with the lofty thoughts or modes or life dimly perceived by them.

We are referring, of course, to the main mass of the villagers who were Hindus. There were just a few Mohammadan houses and the Mohammadan population was very poor, wretched, and not prospering. They were artisans or labourers and were hardly possessed of anything like property. Some of them chiselled images. Others built houses. At the head of the village society were the Hindu village headmen. Immediately after the middle of the last century, the village headmen or Patils were Ganapat Rao Patil Kothe and his brothers or cousins. All were styled Patils and the head of them was actually performing the

function of the village Patil. There were no roads, no street lighting and no public comforts such as privies. Even for the supply of drinking water there was only a village well and the water had to be drawn up, each one bringing his or her own vessel. There were one or two mud built *chavadis* used as schools for the few children, with furnished accommodation for visiting strangers. Corporate life was at a low ebb, and as for religious life, there were three petty, fragile structures one for *Sani*, one for *Ganapati*, and one for *Sankar*. So petty indeed that they had hardly any doors to preserve and safeguard the images. For instance during the early years of this century, a half crazy man entered into each of these temples and broke the images; whether by iconoclastic zeal or simply by a freak of madness; people could not make out. He also broke the marble *padam* of Baba placed under the *gode neem* tree into two by hitting it with some heavy stone or other object. Thus there were hardly any religious buildings. The Maruti temple next to the Mosque was about a dozen feet square. The Khandoba temple just outside the village was about 8 or 10 square feet, a structure of brick and clay; and a mud and brick temple of Vittal in the heart of the village were practically all the religious buildings. Thus Shirdi in the middle of the 19th century would hardly be considered a place of religious merit and certainly not a place having any person, object or shrine of religious importance enough to attract people to visit the village. Incidentally the reader would note that today it is exactly the opposite of what has been described above. Along the cool sequestered vale of life They kept the noiseless tenor of their way may be taken from Gray's elegy and applied to old Shirdi with great appropriateness. This obscure and negligible village has now suddenly become perhaps the most important place for Sai worship, which has spread all over the country and which promises to overflow its present limits and work wonders and benefits for thousands, if not millions. Today Shirdi looks exactly like a township with numerous buildings of brick and stone and concrete with a number of storeyed structures, and it has become a place of pilgrimage for people all over India-not merely for Hindus but for all communities, taking rank with Kasi, Kanchi, Mathra and Rameswar.

Now in 1955, it presents the daily appearance of Tirupati Venkatesa temple and its approaches. There are streams of devotees coming by every train and every road and gathering at Shirdi. In spite of the very large number of rooms and halls and *Dharmasalas* provided by the Samasthan, most of the visitors find it difficult to get accomodation. Though boarding houses have also sprung up, the question of boarding is a difficulty for many. It is not merely in the assemblage of crowds but also in the atmosphere of the village and of the shrine that there is a close resemblance to Tirupati. People fired by *bhakti* and belonging to every class including the beggar class are swarming everyday and at everytime to the feet of Baba. And any one who visits the place cannot fail to catch the contagion of devotion and enthusiasm. Referring, however, to the crowds, we may incidentally notice how it has pleased Baba to arrange the arrival of the crowds to his feet. Toward the close of the last century, Baba's popularity began to swell by the work of Chandorkar and Das Ganu, especially by the latter's *Hari Kathas*. In the first decade of this century there was a regular and perceptible increase in the number of people especially respectable people, running up to see Sai Baba and in the next decade, the crowd of visitors was swelling not only in number but also in the nature of its components. People like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, George Seymour Curds, Revenue Commissioner of Bombay, Collectors, Deputy Collectors, *Mamlatdars*, and other employees of the Government, rich *Parsis* and well-to-do *Mohammadans* especially from Hyderabad side were in the swarm that came to Baba. It was noticed that poor and weak people, especially old and crippled people, could not easily get to see Baba on account of the approaches being filled with crowds difficult to cross. The crowds at the *Dwarakamayee*, where Baba was generally seated, were also very thick and included not merely human beings but a large number of dogs and other creatures. Abdulla Jan in his statement in 1936 says, All that glory of Sai Maharaj was then grand, but in 1936 there was no relic of the crowd. The halls of *Dwarakamayee* and the *puja* room were visited only by a few people on ordinary days. And Abdulla Jan thought that Baba's, like all human glory, rose to the zenith at one time and afterwards went down to the

nadir. But Abdullah Jan did not know Baba's ways. Even as Jan was giving his statement, the movement was progressing and within a very few years, the number of visitors to Shirdi increased and went on increasing in arithmetical or geometrical progression. At present it is difficult to say whether we are anywhere near the zenith of Baba's popularity. Perhaps it is only just now that Baba is getting to be recognised in various parts of India. The more He is known, the more assuredly will He draw groups to his feet. One index of his growing popularity is the large number of children we name after Him in so many families, Hindu and *Mohammadan*, and the large number of temples and *bhajan salas* named after Him. So he is sure to equal Tirupati Venkatesa in the matter of attraction of people. Incidentally it may be noted that Tirupati Venkatesa and Sai are not different. Sainatha Manana says,

Venkatesastu Sayeescah
Tayor bhedatn Na Vidyate
Tayor aikyam Smaran Nityam
Tat Sthanam Labhate Narah

this means, Venkatesa is indeed Sayeesa or vice versa, Sayeesa is the same as Venkatesa. There is no difference between the two. Perpetually remembering this identity, one reaches that position of Venkatesa or Sayeesa. As may be seen from the historical sketch of Sai Baba's growth and development in his last birth, He attained his present position, as stated by himself several times, by the grace of Venkatesa, his *Guru*. His *Guru* was originally named Gopal Rao, but had become identified with Venkatesa. And to Baba, Venkatesa is only one of the names of God, Allah, Hari and Khandoba all denoting the same God. Therefore, his *Guru* having become identified with God Venkatesa, divine powers permeated and saturated his nature and these flowed on to Baba especially at the time of initiation of *diksha* and throughout his further life when he was constantly dwelling in his mind upon his *Guru*. So, no wonder that Shirdi begins to resemble Tirupati.

We are not, however, concerned with the mere question of crowds. We are concerned with the way life is led at Shirdi or has been led all these years.

The followers and worshippers of Baba have derived the same benefits by worshipping him as the most intense worshippers of Tirupati Venkatesa or Brindavana Krishna or Bhadrachala Rama have. For all these are but God. For purposes of spiritual benefits, the accumulation of crowds is not a necessary or beneficial factor though the enthusiasm of large crowds might be infectious and sufficient to start many people on their *bhakti marga* and may confirm waverers in the strength of their *bhakti*. So far as ideas of Baba prevalent in the village are concerned, there is bound to be some fluctuation in the villagers' mentality. Before the closing decades of the last century, Baba was considered first as a negligible or pitiable *pagal fakir*, then he grew to be the wizard of the village, and then into the god or godman of a good number and the Lord or benefactor or food-giver. The Sai Maharaj that fed several hundreds everyday, shed his mortal coil in 1918, and when he passed away, many a villager formed and retained the impression that Baba was dead and was no more a factor to be dealt with. The poor beggars who were fed by Baba, did no doubt suffer from his absence but those, whose hunger was spiritual, did not suffer so badly, though they also found the physical absence of Baba at first to be a handicap in the way of Sai *bhakti*. Sai was so little understood and there was hardly anything worth calling a real account of Baba at the time of his *Mahasamadhi* in 1918. Luckily by the exertions of H.S. Dixit, Dabolkar, and other *bhaktas*, literature sprang up.

A monthly journal, Sai Lila was started and Baba was pleased to keep up some degree of Sai *bhakti* amongst those who had contacted him and the small number that came into contact through them. As decades after decade went on, this way of keeping up Sai *bhakti* appeared to fail, and that is why Abdulla Jan noted in 1936 that the number of persons approaching Sai Baba at Shirdi was so pitifully small on ordinary occasions. But it was not Sai's will that his movement should flag. He roused up agencies from unexpected quarters and the Sai movement flared up in the thirties and forties of this century so that it attained an all India character and drew thousands instead of drawing hundreds to Baba's feet. So Shirdi village life has been changed into Shirdi town life so far as externals are concerned and even so far as the spiritual side is concerned. Sai

Bhaktas are carrying on Sai Worship and flocking to his feet in his present astral form keeping up a high degree of enthusiasm. Through Sai literature like the present available and the growth of Sai temples and *bhajans*, the Sai spirit amongst the visitors to Shirdi is bound to grow more and more. Shirdi is now important mainly on account of the growing Sai movement though incidentally the sugar factories and other industrial conditions have added to the material improvement and importance of Shirdi. The main fact to notice about Baba worship at Shirdi is that the dilapidated Mosque that represented his residence in about 1880 or 1890, when N.G. Chandorkar first came to him, has been built up and modernised to the extent permissible. The main place of worship of Baba is now at the Sai Mandir which was formerly termed Buty Wada. The Samasthan has now acquired and become owner of these holy places connected with Baba. To the credit of the Samasthan it must be said that all places connected with Sai Baba and his daily movements are so well maintained that the *bhakti* of any serious Sai devotee has ample facilities to develop while at Shirdi. Every part of Shirdi is important to the *bhakta* by reason of Sai having visited it or performed certain *chamatkars* or other benefits at those places or by the burial or erection of memorials of his devotees or followers or creatures connected with him. Even the horse that formed Baba's procession *Shamakarna* has his burial tomb just as the tiger that visited him shortly before his *Mahasamadhi* has its tomb in front of *Dwarakamayee*. The best *bhaktas* of Sai Baba are not buried or given memorials there except in the shape of pictures. There are a good number of pictures in front of Baba's shrine including Ganpat Rao Patil's, Bayyaji Bai's, Tatyia Patil's, Dabolkar's, Dixit's, Chandorkar's and others. These will give many a holy thought for the *bhaktas* viewing them to develop their *bhakti* and increase their stock of information about Sai. After all Shirdi is historically important because of the growth and spread of the Sai Baba movement from it. Out of love for Baba's dwelling place and out of regard for his statements about Shirdi, many a devotee vows to go to Shirdi if some wish of his is accomplished. But in most cases, Sai Baba has outgrown Shirdi and his presence is felt in the various temples that have been built for him and in the

bhajan halls; and even in the homes, Baba's presence is actually felt and his *sakshatkaras* also take place sometimes to confirm the feeling that He is divine and everywhere. Still Shirdi retains and must retain its importance and attractions to Sai *bhaktas* and is bound to increase in its material appearance and in the material provision made for the satisfaction of the devotees needs.

Twenty-three

God Realisation - Brahma Nishta

The words God, God-realisation, *Brahman*, and *Brahma Nishta* are constantly heard in discourses and seen in books. But how often do they convey any real idea to persons? In connection with the biography of saints, this question naturally arises, because a saint is ordinarily taken to be a person who has God realisation or, as some persons put it, one who has seen God and is familiar with God. *Madhabhijna* or familiar with Me is the description given of the *Guru*, to whom Lord Krishna directs Uddhava to go²⁶³. Now before one can deal with the subject with confidence, one encounters various preliminary difficulties. Is God a definite object in order that one can get familiar with it just as one gets familiar with one's parents and friends? Or is it like a parabola only partly seen or a peripheral idea? All the objects that we know are objects in space and time. Is God an object in space and time? We see only things in space. Therefore, if one says he has seen God, the inference is that God has been seen in space. There is no doubt a feeling in one's mind sometimes that one has seen a particular object, say, for instance, in visions or dreams though one is unable to say definitely that all such objects are seen in space. The seeing of God is a very common phrase. The term used in literature for it is *Sakshatkara*. That term does not always mean seeing God. *Sakshatkari* is often employed to denote a person in a high religious state of mind or one with extraordinary experience especially in spiritual matters at least possessed of such extraordinary powers as to make people believe that he sees things which others do not. But the usual meaning of *Sakshatkari* is one who has actually seen God. That God is seen or was seen is a statement encountered very frequently in religious books of all the religions. In the Bible, for instance, God is said to have appeared before Moses and Jesus.

That is, they all actually saw God. As seeing and hearing are generally put together, the term hearing God is used often along with seeing. In the Old Testament, hearing some voice from thunder and declaring that that was the voice of God is a common feature. In the New Testament²⁶⁴ when Jesus cried 'Father glorify thy name', then there came a voice from Heaven, saying I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. Jesus said, 'This voice came for your sakes'. In Hindu scriptures and other literature, 'Seeing God' is a very common phenomena and not merely seeing but playing with God and having considerable familiarity with God is frequently found in the biography of medieval saints. Jana Bai is said to have been helped in her work of grinding grain for domestic purposes by God, and she is stated to have shared and eaten the remnants of the Brahmins food with God. At Namdev's cry God ate up the food he offered. In this case, God denotes a particular form and a particular incarnation, namely, Krishna or Vittal, and in several similar cases when a person is said to have seen God, it is a particular incarnation of a particular form that is seen. That is God and that alone is God to a person like Janabai or Namdev, at least at first. There may not be much difficulty for one to agree that a particular incarnation with a particular form might have first led a life on earth with the *sthula sarira*, that is, with the gross body, and later on passed into the *linga sarira* that is astral or subtle body, and from there from time to time, appeared with that particular form or any form it liked, exercising its *yata sankalpa samsiddhi* or creative power. Students of Sai literature will be quite familiar with these facts. Sri Sai is now said to appear, time and again before particular devotees, generally with the form which he wore when he was at Shirdi. People often say that whom they identify with God has appeared before them and talked with them or given them directions or help. That Sai has appeared and is appearing and rendering such help appears to be beyond question, especially to those who have been frequently reading of such experiences. The very latest pamphlet issued by the All India Sai Samaj, 'Is Sai Baba living and helping', now contains unquestionable evidence of Baba's appearing and acting at various places including the Ahmedabad lawyer C.C. Manikvala's house. If seeing God is only of this sort,

then we may take it, that there is very strong evidence of God being seen and moved with. There are many persons who would agree with the truth of the phenomena mentioned, but at the same time would prefer to use the term God in a different sense so as to denote Formless God. We are all, according to Taittiriya Upanishad bound to worship the father, the mother the husband and the *Acharya*, or the *Gurudeva*, as God; and to the worshipper they are God. But to those who are not worshipping them, such fathers, mothers, teachers, and husbands are not God at all but only ephemeral forms.

We shall now in this chapter take up the general stand-Point and find out whether there is God-vision or God-seeing in the generally accepted sense of the vision of a person or personality accepted by every one or, at least, by vast masses, as God. The difficulty here is that there is hardly any unanimity of opinion as to what God is amongst all persons. There are some persons who do not wish to say that there is any God at all. Even omitting them as a negligible minority, others differ in their ideas of God. The vast mass of persons who talk about and discuss God are persons without any actual experience of God, without any actual realisation or any state of mind which can be even by a remote analogy called seeing the divine. The vast majority are without realisation either of a Personal or Impersonal God. They have no *Brahmanishta* and they are not *Harinishta* or *Mada bhijnam* that is, familiar with a Personal God and those who contact an Impersonal God may be trifling in the view of those highly respectable authorities who say that the Impersonal is the Personal and the Personal is the Impersonal and that differences are without any real justification. Yet there are persons who refuse to accept this view, who contend that up to the last moment of time, the Personal is the Personal even when unseen for a time and can never be called Impersonal; and that the Impersonal is the Impersonal and can never be styled the Personal. We are now entering into the field of religious controversy. But in this book it is safer for us to avoid such controversies especially because there is no need for such controversies, also because Sai Baba deprecated the intrusion of controversy into his biography. The safest course for us to adopt here is to see whether, on the basis of any

particular scripture we can state what God vision or God realisation or *Brahman* realisation is, and how far it is declared possible or impossible. Let us take the Hindu scripture first, for the great majority of our readers are Hindus. Now so far as Hindus are concerned, the *Vedas* and the *sastras* are the determining factors and the *Vedanta* consisting of the *Upanishads* is considered as an essential part of the *Vedas*. In the *Upanishads*, there is a vast preponderating mass of texts and passages in favour of treating *Brahman*, which is the word used mostly in the *Upanishads* for God, as denoting the Impersonal Absolute. And we shall see what God realisation or *Brahma Nishta* would be, after determining what the *Upanishads* say about *Brahman*. The Kenopanishad says,

Yat chakshusha na pascyati Yena chakshumshi pascyati.

Tad eva Brahma tvam viddhi Na idam yad idam upasate.

this means, *Brahman* is that which one does not see with the eye, but that, by means of which the eye sees. That alone is *Brahman* not objects which people in the world are worshipping as god or gods. Similarly about hearing and thinking it is repeatedly stressed in the same *Upanishad* that *Brahman* is not heard, that *Brahman* is not the subject of thought, that is, conceptual thought. Taking this as a fairly clear assertion that *Brahman* is not the subject matter of sensual perceptions, God-vision in the usual sense of seeing a God, is an impossibility. But the *Upanishad* refers to *Yad idam upasate* that is, that which people worship. Those are primarily symbols of *Brahman* and they may be acting as substitutes for *Brahman* with the vast masses. The mass ideas are based on the *puranas* which deal with Polytheism that is many Gods. Let it be noted that they are all with form, indeed the minor gods that is those below Narayana's *Avatar* are like men mistaking their bodies for themselves and treating phenomenal objects as real²⁶⁵

“sarve vimohitadhiyah tava maayayeme Brahmadayah tanuabhrutah bahirarthabhaavah”

that is, *Brahman* and other gods have bodies or forms and deluded by your Krishna's *Maya* treat phenomenal worlds as real. That is how we get the idea of a God talking with and walking with *bhaktas*. In the Old Testament, we read,

Abraham walked and talked with God. So, what Abraham walked and talked with was what people worshipped as God, a Personality, in general, yet at times the abstract *Brahman*. If this is conceded, then the very interesting question arises whether for each of us a distinction should be maintained in practice between the two. Water is the same, though, as the upper part of an iceberg, it may be hard and easily seen. As the lower part, it may be hard and not seen, or as liquid water it may be soft and seen or unseen and as vapour, it is neither seen nor felt as hard or soft. The distinctions are useful for practice though chemically all these forms are the same substance H₂O. If we dive into the definition of God, we may get some further light on the matter, that is, if we dive into the definition of both *Brahman* and God. In the *Tattiriya Upanishad*, *Bhrighu*, son of *Varuna*, asked the latter What is *Brahman*? The reply was,

Yato Va Imani Bhutani jayante Yena Jatani Jivanti.

Yat Prayanti abhi samviscanti Tad Brahma.

this means, That from which all these creatures or things of the Universe are born, that by which all these are sustained, that which they go to and get merged in finally, that is *Brahman*. In one word, the origin and the end of the Universe is *Brahman*. In this definition, the suggestion, rather than the express statement is that *Brahman* is the original cause and perhaps the Impersonal cause. Anyhow, God is usually thought of as the creator or cause. The popular way of viewing God is as the universal cause and protector, that is, treating God as a Person, omnipotent, beyond time, and all-prevading and all-protecting. The Hindu philosopher tries to work out the implications of omnipotence, omnipresence and ends by taking God as Impersonal mainly and uses the term *Brahman* for it. The Universe is manifest but the source of the Universe is not manifest and the source of the stream is the stream. Therefore *Brahman* is unmanifested, at least before creation but after the Universe has appeared, is *Brahman* to be treated as manifest or unmanifest? Here there is a difference of views or of treatment. The view preferred in the *Upanishads* is that everything that is manifested is really the unmanifested and is therefore, *Brahman*.

Sarvam kalavidam Brahma.

this is, the Truth perceived by the Seers only. Yet when objects manifested are seen or dealt with, they are not, as a rule, treated as *Brahman* by the mass. But the *sadhaka* aiming at *Brahma Jnana* must forget or ignore the seen and retain in his mind only the unmanifest cause as the real basis of the seen. A *sadhaka* who begins to think of or deal with *Brahman* takes himself away from each seen or perceived object of the manifest world, mentally at least, and treats it as *Brahman* that is as purely unmanifest. How the unmanifested appears as manifested is a great problem defying the skill of those who tried to reason it out, and for that purpose the *Upanishads* suggest various analogies. Analogy or *upamana* also is a *Pramana* or method of reaching the Truth with the help of which this question can be solved. What is not manifest to the senses or to some of the senses can get later manifested and again disappear from the manifestation. The *Chandogya Upanishad* in explaining *Brahman* through the mouth of a *Rishi* to his pupil *Svetaketu* gives sixteen analogies or arguments. A lump of salt, which is manifest to the eye, if dropped into water, completely disappears, and then to the bare sight there will be no salt. But if the water in which the salt was put is tasted and the taste is compared to the taste of the water before the salt was put in, one notices the difference. The water at the later stage is saltish while in the other stage it was not saltish. Hence the salt which now is not manifest to the sense of sight is still continuing in existence, manifest to the sense of taste. This is the analogy by which the *Guru* tries to inform the *sishya* that *Brahman*, the unmanifest, is still real and can be manifest to another sense or the self beyond the senses. The above refers to the procedure from the manifest to the unmanifest. Now another analogy takes this pupil from the unmanifest to the manifest. The student was asked to fetch a banyan fruit and open it. That was full of seeds. The student was asked to cut open one of the seeds, and he cut it open. Then the question put to the student was, What is there inside the seed? The answer was Nothing, then the teacher taught him This seed when planted rises to be a huge tree which covers the earth and that entire huge mass covering the earth comes from what you call the Nothing inside the seed. That which is not manifest to you when you opened the seed has become this vast

manifestation the tree or forest which your sight cannot ignore. *Svetaketu* the pupil, was given more than a dozen other arguments or analogies from which he could draw the conclusion that the unmanifest becomes the manifest and again merges back in the unmanifest. Therefore, the definition given above by *Varuna* has been condensed in the first *Brahman Sutra Janmadi Asya yatah*, which means, *Brahman* is that from which *Janma* birth, development, and the dissolution of the universe proceed and manifested. Therefore, the vast mass of thinkers and readers amongst Hindus accept the position that the unmanifest has become the manifest and the manifest again becomes the unmanifest. Lord Krishna, in asking Arjuna not to grieve over the coming disappearance or death of all his kinsmen in the battles of *Mahabharata*, says about their souls and other souls,

Avyaktadini Bhutani Vyakta Madhyani Bharata

Avyakta nidhanani Eva Tatra ka Paridevana.

this means, These creatures rise out of the unmanifest. But in the interim period of life are manifest, and at the end they again relapse into the unmanifest. What reason is there for bemoaning this? So, the Hindu mind is accustomed to treat the unmanifest and the manifest as being different modes of existence of the same, and what applies to creatures applies to God also. God also is unmanifest at times and manifest at other times. At most itimes, to most people, or in fact to almost all people, God is 'unmanifest. Nobody sees, hears, or has contact with God at all at ordinary times. But God is declared to manifest himself to some people in certain ways. When something suddenly manifests itself, is it the Universal and Original cause? This is a question which a doubter may raise; but those who have faith in God and expect or believe its manifestation for their benefit have no such doubts. It is the latter class we now deal with and hence doubts of identity have no place here in this book. When H.S. Dixit had a vision and did not know whose form he saw, Baba told him it was Vittal's. In such cases, God-vision leading to God-realisation or *Brahma Nishta* is said to occur. So, let us take up the question as to the circumstances in which God is said to become manifest. A manifestation is possible under limitations. What is manifest

to one may be unmanifest to everybody else, and yet it would be called a manifestation. What is manifest at a particular moment of time may at the next moment become unmanifest. The manifestation to the senses is the usual manifestation referred to. But, to certain minds, the manifestation to the senses is considered a very inferior order of experience. Knowledge obtained by sense experience is discounted by a good number of thinkers, but that which is obtained by the soul itself by its contemplation, without using the physical senses, is considered to afford a more reliable basis for one's conclusion or experience. Knowledge through the sense is called *Jnana* some times. But that which is obtained by the thought power is called *Vijnana*. No doubt the terms *jnana* and *vijnana* are not used in the above sense always and very often *vijnana* and *jnana* denote quite different things from those stated above and they may be used to denote the exact opposite of the above senses. *Vijnana* would be *Vividha Jnana* that is knowledge involving differences and multiplicity, while *Jnana* would denote pure consciousness in which no difference or multiplicity is involved. The way in which God is to be realised is imparted to a pupil by a teacher who himself has realised God and the method or course almost invariably suggested is some form of *Upasana* by the pupil. Das Ganu wanted²⁶⁶ *sakshatkara* of God, and told Baba, Baba, you ask me to make *Saptaha* of *Bhagavata*, that is, to read the whole of *Bhagavata* in seven days. I shall do so, but I must have *sakshatkara* or appearance of God at the end of it. Baba said, Yes. Vittal will appear. But there must be sufficient *bhav*, that is, intensity of concentration on God. Usually, the accepted method for getting *sakshatkara* of God realisation is intense concentration, and, as we have been referring to the *Bhagavata* just now, we may note that the concentration mentioned therein is further described in the *Bhagavata* itself. In the *Ekadasa Skanda*, Uddhava asks how God is to be thought of in words which are remarkably similar to the words used by Baba. Baba said, If you are unable to think of *Nirakara*, concentrate upon my form that is think of Me as God. In the *Ekadasa Skanda* of *Bhagavata*²⁶⁷ the same is advised. Sri Krishna says to Uddhava, Portray in your mind the entire body of Sri Krishna, get all the limbs, the ornaments, the colour, the sheen and other

attributes into your mind. After doing that preliminary work, narrow the field of concentration. Proceed from the whole body with dress and weapons to concentrate on the face alone. After concentrating on that, proceed further to finer concentration remembering that the essential nature of God is not material but ethereal. Uddhava is advised to think of or see within his mind Sri Krishna's face as nothing but ether. Ether is all embracing, subtle, and unmanifest. So, from the manifest, Uddhava is advised to pass on to the unmanifest, with the feeling that it is the same, that is, with the conviction that the Krishna's face that he has concentrated upon is the same as the Universal ether. That gives him naturally help to reach absorption or *laya* in the unmanifest *Brahman*. The net result of the concentration, in fact of all concentration on a Divine Form would be that the soul of the *sadhaka* will be filled with the bliss of the ethereal unmanifest *Brahman* which as Krishna says is the same as *Satchitananda*, that is, that which is perceived as bare Bliss within the soul of the *sadhaka* himself in *Sushupti-or-Turiya* trance proving *Tat Tvam Asi*. This process is one of *sakshatkara* and may also be called God-vision, though at the final stage there is nothing for Uddhava to see outside his body. Uddhava becomes like a piece of salt dropped into the ocean of God and simply perceives or has experience of unlimited *Satchitananda*. This is undoubtedly *sakshatkara*. Seeing God, it cannot be literally. But it may be in a metaphorical sense. Seeing, *Darsan*, is often used in the scriptures to denote knowing with certainty as usually certainty is derived by seeing, *paripascyanti dheerah*²⁶⁸.

Let us however pass on to the other forms of *sakshatkara* which are far more common than the above. Hinduism is preeminently a polytheistic religion for the many. It is only very few who reach unity of God through the Upanishad, and the Hindus revel in the infinite number of gods and saints whom they worship and get *sakshatkara* of and to the vast mass, there is no other, that is, no unmanifested God to experience. If a person goes on intently thinking of his *Ishta Devata*, the latter appears to him and renders help to him in innumerable matters. This is familiar to readers of medieval literature-the history of the saint-and this is what is mostly referred to as *sakshatkara*. There is the vision and the

contact with the *Ishta Devata* and the attainment of innumerable benefits thereby. This is the sort of *sakshatkara* that evidently Das Ganu wanted but did not obtain. But some of these *sakshatkaras*, or rather the vast majority of *sakshatkaras* as a rule, are transient and the benefits are worldly-hence often a bar to Realisation. They appear just for a fraction of a second and then disappear. But still within that very small portion of time they sometimes produce an impression of great importance which may affect the future life of the experiencer. Coventry Patmore who had mystic experiences and expressed the same in some of his verses has given a description of this fleeting *sakshatkara* that he enjoyed. His verses run thus :

What's that, which, ere I spake, was gone
So joyful and intense a spark
That, whilst o'erhead the wonder shone
The day, before but dull, grew dark?
I do not know; but this I know,
That, had the splendour lived a year,
The truth that I some heavenly show
Did see, could not be now more clear.
This know I too: might mortal breath
Express the passion then inspired,
Evil would die a natural death,
And nothing transient be desired;
And error from the soul would pass,
And leave the senses pure and strong
As sunbeams. But the best, alas,
Has neither memory nor tongue!

This may be compared with the experience of universal Bliss at Sunrise in W.W. Wordsworth's youth at Sunrise from the Excursion. H.S. Dixit had a *sakshatkar* of Vittal-very elusive and very momentary and in order to confirm his idea that it was real and that it related to Vittal, he went to Baba. Baba gave him assurance that it related to Vittal and that his experience was real, for Baba knew the

internal state of every one's mind and what occurred to each. Baba however added, Vittal Patil is a very elusive person; tie him fast; else he will elude. This gives us the clue to the exact nature of most of these *sakshatkaras*. They are very brief impressions produced either on the mind or on the senses and create the impression that one has seen his *Ishta Devata* and derived benefits thereby. But like all other sense impressions, these also must fade and be finally lost. If they are to benefit one, Baba's advice has to be followed, that is, there must be such a constant repetition of a *sakshatkara* as to make it a permanent possession. Instead of relying on a momentary glimpse of the view of something divine, one has to work one's own self till the self of the individual disappears in the self of the Universe. This is called *Brahma Jnana* or *Brahman* realisation. Even this may be momentary. In order to become permanent, the *sadhaka* is advised to repeat it so that the impression in the heart is far stronger and more serviceable. If one has really become identified with *Brahman*, death has disappeared. He can say with the Pope,

Oh! Grave, Where is the victory?

Oh! Death, Where is thy sting?

Death has no meaning to a person whose self has become the self of all, that is, who has lost his sense of separateness at once and forever²⁶⁹. Our sense of separateness is due to the fact of our identifying ourselves with our body. That identification is gradually corroded by *sakshatkar* such as those mentioned above. By constantly dwelling on God, that is by *Bhramara Kita* doctrine, As a man thinketh so he becometh, we get only God as our nature and the former identification of self with the body disappears. Baba said: This body is my home. My *Guru Mourshad* has taken me away from this body. That is, his *sakshatkara* of his own nature as that of *Brahman* became so permanent and enduring that the occasional identification with the body, if it should occur again, leaves no effect on the soul. There are stages in a *Jnani's* life, after he has gone through a course of realisation, when former delusions like the delusion that one is the body tend to recur but are overcome, especially with the powerful help of a *Guru*. The *sakshatkaras*, if they are utilised to overcome these delusions of difference,

are the greatest achievements for any soul. Baba evidently with the help of his *Guru* had arrived at that highest pinnacle and if persons have deep and concentrated faith in Baba and adopt the lines he has mentioned and set an example of, then they also can reach a similar state of *sakshatkara* which goes far beyond occasional sights of some divine forms but consists in retaining permanently a feeling of realisation that the self is not the body but the Universal Self. That is the true *sakshatkara* of the Real.

Glossary

abhisheka Offering a holy bath to the diety

abhyasa Practice

acharya deva The teacher treated as Lord/God

"acharya devo bhava" Worship the teacher

adhyatma Thought of atman, reality and eternity

adhyatma jnani Knower of self God - realised

advaitism The Hindu philosophy of non-dualisim

agni Fire

"aham brahmasmi" I am Brahman, the indweller of all souls

ahamkar Ego

akalyana Mischief

akarshana Act of attraction

akasa Space without limit

akkalkote wakil Akkalkote is a place. Wakil is an advocate

amor propre One who has no vanity or selfish love

amsas sparks

anal haq One with Allah supreme God

aniketana Homeless

animadi siddhis Various super natural powers

anityam asukham Life is impermanent & full of sorrow

anjali Salutation pose with folded hands

ankita A person deeply attached and dedicated fully to a master such as Shri Sai Baba

ankolam A tree

antaryamitva Acting as the soul of all creatures (the indweller)

"apanasarika karitat tatkal" The Guru brings the student without any difficulty and without requiring any period of time to his absolute likeness

arthalubdha The conveteous *arti* Waving of lights, incense, camphor before an idol as an act of worship

asanga Non attachments keeping aloof
ashta mahasiddhis Eight super natural powers
ashtaishwaraya Eight types of wealth or riches
ashtapasas Eight knots of the Sishya, pupil's attachments
asirvada Hand raised in blessing
asthairya Weakness in thought and action
asthira Fickle minded
asuric bhava Emotions of people having narrow and cruel tendencies
asuya Envy
"atithi devo bhava" Worship the guest
atma sakshatkar Self-realisation
atmajnana Knowledge of atma, soul
atmana By self study
avadhuta A sage, unclad seer
avadhuta jnani Unclad seer of highest order
avahana Invocation
avarana Darkness or maya that covers up consciousness and knowledge
avatar Divine incarnation and God's agent or form
ayaskanta Magnetic stone
ayi Ramakrishna ayi-a great lady devotee of Shri Sai Baba
babqcha lekhru Children of Shri Sai Baba, Marathi
babul A kind of plant by name babul
baddha Conditional tie-up (bound by samsara or ajnanis)
bandha Bondage, relativity
bandhutva Relationship, kinsmanship
bhagat Baba's way of addressing Mahalsapathy his close disciple Marathi.
bhajan Singing of the Lord's attributes
bhakti Deep devotion to God
bhakti sraddhavihina The person without devotion or faith
bharatavarsha Bharat, India

bhava Emotional relationship

bhayam Fear

bhiksha alms

Bhishma The great warrior king of Mahabharata fame, the grand uncle of both the Kauravas and Pandavas

bhootadaya Compassion for all beings and creatures

bhramara kitanyaya The logic of the bee-as it evolves so it becomes. As a man thinks, so he becomes.

bilba A seed known as bilba *bilva* Bell tree leaves

brahma atma aikyam Oneness between God & soul united with supreme soul

brahma jnana Knowledge of Brahman

- brahma nishtha* A state of God-realisation
- brahma rakshas* A weird spirit of killer, evilly possessed
- brahmanda* The universe caused by Brahman uniting with maya
- brahmins* Knowers of Brahman, but known to denote people belonging to the highest caste
- buddhi* Intellect
- chaitanya* The supreme bliss of God Sri Sai Baba
- chaitanya marga* Way of nama sankeertan 'started by Chaitanya, an incarnation of Vishnu in Bengal
- chamara* Whisks, feathers tied up as a fan, an insignia of respect
- chamatkar* Miracles
- chatra* Umbrella, insignia of respect
- chaturmasya* Four months vow to be followed by a sannyasi
- chavadi* Common resting place in a village for pilgrims at Shirdi
- chintamani* The wish yielding mythical gem or stone
- chitta* Will
- dana* Charity
- daivam* Fate
- daivi sampath* Divine qualities
- dakshina* Money offered with respect to teachers, Gurus
- Dakshinamurthi* The supreme teacher who teaches through silence
- Dakshinamurthy pooja and upasana* Worship of Lord Shiva in the pose of Dakshinamurthy, the teacher who teaches in silence, with no word spoken. . The method of sitting before him and learning through silence.
- dama* Control of feelings
- dasis* Devoted maid servant
- Datta* The trinity; Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva is combined in one and is known as Datta or Dattatreya, Sai Baba is an incarnation of Datta
- Datta charithra pothi* Reading of book on Datta, the three headed God. Trinity in one.
- daya* Compassion, concern

deha Form, body

dehatamabuddhi One's body being treated as one's soul

deva Attribute or form of God

dhairya Courage

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dhanam Pride of wealth

dharana Flow like a river

dharma Acceptable norms from time immemorial, of right conduct and character at home, in society and in one's country

dhriti Self control/courage

dhuni Sacred fire lit by Sri Sai Baba at Shirdi

dhyana Meditation

dridha samhrida Strong devotion and attachment to the Guru

droha Unfaithfulness to Guru

dualism The system that differentiates soul and God

durvasanas Bad traits

dussanga Bad company

dvaitism Concept of personal God to a seeker, aspirant

dvesha Hatred '

dwaparagyuga A yuga is millions and billions of years, of one such yuga is dwapara yuga-Lord Krishna lived in dwapara yuga

dwapara yuga Uddava Uddava was a devotee of Lord Krishna in the age of dwapara yuga, when Krishna lived

dwaraka mayee Place of residence masjid of Sri Sai Baba called dwaraka mayee. Mother's place, residence of Lord Krishna.

dhyanaastha In trance

ekamsat One with supreme

fakir Muslim sanyasi

gadi Seat, position

ganamdar or chakkiwala One who grinds seeds into oil

Ganapathi Vigneswar, eldest son of Lord Shiva. The elephant

headed God much loved in Maharashtra
ghatakasa Space occupied in a small pot
gitanhamu The meaning of the Bhagavad Gita, a song of Saint Thyagaraja
gode neem Margosa tree, neem tree of sweet and bitter leaves at the gurusthan *in* Shirdi
grihasta A house-holder
guna Darkness, attribute of ignorance
Guru bhakthi Devotion to teacher, Guru
Guru bandhu A teacher, Guru of the same kind-colleague
Guru Gita The book which explains and teaches the various aspects of the Guru, the teacher
Guru namasmarana Repetition in full faith of the name of the Guru
Guru parampara Teachers of a supreme order ensuring continuity from time to time of spiritual teachings
Guru seva Service of the Guru, teacher of divinity
Gurudeva Teacher who is considered to be God
Gurukulavasa Stay under a Guru for study with the Guru carrying out all orders of the Guru and the Guru's family and doing all the household work
Gurum vina Without the Guru
haj Pilgrimage sacred to muslims
haram Opposite to Muslim way of worship
Harinishta Familiar with personal God, Hari-Vishnu
henotheism Worship of one form at one time and another form at another
Indra The God of the devas, known as Indra, presiding over svargaloka
indriyajit Controler of all senses
ishta Fulfillments of one's vow's
ishtadevata One's own preferred deity like Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Maruthi
Iswara Lord of destruction one of trinity the others being Brahma and Vishnu (Narayan)

Janaka Maharaja Sri Janaka. The emperor of Mithila *janma* Birth
jihvopasthajaya Perfect control over palate, tastes and the sex urge
jitendriya Controller of all senses especially anger, self control
of the highest order
jiva Soul in a living body
jivanmuktha Highly realised soul, here in this world. Liberated
from all bondage while still living
jnana Deep knowledge of God
jnani Realiser of atma, soul
kaka Uncle, refer to Sri H.S.Dixit, a close devotee of Sri Sai Baba
kaliyuga Uddhavesabua A devotee of Sri Sai Baba by name Uddhavesa bua in
the present age of Kali
kaliyuga A yuga is millions and billions of years one such is kali-yuga the
present age
kalpura camphor
kamadhenu wish yeilding mythical cow
kamakrodhajit Controller of desires and anger
kamini Attractive women
Kamsa King of Dwaraka. Uncle of Lord Krishna, who wanted to kill Krishna
kanchana Gold. Attraction of wealth
kanjira A small drum instrument played by hand
karma Result of past actions. As you sow so you reap.
karnams Village officers
karya Refers to maya, the power of the shakti of Chaitanya, which causes forms
and appearances
khuda Muslim term for God, refers also to prophet Mohammed
kirtankar One who sings the Lord's names
Kula Pride of family
Kumbhabhisheka Religious ceremonies of pouring sacred water after
invocations, to the Lord
kumbhakasa Space occupied by a big pot

- kupni* Robe of an ascetic. Marathi.
- lajja* False sense of shame and shyness
- lambadi* A tribal
- laya* Merger or engrossed
- linga sarira* Astral or subtle body
- lokahita* Good of the world
- lokakalyana* Good of the entire universe
- lokasanghaha* To take full care and responsibility extending protection to all beings of the world
- lotus feet* Sacred feet of Sri Sai Baba compared to the lotus flower, in divinity this flower represents God's tender and utmost kindness. Lotus also represents supreme truth
- mad abhijnam* Familiar with personal God, Hari- Vishnu
- Mahapurusha* Illustrious person
- mahasamadhi* Giving up of the mortal frame
- mahavakyas* Supreme truths embodied in religious text, such as Upanishads
- mahima* Greatness
- "Main Allahum"* "I am Allah"
- mamata* pride
- mana tyaga* Supreme sacrifice
- manan* Repeated and serious reflection of God's stories
- manas* Mind
- mantras* Sacred words or syllables of God's attributes
- manusmriti* Laws of Hindu sage known as 'Manu'
- marana* Causing death, killing
- marwadi* A money lender
- masik sraadhha* Monthly religious rites
- masjid* A mosque. The place Baba lived in was a masjid which later came to be called Dwarkamayee
- "mat parayanas"* Those persons entirely devoted to the Guru
- "natru deva bhava"* Worship the mother

"matruvat paradarmscha" Viewing women other than one's wife as one's mother

matsara Jealousy

Maulana Learned in Muslim scripture

maya or prakriti Illusion

mitabhashana Man of few words

Mohammadan A Muslim

mohana Creating delusious

moksha Supreme self-realisation or liberation from births and deaths

moksha Liberated soul. Liberated from conditional bondage

mokshamu galada Is there a way for realisation of God head, a song of Saint Thyagaraja

monism Advaita, God is one reality, without a second

mouni A Guru who enjoys the firm bliss of perfection but does not teach the same

mukta Realised, liberated soul

mukti Realisation of the real nature of oneself and of the Atma

mumukshta Desire to be free

murthy Sculpted image of God, a personal God

mussalman A muslim

"Nahi Ninda Nyaya" No reason to condemn other forms of worship

naivedya Food offering to God

najananti mudhastal No grace decends to one

namams Vertical lines on forehead of Vaishnavite Hindus, followers of Lord Vishnu and horizontal lines for Saivites-followers of Siva

namasmaran Thinking of God's names

namazes Muslim way of offering worship five namazes *are* made in a day

Narayanu Lord of preservation, one of trinity the others being Brahma and Mahadeva (Iswara)

natidure nichavat Ready to obey Guru's orders, standing like

a peon or a servant and at all times serving the Guru
nautch Village dancer
navavidha bhakti Nine forms of devotion
nididhyasan Deep contemplation
ninda Tendency to scoff or find fault
nirakara Impersonal God without form
niranjan One who has conquered maya or illusions of world, God realiser
nirguna God, beyond all attributes-gunas: Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic
nirmalamanas Calm and pure mind
niscreyas and screyas The good and the excellent
nitisloka Verses of good and right conduct handed down through the ages
nityapurna Pure and eternal fullness of God
pada The serpent power reaching hamsa padam through the nadis the other being pinda
padathirtham Waters that have washed the feet of the Guru
pagal Mad
pagal fakir A mad Muslim ascetic
panams A paltry sum of Rs. 1-4 annas
panchayatana A group of five saints
para prakriti Entire nature and the universal world
para vairagya Detachment leading to God
paramam padam The highest state of realisation
paramartha Supreme goal, ultimate reality
paramartika There are 3 stages of reality. This refers to the ultimate reality
paramasreya Self-realisation
paramatma Indweller, God
naramatma swarupam Form of supreme God
Parikshit Son of Arjuna. Hero of the Mahabaratha war
Pati Husband
pinda The kundalini sakthi, the serpaat power in a human being

flowes in 2 nadis pinda and pada

pingala Name of a dancer, in the context of this book.

Pingala and Ida are also the other names of Pada and Pinda, the nadi's through which the kundalini shakti flows to reach the susumna nadi

"pitru devo bhava" Worship the father

poornalaya Completely and fully immersed

poornaparabrahman Total and full supreme consciousness of divine bliss

poorva abhyasa Exercise or training in a previous life

poorvakarma Result of past actions; of actions done in previous birth

pothi Study of scriptures and religious books

prakriti Universe, nature

pramana Method of reaching truth

prapatti Complete surrender to God, Sri Sai Baba

prarabdha Result of past karma attached to the body, which the body must fulfill

pratibhasika There are 3 stages in sages in their pursuit of the supreme knowledge in the first stage called pratibhasika, the ignorant does not see truth at all but sees good as evil and evil as good

Prem rupi Form of God. Full of love

Prema Supreme love

Prema Deep love and concern

Preya vastu Momentary articles or passing things

Priyah Most dear

puja Worship

purusha Male being, jiva

putra Son

raja upacharas A royal worship rendered such as to a king or emperor

rajas Ego-centred, self assertive

rajasic qualities of over-lordship, self assertion
ramavara Represents Hindu God Sri Rama. Marathi.
rasakrida Divine play of Lord Krishna with the gopis
rinanubhandha Tie-up obligation coming from previous birth
rupa Attaining the bindu
rupatita Beyond form merged with God-head
sadachara Right conduct
sadgati Merging with the supreme God-head
sadguru Teacher of the highest order, knowledge of God-realisation
sadhaka A seeker of the knowledge of God-head
sadhu Pious seeker
sadvastu Real
sant lilas Saintly miracles
Sai Sudha Magazine of All India Sai Samaj
saiva acharya Teacher who worships Lord Shiva
saiva matakhndanam Criticism of Saivism
Saivaite Follower of Shiva
sakara God with form
sakshatkara Personal presence or vision of God
saktinipata The Guru awakens the latent unawakened energy in the sishya through his Divine Grace and power
salangai Tamil word for tinklets generally tied to feet of dancers
sama Being humble, forgiving
samadhana peaceful negotiation
samadhi Fully merged with God-head
samadhi mandhir The place where Sri Sai Baba's mortal remains are enshrined at Shirdi
Samartha Competent and qualified Guru who uses all his siddhi and superior powers for his sishya
samatva Equality
sameepyam Being in the proximity of God

samsara Worldly life
samsarati Perfect cycles in the round of birth and death
samscayatma vinascyati The perpetual doubter perishes and can make no progress
sangamnare kazi Sangamnare is a place near Shirdi, kazi is a Muslim chief priest
sani Saturn. One of the navagrahas
sankalpa Resolve. Initial portion of pooja
sannyasi One who has renounced worldly attachments
sanatana dharma Dharma coming down from the ages of the rishis and sages
santosha Joy
saptaha Seven days study of scripture
saram Keen listening-devotional
sarangati Clutching the feet of the Lord, total surrender
sarupyam Attaining the same from as God
"sarva bhuta hite ratah" Interested in the welfare of all creatures
"sarva bhutatma bhutatma" Becoming and realising that one is the self of all creatures
sarvantryami The sole indweller in all creatures
sastras Religious duties and rituals, as laid out in the scriptures
sastric pertaining to holy texts
sat-chit-ananda Truth-consciousness-bliss
sat purusha Perfect, self-realised being
satchitananda bhavatita Awareness of supreme truth consciousness and bliss
sat hi akaraka At the moment of death, a friend to remind one of God
satsang Holy company. Company of the good
satsankalpa Good and divine thought or decision
satva Pure and selfless conduct
sawalokha malapahe Getting rid of gross problems of the entire world
sayujyam Being merged in God

scama Being humble and forgiving
scamadishatka Possessing the 6 qualities, control of inner and external sense organs, quietitude, renunciation, forbearance and faith
scankha Doubts
scuchi Right thoughts and actions/purity
scuscrusha vimukha One who does no care to render service to the Guru
seelam Good character *sevaya* Self-denial, service to the Guru
Shamakarna Name of the horse, presented to Sri Sai Baba *Shankar* Lord Shiva
shanta peaceful
shanti peace
shodasca upacharas Sixteen types of worship offered to God
shraddha Faith, doing work correctly
siddhi Super natural power
sishya Disciple
sthambana prevention of movement
Siva Lord Shiva, one of trinity
Siva panchakshari Five words leading to Shiva. Trance
Om namah sivayah or sivaya namahom
skandapurana The traditional story from the puranas relating to Lord Subramanya, son of Lord Shiva
sloka Verses
soham "I am God"
sowbagya Bountiful blessings
srotria High class caste brahmins
sthairya Firmness in thought and actions
sthula Gross body
stotras Verses in praise of God
subra marga The path of virtue
suddhachaitanya Pure consciousness

sufi A Hindu/Muslim religious sect
sukham Bliss, indentity with God
sukshma or lingasarira Subtle/astral body
sumangali Married woman
sushupti Deep sleep
swadhyaya One's conduct of chanting and reciting Vedic texts
that nourish the inner being, imparts, spiritual strength and purifies the mind and
heart
swaroopa Form
swechcha marana To die at will
tamas Dull, lazy
tamasic Ego, hatred, cruelty, dull, lazy, lethargic
tan,man, dhan Body, mind, possessions
tashildar District Revenue Officer, Marathi
tatvanishta Firm master of tatvas
tinha yatra Pilgrimage of holy rivers
titiksha Endurance
Todas Hill tribals
tongawallah A cart man
turiya One with supreme spirit. The fourth state
uddharet To raise oneself
udhi Sacred ash from the fire lit by Sri Sai Baba
upadesh Teachings
upadhis Worldly attachments of power and status
upadishta Directions given by the Guru
upamana Example
uparati Ceasing, stopping
upasana Worship or japa of a mantra
vagardtha viva sampriktau Like words and meanings embedded in each other
vagmi A Guru who expresses his thoughts and realisation and teaches the
same

vaideek brahmin A brahmin learned in vedas and prescribed rituals
vairagi One detached
vairagya Detachment
vaishnavite Followers of Vishnu
vanajari The teacher in the forest who can show the proper course to travel in the forest and come out safely
vanis Oil mongers
vasanas Tendencies
vasikarna Act of fascination
vatsalya Deep affectionate concern of a mother to her children
vedas Sacred holy texts
vibhuti Attributes of God
vichara Distinguishing between unchanging and changing reality, enquiry about matter
vidhivat Practices of a pupil going to the gurukula as per injunctions
vidhya Learning
vijana Vividha-jnana, means knowledge gained through understanding and contemplation
vimana Flying vehicle. Here refers to liberation from bondage of birth and death, in contemplation of God.
viraha Suffering through separation
virakti detachment
vishnu mata kandanam Criticism of vaishnavism
viveka Discrimination
vivekachudamani A holy book written by Sankara, incarnation of Lord Shiva
viveki Capable of discrimination
vyabhichara Going astray, wrong paths
vyavaharika There are three stages in sages in their pursuit of the supreme knowledge, the 2nd stage in the sage sees truth and differentiates between good and evil

"yogakshemam vahami aham" Undertaking to safe guard and advance temporal and spiritual interests

REFERENCE

- Ref. Refer To No.
- 1 Mundaka Upanishad II (10)
 - 2 Baba's Charters And Sayings 58
 - 3 Srimad Bhagvata XI Ch. VI
 - 4 Devotees Experience I 85
 - 5 1913 - 1914
 - 6 Bhagavad Gita VI 41 - 45
 - 7 Srimad Bhagavata XI Skanda, 18th Chapter verse 44
 - 8 Baba's Charters and Sayings 80
 - 9 Baba's Charters and Sayings 81
 - 10 Baba's Charters and Sayings 72
 - 11 Baba's Charters and Sayings 58
 - 12 M.A. M.Sc. Baba's Charters and Sayings 417
 - 13 Baba's Charters and Sayings 412
 - 14 Baba's Charters and Sayings 425
 - 15 Baba's Charters and Sayings 424
 - 16 Baba's Charters and Sayings 420
 - 17 Baba's Charters and Sayings 449
 - 18 Baba's Charters and Sayings 416
 - 19 Baba's Charters and Sayings 404
 - 20 Baba's Charters and Sayings 61-71
 - 21 Baba's Charters and Sayings 542
 - 22 See Appendix I
 - 23 Mani Sahukar's the Saint of Shirdi
Rao Sahib Harshad P. Mehta's 'The Spiritual Symphony of Shree
Sainath of Shirdi' are small books not trying to set out Baba's Life in full.
They are first introductions to Baba to rouse the public and make them
approach Sai Baba.

- The Greatest Saint Sainath "How to overcome calamities and to get what you want from Shree Sai Baba" by Ramnath Modak
- 24 Baba's Charters and Sayings 61-119
- 25 Baba's Charters and Sayings 481
- 26 Baba's Charters and Sayings 472A
- 27 Probably that Fakir was a Sufi and Baba's First Guru. Baba often referred to his guiding or guardian Saint-Guru as 'that Fakir' Baba's Charters and Sayings :102, 233, 419, 102, 398.
- 28 All this is narrated in the legends about Gopal Rao Deshmukh, now kept at his place in Selu
- 29 Srimad Bhagavata XI (15) 7
- 30 Baba admitted he had power to revive the dead, Baba's Charter & Sayings 93, 321.
- 31 Baba when asked by a court commission as to what his name was, said, 'They call me Sai Baba'.
- 32 Baba's Charters and Sayings 152
- 33 B.S. Khaparde's diary notes in 1911 and 1912 several times that Baba skipped and danced. G.G. Narke also adds that Baba would do so in G.G. Narke's Mothers presence
- 34 Baba's Charters and Sayings 119
- 35 Baba's Charters and Sayings 293
- 36 (Tamil Word) Serangkottai
- 37 Water Jars are always kept in the mosques for people to wash their feet before entering the sacred precincts
- 38 Compare the story of Nayanmargal in Tamil Periapuranam
- 39 See Appendix II
- 40 Srimad Bhagavata XI (23) 51, 52
- 41 Baba was being taken for a Muslim by almost everyone
- 42 Baba's Charters and Sayings 304
- 43 Manu Smriti (2) 162
- 44 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 12

- 45 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 38, 39
- 46 Sai Mahima Stotra 1912
- 47 St. John (3) 2. No Man can do these signs which thou doest unless God be with him
- 48 Probably because his first veneration and ideas of God came from a Fakir, his foster father
- 49 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 39
- 50 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 46
- 51 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 2, (18), (35)
- 52 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 6
- 53 Srimad Bhagavata XI (II) 17
- 54 Srimad Bhagavata XI (23) 33 to 41
- 55 See Appendix III
- 56 Baba's Charters and Sayings 601, 602
- 57 Baba's Charters and Sayings 103, 351
- 58 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 40, 41
- 59 Baba's Charters and Sayings 204
- 60 Srimad Bhagavata Skanda XI Chapter VIII Verse 2
- 61 Verse 11, Chapter VIII
- 62 Chapter VII Verse 21
- 63 Srimad Bhagavata XI Chapter (19) Verse 36
- 64 Baba said he went on with smaran of Hari's name till Hari appeared. After that Sakshatkara, he stopped giving medicines as giving Udhi and blessings gave cures and relief.
- 65 Srimad Bhagavata XI (6) 22
- 66 Which procession would have precedence and which mark 'U' or 'Y' should prevail in the buildings and images
- 67 Baba's Charters and Sayings 284
- 68 Baba objected to "Conversion" See the difference of worship now at Coimbatore Naga Sai Mandir, Mylapore Sai Mandir and Shirdi Sai Mandir

- 69 Bedil the Sufi of Sind says about the great... Daavisi at Matvane Uypaka
Hai Sai This Sai who pervades all as the soul of all, shows or
teachers".
- 70 Taittiriya Upanishad
- 71 See Appendix IV
- 72 Baba's Charters and Sayings 123, 155, 174.
- 73 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI 6 : 14
- 74 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI 6 : 8
- 75 Srimad Bhagavata Chapter XI (21) 43
- 76 As in Bhagawad Gita (13) 8-12
- 77 Srimad Bhagavata XI (8) 5 Durvigahyo and XI (9) 14
Alakshyamana Achariah and XI (7) 28 Jadonmatha Pisachavat
- 78 Guru Gita verse 44, 45, 47 to 91
- 79 See Appendix V
- 80 Baba's Charters and Sayings 72 A
- 81 Srimad Bhagavata XI Skanda Chapter X verses 8 to 9
- 82 Guru Gita 273 to 279
- 83 Baba's Charters and Sayings 347, 349
- 84 Chapter II Sai Satcharitra
- 85 Vivekachudamani
- 86 Taittiriya Upanishad
- 87 Baba's Charters and Sayings 56
- 88 Guru Gita verse 82
- 89 Baba's Charters and Sayings 176
- 90 Baba's Charters and Sayings 175
- 91 Chapter IV verse 5
- 92 Chapter IV 34 and 35
- 93 See Chapter II (7) of Bhagavad Gita
- 94 In Guru Gita verses 101, 126, 179 to 189
- 95 Guru Gita verse 82, 304 to 305
- 96 Verse 55, 125

- 97 Mundaka Upanishad I (2) 12
- 98 Chapter XI (10) 5
- 99 Supported by Verse 303 and 304 of Guru Gita
- 100 Srimad Bhagavata XI (17) 22, 30
- 101 Baba's Charters and Sayings 35 to 39, 96, 384, 509
- 102 Baba's Charters and Sayings 182
- 103 Guru Gita parts 1 to 3
- 104 Dasa Bodha Chapter V
- 105 See Bhagavata Gita Chapter XII
- 106 Guru Gita in verse 198, 199
- 107 Kapalam Vriksha Mulamcha Kuchelam Asahayata Sarvatara Samata
drishtih Etat Muktyasya Lakshananam that is, begging, staying at a free foot,
Rags, No companions, Viewing all with equal vision, these are all marks of
a Jivan Mukta.
- 108 Guru Gita verses 203 and 272
- 109 Guru Gita verses 198 to 203
- 110 See Appendix VI
- 111 Baba's Charters and Sayings 177
- 112 These are dealt with in Baba's Charters and Sayings 124 also
- 113 Srimad Bhagavata XI Chapter 13
- 114 Guru Gita in verses 270, 271
- 115 Guru Gita in verses 304 - 305
- 116 Khataupa
- 117 Verse 308 of Guru Gita
- 118 Chapter XI (23) 1-10
- 119 See G.S. Khaparde's diary showing How he misunderstood Baba's words
at first
- 120 Guru Gita verse 204
- 121 Chapter XI (10) 6
- 122 Guru Gita verse 175 says, Guru prasadat anyatara sukham nasti Mahitale
that is, No happiness is on earth except by Guru's grace and Guru Gita

- verse 191 says, Yadyapi adhita Nigama, Shadanga Agamah priye
adhyatmadini Sastrani, Janam nasti gurum vina
- 123 See Guru Gita verses 74, 80, 175, 191, 202, 299, 318.
- 124 Srimad Bhagavata XI (9) 3
- 125 Baba's Charters and Sayings 203 to 319
- 126 Verse 89 of the Guru Gita
- 127 Referred to in verses 90 to 95 Guru Gita
- 128 Guru Gita verses 91, 92, 93
- 129 XI Skanda Chapter IX verse 31
- 130 Mentioned in Chapter VII verses 33 and 34
- 131 Chapter I verse 5 and Chapter XVII verse 28
- 132 Baba's Charters and Sayings 412
- 133 Baba's Charters and Sayings 411
- 134 Baba's Charters and Sayings 408
- 135 Guru Gita verse 276
- 136 Skanda XI Chapter 15 verse 33
- 137 Patanjali Yoga Sutras verse 54
- 138 Guru Gita verses 286 and 287
- 138 Baba's Charters and Sayings 91
- 140 Chapter VII Bhagavad Gita
- 141 Srimad Bhagavata (13) 34 and 10 (11)
- 142 Baba's Charters and Sayings 13
- 143 Baba's Charters and Sayings 523
- 144 Baba's Chapters and Sayings 107
- 145 Chapter IV verse 34.
- 146 Baba's Charters and Sayings 183
- 147 Baba's Charters and Sayings 301
- 148 Guru Gita verse 122 to 124
- 149 Guru Gita verse 125
- 150 Guru Gita verse 126
- 151 Guru Gita verse 128 .

- 152 Humkar 132
- 153 Verse 134 - Guru Gita
- 154 Verses 136 and 149 Guru G.ta
- 155 Verses 146 - Guru Gita
- 156 Vwses 148 - Guru Gita
- 157 Verses 149 - Guru Gita
- 158 Verses 151 - Guru Gita
- 159 Verses 153 - Garu Gita
- 160 Verses 165 - Guru Gita
- 161 Verses 156 - Guru Gita
- 162 Verses 157 - Guru Gita
- 163 Verses 159 - Guru Gita
- 164 Katho Upanishad II (3) 17
- 165 Verses 160 - Guru Gita
- 166 Srimad Bhagavata XI (9) verses 22,
- 167 Verses 161 to 165 Guru Gita
- 168 Guru Gita verses 167
- 169 Bhagawad Gita Chapter 10, 41
- 170 Bhagawad Gita Chapter 4, 11 already quoted
- 171 See Taittiriya and Svetasvatara Upamshads
- 172 Guru Gita 53-55
- 173 See Appendix VII
- 174 Baba's Charters and Sayings 104, 144 to 148.
- 175 Baba's Charters and Sayings 167 - 174.
- 176 Worship of one form at one time and another form at another
- 177 Baba's Charters and Sayings 58 - 60
- 178 Bhagawad Gita (4) 11
- 179 Baba's Charters and Sayings 609
- 180 Baba's Charters and Sayings 455 to 501, 473, 497.
- 181 Bhagawad Gita (6) 41-45
- 182 See Chapter XI Supra

- 183 Bhagawad Gita (5) 25
184 Bhagawad Gita (5) 7
185 Bhagawad Gita (6) 32
186 Srimad Bhagvata XI (23) 31-61
187 Srimad Bhagavata XI (18) 29
188 Srimad Bhagavata XI (7) 28
189 Katho Upanishad VI (2) 8
190 In Baba's Charters and Sayings 178
191 Narada Bhakti Sutras 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 41
192 Narada Bhakti Sutras 47 and 48
193 Narada Bhakti Sutras 65
194 Narada Bhakti Sutras 35
195 In Chapter XIV verse 23
196 Ashta Bhavas are - gurgling in the throat when one speaks -
horripilation, hair standing on end flow of tears and pespiration-
dancing-
shouting and laughter
indifferent to other's views-
falling or rolling on the ground
-Trance
197 In Baba's Charters and sayings 145
198 Skanda XI Chapter XV (1)
199 Skanda XI Chapter XV (8)
200 Srimad Bhagavata XI (15) 32
201 In Chapter IV 7 and 8.
202 Such return after thirty days is reported about Adi Sankara Acharya see
Sankara Vijaya
203 Bhagawad Gita VII 15
204 Bhagawad Gita VII 24
205 Bhagawad Gita VII 25
206 This is repeated in IX (11)

- 207 Bhagawad Gita IX (13)
- 208 Bhagawad Gita XVI 1-3
- 209 Bhagawad Gita Chapter X
- 210 Bhagawad Gita Chapter XV (7)
- 211 Bhagawad Gita Chapter X (41)
- 212 Bhagawad Gita Chapter VII and IX
- 213 From the All India Sai Samaj or Shirdi Sai Sansthan.
- 214 Bhagawad Gita Chapter IV Verse 11
- 215 Baba's Charters and Sayings 507 - 518
- 216 Bhagawad Gita Chapter IX (29)
- 217 Bhagawad Gita Chapter XVIII verse 65
- 218 In Verse 69 Chapter XVIII Bhagawad Gita
- 219 Baba's Charters and Sayings 516
- 220 Baba's Charters and Sayings 14
- 221 Baba's Charters and Sayings 15
- 222 Baba's Charters and Sayings 16
- 223 Guru Gita Chapter II verse 13, quoted and explained at page 159
- 224 In Baba's Charters and Sayings 13
- 225 Bhagavad Gita VIII 14
- 226 Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.
- 227 Baba's Charters & Sayings 400 to 450
- 228 Baba's Charters & Sayings 373
- 229 Baba's Charters & Sayings 56
- 230 As mentioned by him in Gospel para 56
- 231 Gospel Para 96
- 232 Baba's Charters and Sayings 57
- 233 Ekadasa Skanda Chapter XV Verse 21
- 234 Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII verse 42
- 235 Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII verse 43
- 236 Srimad Bhagavata VI 2, 7, 14

- 237 Here is an instance of using God's name by way of joke or fun among a particular set, Resorting to drink or bottle is spoken of as resorting to 'Midasannam Govindappa' that is, the narrow necked govinda is given as a description of the bottle
- 238 Pandava Gita verse 52
- 239 To Benefit by Bhagawad Gita VIII 42
- 240 Bhagawad Gita Chapter VIII verse 43
- 241 Baba's Charters and Sayings 28
- 242 Therefore Baba's Charters and Sayings 28 will clearly apply to such people.
- 243 That is explained in Baba's Charters and Sayings 25
- 244 Baba's Charters and Sayings 19
- 245 Baba's Charters and Sayings 20
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267 That is the concentration advised in chapter XIV verses 24 to 29 and
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268 Mundaka Upanishad VI 6
269 Of Narayan Asram's experience in Devotees Experience 1:85

Appendix

Appendix I

Baba is inscrutable, a sphynx

More Babaku marma Janare Koi More

None knows the inwardness or secret of my Baba^r

Koi Kahe donge koi pakhandi More

Koi kahe divana re

Some called him hypocrite, some heterodox, some called him mad

Koi kahe lobhi koi kahe bhogi More

koi kahe bade syana re

Some called him greedy, some sensualist, some called him a wise sage

Koi kahe yogi koi kahe tyagi More

koi sadhu janare

Some termed him a *yogi*, some a self-sacrificer; some a *sadhu*.

Koi guru sadguru Vako More

Koi Iswara jaana re

Some called him a *Guru*, a *Sadguru*, some knew him to be Iswara Divine

Sri Babaki siddhavasta More

Koi Virala pahchana re

Sri Baba's state is that of the *Siddha*. Some alone see him as different from all.

Apana Apana sab phala pave jisne jaisa More

jaana re

Each gets a reward suiting his own idea of Baba

Mehbub Sabaki suni para, Turn mat More

dhoka khanare

O Mehbub author of this song, Do not get confounded by listening to the views of all.

Appendix II

Baba allowed Nana Chandorkar's son, Bapu to apply sandal paste to his forehead as the child was accustomed to apply sandal paste to the forehead of the image he worshipped at home. Similarly another elderly person who was

accustomed to worship his own *Guru* by applying sandal on his forehead did the same to Baba considering Baba to be his *Guru*. Baba knew his thoughts and could not prevent him. It was thus that others were emboldened and all claimed to be the children of Baba, claiming also the privilege of applying sandal paste to Baba's forehead as Bapu Chandorkar did.

Appendix III

The Bhikshu's ways of facing insult and trouble

In the Srimad Bhagavata, Bhikshu Gita, Chapter XXIII we find the rationale or the intellectual basis of one's equanimity in the face of insult and trouble, set out in great detail. We may refer to the essence of what is said therein. A rich Brahmin miser, on account of his miserliness, got into bitter terms with his relations, friends and almost every one and his property was also lost. Then he began to realise the absurdity of relying upon riches for happiness and determined to adopt a monk's role, and went about with his staff, *Danda* and begging bowl *Kamandalu*. But several people recognised who he originally was and began to trouble him in various ways. Some mocked at him, others plucked away his staff and begging bowl. Some passed water in his begging bowl and took delight in tormenting him in various ways. He was able to endure these *tapatrayas* or troubles of three sorts; which came from the animal kingdom or from the body or from finer forces; philosophically being assured in his mind that they were all the result of his *karma* and so inescapable. He convinced himself that the pains he endured just like the pleasures he had were all due to his mentality and not to any other causes. Therefore, he resolved that his only course was to bravely appeal to God, completely surrender to him, and face all pain and pleasure with thorough indifference based on his surrender to God. He found that the people who gave him trouble—who were considered to be the cause of his pain, were really not the cause of his pain. He analysed the situation thus:

the cause of the trouble given may be stated to be one of six things namely

- the body of the troublesome persons.

So far as their bodies are concerned they were insentient and it was the bodies of the troublers that troubled his body; and if the troublers were treated to be mere bodies then he also should be treated as a mere insentient body; then there was nothing to complain about. It is one part of insentient nature troubling another part though both together form one nature. In a particular organism, sometimes the teeth bite the tongue and his present trouble was in no way different. If the teeth bite the tongue what is a person to do? Whom is he to blame?

- the finer forces presiding over the organs with which they gave trouble.

Again, if their organs which trouble his organs be considered to be the movement or action of the Gods presiding over their organs - Indra presiding over the hand or the moon presiding over the mind, what does that matter? He himself was not an organ but the pure *atman*. The hand of those persons was striking his hand. So it is Indra striking Indra. Sometimes even our own hand may beat the other hand in our own body, who is to complain to whom? All together form one.

- the *Atma* or the spirit that ensouled those people. As for the third consideration that the troublers should be treated neither as their bodies nor as the Gods presiding over their organs, but as the pure *Atma* alone,

What is there to complain of? *Atma* cannot injure itself. There is nothing besides *Atman* to hurt the *Atman*. Therefore there is nothing in the matter for complaint.

- the trouble might be due to planetary positions in his horoscope.

The fourth cause of trouble namely planetary action and the position of the planets at the time the injured person who is suffering was born. This is also inapplicable as the planets can only affect that which is born, which is the body. But I am not born. I am the soul and so the planets cannot give me pleasure or pain. Besides books on Astrology say that some planets fight with others by *Padavikshanyam* and *Ardha Vikshanyam* and they take the position of the Sun in the 8th or 12th house from the *Lagna*. If one planet fights another what is that to me, the *Atman*!

- Previous *Karma*

If *Karma* is the cause of all pleasure and pain, who does what *karma*? The body cannot perform any *karma*. It is insentient. The *Atman* being Pure Intelligence cannot do *karma* either. Therefore there is no cause for pleasure and pain to me, the *Atman*, who is independent.

- *Kala* or Time

Lastly, the question of *Kala* or Time. I the *Atman* am the soul of *Kala* or Time. Does fire burn itself or ice chill itself? So, there is no reason for anger or discontent. So, the fully realised person, who has fully surrendered himself at the feet of God, has no one blame because his mind does not turn to the question of trouble or blamer but sees only the supreme person Iswara in every one including the troubler. Hence full faith in and surrender to God is the best basis for *titiksha* and the wise man must control his mind by concentrating it upon the feet of God.

Appendix IV

Bedil the Sufi of Sind says about the great *Avalias* who have cast off their mortal coil - 'These men do never die'. They are God Himself. That Unification or harmonisation of Hindu, Muslim, and other Indian faiths was and is Baba's mission, or rather a part of it. This is impressed daily upon all Sai *Bhaktas* by their Noon *arti*, which says,

Bheda Na Tatwin Hindu yavanancha Kahim

Daavayaasi Jhale Punarapi Nara Dehi

Paahasi Premane Tu Hindu Yavananhi

Daavisi, atmatvane Vyapaka Ha Sai

This means, In essence or basic principle there is no difference whatever between Hindu and Islam, you Datta *Avatar* took birth in human body to point out and establish this. You look with affection on both Hindus and Muslims. This Sai who pervades all as the soul of all, shows

Appendix V

Derivation of Guru

Guru means Great or *Mahan*

Guru Gita stanza 44

Gukarascha andhakaro hi Rukaras

teja uchyate

Ajnanagrasakam Brahma Gurureva

Na Samsayah.

This means, *Gu* means darkness and *Ru* is light. As light swallows up darkness. *Guru*, is *Brahman* the Swallower of Darkness, without doubt.

Guru Gita stanza 46

Gukarascha gunatito, Rupertito Rukarakah

Gunarupa vihinatvat Gururityabhidiyate

This means, *Gu* means *Gunatita*, that is, beyond the senses, *Ru* means *Rupatita*, that is beyond all form.

As the *Guru* is beyond all *gunas* and forms, the *Guru* is so termed

Guru Gita stanza 47

Gukarah Pratamo varno Mayadi

Gunabhasakah

Rukaro Asti param Brahma Mayabhranti

Vimochakam

This means, *Gu* is the first letter, and that is *Maya* appearing as *Gunas*. The next *Ru* is *Param Brahman*, which removes *Maya bhranti*, that is, the delusions of *Maya*.

Guru Gita stanza 91

Gukaram cha gunatitam Rukaram

Rupavarjitam

Gunatitam arupam cha yo dadyat sa guru

Smritah

This means, *Gu* is *Gunatita* beyond the *gunas* *Ru* is *Rupa Varjita*, that is free from form. *Guru* is so called because he is *Gunatita* and *Arupa* and enables us to be *Gunatita* and *Arupa* that is, to realise ourself as ourself as beyond form and all attributes.

Appendix VI

Guru Gita in verse 285 to 287 raises the question when ignorant men afraid of death and having some *Vairagya* or detachment from worldly objects seek a *Guru* and fall under the influence of a *Nishiddha Guru* teaching *mantras* for achieving worldly aims through *Marana*, *Vasikarna*, *Mohana* and *Akarshana* and whether there is hope of ever escaping from such a *Guru*. The answer is in verse 286, that one having *Vairagya*, dispassion will be saved by a self-realised *Guru* whose contact he will surely obtain as the Bhagavad Gita says,

*Nahi Kalyanakrit kah chit
durgatim Tata gachhati*

that is, those who do the right thing will not be lost.

Appendix VII

Question of Caste

It has been noticed in Chapter XV that amongst the objections raised to Sai Baba's worship, one is based upon caste. Some objectors say that Baba is not a Brahmin but a Muslim, and so he should not be taken for a *Guru* nor worshipped by Brahmins and other Hindus. Such objections have generally been driven out by a personal approach to Sai Baba (even apart from Baba's Charters and Sayings 57, 505 and, 506). His very *darsan* has made sensitive or suitable people feel that they are in the presence of a grand Divine Personality. All doubts, fears, and troubles of the heart melt away by his *darsan*, and people at once felt that Sai Baba is a divine agent to show a way out of all temporal and spiritual difficulties. Feeling thus, those that visited Baba bowed, prostrated and surrendered their *Tan Man Dhan* to Baba. This was *prapatti*. To such a person a discussion about Baba's caste would be absurd, for he has already followed the direction in the Srimad Bhagavata, the Skanda Purana, the Brahma Vidyopanishad 334 and the Guru Gita that the *Guru* must be treated as all the gods put together *Sarvadeva mayo guruh* including *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Siva* and all the pantheon of Hindu gods. Even after His *Mahasamadhi* some have had such contact with Sai Baba. It is those who have not been fortunate enough to have such contact mental or

physical with Baba, that have to struggle with the question of caste, and for their benefit we mention the following :

Even supposing that they do not feel that Baba is God still there is no basis for the assumption that Baba is not a Brahmin, Baba himself said that he was a Brahmin, that his Masjid was a Brahmin's Masjid and he also said that his parents were Brahmins of Patri and that his *Guru* was also a Brahmin, Venkusa alias Gopal Rao Deshmukh of Selu. This is enough to prove Baba's Brahmin birth and initiation or Brahminism according to ordinary ideas. But, as a child, he was brought up by a *Fakir* for four or five years and lived all his adult life in a Mosque at Shirdi, and thus he passed for a Muslim. He was totally indifferent whether people called him a Hindu or a Muslim. But some would be *Bhaktas* are making enquiries, and therefore the question seems to be important.

The authorities are very clear that the question of origin of a *Parama Jnani* or a *Parama Bhagavata* or saint, with remarkable *siddhis*, psychic powers and who spends all his time and energy for the benefit of mankind, whether he is a Hindu or Muslim by caste, is not permissible. For instance, verse 14 of the *Guru Gita* says,

Sva asramam cha Sva jatim cha

Sva Kirtim pushti vardhanam

Etat sarvam parityajya

Gurum eva samascrayet

this means, Brush aside your *ashrama*, your caste, your reputation and all glory and take refuge with a *Guru*. There are many more authorities of the same sort. The feeling of this caste or *kulam* in a disciple is false *pascam* or bond, one of the eight which the *Guru* in his kindness cuts off. The enquiry into the origin is generally discouraged, for example, by the motto :

Rishimulam Nadimulam Na vicharyam

Kabir also gives the same direction. *Sant ka Jat mat pucho* that is, do not ask for the caste of a saint *Narada Bhakti Sutra:72* says, Among them prevails no distinction of caste, erudition, beauty, lineage, wealth or profession.

Anyhow, what is the definition of a Brahman? Is it a question of birth or parentage? The answer is No. Manu is a great authority, and Mahabharata is another great authority. Both say No, Manusmriti X 65 says,

*Sudra Brahmanatam eti
Brahmanas chaiva Sudratam
Kshatriyatjatam evantu
vidyat Vaiscyat tathaiva cha*

this means, The Sudra becomes a Brahmana and a Brahmana a Sudra by conduct. Know this same rule to apply to him who is or of a Kshatriya or of a Vaisya.

Manusmriti II 157 and 168 says,

*Yatha Kashtamayo hasti
Yatha Charma mayo mrigah
Yahcha vipro anadhiyanah
Trayaste Nama dharakah
Yo anadhitya dvijo vedam
anyatra kurute sramam
Sa jivan eva sudratvam
Ascu gachchati Sanvayah*

this means, As a wooden elephant, as a leather patched deer (of the taxidermist) such is an unlearned Brahmana; the three are but Nominal Brahmins. Only in name are they Brahmins.

The Brahmana who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere becomes a sudra in that very life together with his descendants.

In Mahabharata, Vana Parva Chapter 313 in verse 108 says:

It is not birth nor *samsaras*, nor Vedic studies, nor one's *kulam* or ancestry that form the cause or basis of one's being a *Brahmin* or *Dvija* or twice bom.

in Chapter 80, verses 21, 25 and 26 says:

That the cause or basis is mere *vrittam* that is, behaviour or conduct. A Brahmins conduct should be truth, a disposition to give that is *dana*, *kshama* or forgiveness, *seelam* or virtue, gentlemanliness, *tapas* and mercy. These make a

man a Brahmin. If these are seen in a man whatever his birth may be, he is a Brahmin, and if these are not seen in one, whatever his birth may be, he is not a Brahmin. Vishnu Bhagavata says that *Bhakti* makes a man a Brahmin and only *Bhakti*. Other authorities say *Brahma Jnana*, God-realization makes a man a Brahmin.

As to Truth, Chandogya Upanishad IV 4 says that the speaking of to one's own disadvantage indicates Brahmin-hood. Baba was the soul of Truth. The question is, Was Baba a *Jnani*? Baba, who said *Main Allah Hum 'I am god and I am all'* was undoubtedly a *Jnani* of the highest order and he had all *siddhis* resulting from concentration on God, and he always remembered God. So, undoubtedly Baba was Brahmin and necessarily a Brahmin.

Manu, Vishnu Bhagavata VII II 35, says

Yasya Yallakshanam Proktam

Pumso Varnabhivyanjakam

Yad Anyatrapi driscyeta Tat tenaiva vinirdiscet.

this means, Whatever qualities are said to be indicative of a caste will, if found in any person, entitle that person to be considered of that caste. Sridhara's comment on the above is, Brahmins and other *dvijas* are recognised by Sama-peace. chiefly - and not by birth.

Brahmavidyopanishad says in

Verse 2

Hamsa vidyam imam labdhva Guru susrushaya Narah.

By service to the *Guru Hamsa Vidya* is obtained

Verse 3

Atmanam Atmana Sakshat Brahma budhva Sunischalam

Dehajatyadi sambandhan varnasrama samanvitam,

Thereby one realises oneself as Brahman steadily. Let one ignore the body, its caste *varnas* and *asramams*,

Verse 4

Vedasastrani chanyani padapamsumiva tyajet.

Gurubhaktim sada kuryat sreyase bhuyase Narah.

Gurureva Harih Sakshat Na anya iti abravit srutih.

And the injunctions of *vedas* and *Sastras*, and treat them as the dust of his feet. Let him have devotion to the *Guru*. That will benefit him greatly. The *Guru* is no other than God, the Vedas declare.

LIFE OF SAI BABA

VOLUME II

BY PUJYASRI H.H.NARASIMHA SWAMIJI

PART II

I Mahlsapathy

II Narayan Govind Chandorkar

III Das Ganu Maharaj

IV H.S. Dixit

V Anna Saheb Dabolkar (Hemadpant)

VI Sri Upasani Baba

VII G.S. Khaparde

VIII Succession to Sai's Seat

Foreword to Part II

BY

Sri B.N. Dattar. Home Minister, Govt. of India

H.H.B.V. Narsimha Swamiji, the Founder-President of the All India Sai Samaj, Madras, has requested me to write a foreword to this very interesting publication on Shri Sai Baba's Apostles and Mission. I gladly do so in my personal capacity for a variety of reasons.

In the first place, I myself have been under the guidance of the Saint of Shirdi for the last 18 years. In a way, Swamiji has been responsible for rousing in me a desire to know Shri Sai Baba and to seek His Grace. It was in or about 1937 while both of us had been at the Ramanashrama at Tiruvannamalai that I came to know that Swamiji had visited Shirdi and had been trying hard to collect material for a detailed study of the mysteries of the manifold life of this great saint. It was my conversation with him that enkindled in me a great curiosity to visit Shirdi and to seek His Blessings. I did so early in 1938, and have since then been visiting it off and on.

I have read, amongst others, all the publications of Swamiji on Shri Sai Baba and the experiences of His direct disciples.

To my good fortune, we have ever been in touch with each other. I have learnt not merely to respect but to revere Swamiji for the selfless and enthusiastic manner in which he has been working day and night during the last 20 years over the spread of the Divine Message of Shri Sai Baba. His missionary zeal in this cause has been to me a matter of deep spiritual gratification.

Swamiji has been ever in communion with the Saint and Mystic that Shri Sai Baba was, and, if I were to say so, Swamiji has been growing young in his advancing years, because of his complete dedication to the cause of Shri Sai Baba.

His writings are marked by a great critical and rational spirit that goes to the core of things without disturbing one's faith in and reverence for the things of the spirit. In fact, these feelings are strengthened thereby. That has always to be so if one were to know correctly and adequately the purpose behind the lives and the mission of such Avatars.

In an earlier publication on the life of Shri Sai Baba, Swamiji has, in a very erudite but entertaining manner, placed before us the fundamentals of our faith and spiritual traditions. One knows by his writings not only the salient features of the lives of great saints like Shri Ramana Maharshi and Shri Sai Baba, but also realises, as if by a God-given glimpse, the great purpose or purposes for which these high Souls descended to the earth and fulfilled in their own ways the Divine promise of maintaining righteousness in and uprooting wickedness from society. During the last 20 years, thanks to Swamiji's energetic propaganda and publicity, Shri Sai Baba has attracted devotees from far and near, as also from all sects, communities and religions. They come from all sections of the society and, in particular, from its intelligentsia. In the case of the latter, one has to carry them across the fields of doubt and scepticism before they reach the other shore of spiritual enlightenment, and are safely and for ever established on the bedrock of faith in and devotion to the Divinity that Shri Sai Baba was and is.

The present volume gives us a glimpse into the lives of the immediate and illustrious devotees and followers of Shri Sai Baba. They came from all faiths and while achieving blessedness and maintaining complete devotion to the Saint, ever remained enlightened members of their religions. Almost all of them had the good fortune of having known the Saint, at close quarters while He was living on this earth in flesh and blood.

It is to me, as it will be to other readers, a matter of great spiritual satisfaction to know how these direct disciples of the Saint came under His influence and protection and achieved blessedness.

Shri Sai Baba never believed in what can be called a formal initiation, I know, however, from the experiences of many including that of my humble self, that, in fact, there is such an initiation, though of an imperceptible but highly effective type. The moment you go under His influence you become a changed man and are ever convinced that all your burdens are borne by him, that you feel so light on account of His guidance, and that, at the same time, so purposefully united with Him, and through Him, with the Higher Forces that are working in the universe for the uplift of mankind.

I deem it a privilege to confess that I have learnt many new and stimulating things from a perusal of this great publication. It has in a way strengthened the impressions that I have formed from Gandhiji's writings on spiritual matters.

I, therefore, very gladly recommend this book to all those that seek Divine Light and guidance.

Om Tat Sat.

B.N. Datar.

Bihar Governor's Camp

To

B.V.N. Swami

Dear Friend,

I have your two letters from Madras and also the second volume of the Life of Sai Baba.

It is only recently that hagiology is being studied rationally and scientifically. Otherwise it was a matter of 'take it or leave it'. Those who had faith believed everything blindly. Those who were sceptic scoffed both at the faith and the object of faith.

Today, I think it would be unscientific to reject anything simply because it has not yet been explained or it is not obvious. Books such as 'Man the Unknown' by Dr. Alexis Carrel have opened the eyes even of the most critical people to the unknown powers that lie behind man's apparent consciousness.

From that point of view the publication of authentic lives and incidents that have taken place in connection with saints is a first step towards trying to understand the sources of saintly power and saintly achievement. The two volumes, therefore, on Shri Sai Baba should be welcomed by all those who are interested in "man the unknown".

Yours sincerely R.R. Diwakar

Preface to Part II

Sai Baba is indeed an ocean unfathomable and illimitable. One can pick up any direction and go as far as one likes and yet not exhaust Sai. As for the depth, human beings cannot get to the bottom of Sai either as to the number of his acts or to the extent to which they can be interpreted as benefiting humanity. Even the surface of the field or sea of Baba is absolutely uncharted. The human combination with the divine is unlimited and defies definition and description. No one is yet able to say what exactly are the origins of Baba, the early environment, and the early and later forces moulding the entity called Baba and resulting in the ultimate product now known to us as Sai Baba. An attempt has been made previously to describe his earlier origins and early influences, but such attempts must always remain very imperfect and superficial. Something has been said or written but when one goes through all the matter till now written, one still feels dissatisfaction because from any point of view, the matter given is certainly not sufficient and certainly not satisfactory. An attempt has however to be made to understand what we can pick out from what is available.

Baba's entire life, to say nothing of the beginnings, is shrouded in mystery. Nobody knew his father or grandfather or family or even to what community by birth he belonged. Some were so much staggered at this difficulty that they propounded a theory that Baba was "Ayonija" (not born of woman), that is as much as to say he was produced like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. But in modern days, people are not always prepared to accept "*Ayonijatva*" for any person they have seen. Baba himself has furnished particulars enough to explode the *Ayonija* theory, and hence an actual attempt has been made to explain what the heredity of Baba was and what the earliest environment and forces acting upon him were. In spite of the scarcity of material, an explanation has been given of how Baba grew up to be what he became in the strangest possible manner. Born of Brahmin parents of a very poor and pious sort, and having been handed over to a fakir for his sustenance and care at the very early age of one year or so, Baba seems to have been fitted by Providence to overcome all differences, especially differences of race, religion, creed, etc. The

fakir who took charge of him and kept him for five years seems to have been a very pious, real and loving fakir, and the impress of that fakir left on Baba is to further purify, and deify the pre-existing elements which may be supposed to be inherent in him, as a result of age-long growth (*Bahunam Janmanaam ante, Jnaanavan maam Prapadyate*). Differences between God and God, caste and caste, race and race could not possibly exist in that fakir's ideas and upbringing. But the essence of the fakir's training seems to have been the immersing entirely of the little Baba into the loving care of the fakir. To Baba, "that fakir" meant always the living God that looks after every one of us with equal mercy. That evidently represents or sums up the earliest span of life that Baba had. Providential arrangement for Baba has always been to promote the divine aim of his life, namely, the realisation that God is Love and Love is God, the unification of the different trends of Indian thought and life in matters of religion, etc. The fakir, who died when Baba was aged about five, directed his wife to take Baba to a great and pious Brahmin saint who was also a Prince, namely, Gopal Rao Deshmukh, Prince of Selu, who was at the same time a Prince of piety, a master of devotion, and "infused contemplation", one who had thoroughly identified himself with God in the form of Tirupati Venkatesa. This Gopal Rao, known as "Venkusa", because he was identified with Tirupati Venkatesa whom he worshipped, became the all-in-all of Sai Baba, the food giver, the soul giver, the Guru, the protector, the friend, and everything to Baba. Baba loved him with *ananya prema*, as the only thing he cared for and that love was fully responded to. '*Tvameva Sarvam Mamadeva deva*'. Such a person who was very broad and universal in his views, while deeply feeling the essence of God or religion within himself, naturally promoted Baba's peculiar way of looking at God as the one great beneficial, powerful loving father supporting all people equally with equal kindness. This was his Guru.

Providence again directing Baba's life cut short his novitiate under this princely Guru when he was just getting to be a man or major according to Indian ideas, that is, arriving at the age of 16. Baba had to part with him under peculiar circumstances. The parting was indeed painful, but it was a necessary part of

divine ordinance for Baba and for the country. Before parting, Baba was vested with all the powers as well as the piety of the Guru, and Baba thereafter passed into obscurity, became a fakir among fakirs, and had the apparently severe trial of having nothing to feed upon with no one to care for him. But really that was never the case. There was always God to look after him, and God always provided for all his needs, temporal and spiritual, both for body and soul. Vairagya and contentment, trust and calm, were the food for the soul; Baba got on and felt nothing was wanting. This training was a continuation of the two previous novitiates in order to ripen Baba for the great and grand work he had. We have faintly described this in previous publications. What now required to be done further about Baba to enable persons to understand Baba more fully is to set out his task of dealing with the world. For a fakir who was resting on God's care and getting on whether he got or did not get food or places for rest, no work or duty, according to ordinary spectators, existed or belonged to him. Yet the ways of providence are strange. It is this unconcerned fakir that must become the all-in-all of the entire world, certainly of the entire millions that came into contact and are coming into contact with him. How that happened or could happen is itself a very interesting chapter of Baba's biography.

Baba who did not care for anything had to be brought into contact with the devout and religious. There must be some devout and religious person first to pick him out, discover his inner worth and start his worship. Hence the development of Baba's work must start of with an account of how his worship started and later on how it spread, and still later what the mysterious ramifications and implications of this worship were. The person worshipped must be really God-like. Many a person is worshipped on account of certain social or other position or level but is unable to exert any divine influence upon the worshipper. In Baba's case, Providence ordained that the worship should be real and effective. The worshipper, if he intends to attract to himself the entire force and personality of the object worshipped, must be pure, sincere and earnest, must reach great heights of faith and surrender, and must lose himself, his individuality in the object of worship, till ultimately he becomes that. *Brahmavit*

Brahmaiva Bhavati (that is, the worshipper becomes the object of worship) is the aphorism that applies to the case. Such a worshipper was needed to draw Baba out of his cocoon.

Baba had by his previous training fully developed himself in self-realisation and God-realisation. His Guru had blotted out (see BCS 72A) his ideas that he was the body and made him realise that he was nothing but the soul, Paramatma or Parameswar. In Baba, this Parameswar essence of his began to beam out with increasing effulgence. The more he was worshipped, the more the divine in him beamed out, asserted itself and proved itself to be really divine. And the proof is still going on. So the next process or stage of Baba's biography must be the sketching of how the poor beginnings of worship by some one's lucky discovery of his merit let others to copy that example, and how, by observing the increased benefits flowing from such worship millions adopted that worship and began to yield themselves completely to the divine influence of the object worshipped so as to become not merely successful and happy in the world but also to become themselves expressions of love, the power of the inner Being of the entire Universe. Baba's nature or influence is simply indescribable, its extent and nature cannot easily be sketched out and the number of persons carrying on his worship now is beyond calculation. But in the beginning they were few and some of them could be called apostles. Therefore the stage has now been reached in Baba's biography for piecing out a few and terming them apostles of Baba and describing their work and also for describing the mission which Baba has and which Baba is increasingly manifesting. It is difficult to stop the sketching out of lives at any particular set of facts. But that difficulty has to be faced. So only just enough of the innumerable facets of Baba's life are pieced out here to present a rough outline or broad idea of Baba's apostles carrying out his mission, carrying on the work that Baba was intent upon. That being the object of this present volume, readers are requested to overlook the numerous defects in the presentation or other defects and to make the best of what is presented and putting their hearts into it, derive as much benefit as they can or as they care to.

A word or two will not be amiss here about the object of this work and the manner of approach. Previous works on Sai Baba have sometimes been taken up by readers or reviewers and approached in a spirit that might be considered natural but cannot be considered by the author as being the most proper or appropriate approach. A book on Sai Baba written by one who has drunk deep from the fountain of Sai's grace, wisdom and life must naturally have an abundant recognition of the place Sai fills up in one's life. Sai completely envelops the devoted sadhaka and leaves no part of him unaffected or uncovered. Therefore one might be under the impression that the life of Sai should deal with every possible point of view for a serious minded sadhaka. The fact however remains that many of our readers are not sadhakas at all nor sadhakas of the most earnest type. Some wish to get a cursory knowledge of a great saint whose name is heard here, there, and everywhere in this country especially. A sort of genteel curiosity, a desire to be acquainted with grand things, just to be acquainted, without any particular idea of being influenced thereby, is the outlook of many a reader. There is nothing to be said against that sort of approach, but a person who is in dead earnest about life, who has tasted the power of Sai to deal with the profoundest and deepest of life's problems cannot rest satisfied with that approach. A serious reader treats Sai as the Guru primarily and next as the all-in-all of himself and of every one who is prepared to surrender to him. Dealing with a Guru naturally necessitates the examination of the general principles governing gurus and Sai Baba, and the attempt at defining what the gurus and sishyas are and what their mutual relations should be. This naturally entails an examination of accepted authorities on this subject and free quotation from their dicta. Such quotations have not been particularly pleasing to certain readers, and one review pointed out that the interest in the book (meaning the story interest) was lost by what was considered to be an unnecessary intrusion of extraneous or foreign matter. But one, who resorts to a thorough study of a saint for the most complete assimilation of his (saint's) influence for the best effects in one's own life, would welcome such so-called digressions and episodes. A serious minded author has to keep in view all sets of

readers, especially the more serious readers who wish to get the greatest benefit out of the book.

A saint's life is the milk of ocean from which a few interesting bits of saintly biography, a collection of apothegms, counsels, reflections and other miscellaneous items might be extracted. But the main interest is still the milk of ocean which will yield an infinite and inexhaustible supply of divine nectar. One important truth that has been gaining strength in the author's mind, as he studied more and more of Baba and came more and more fully into contact with him, is the fact that entire portions of serious scriptures already studied by him or are still being studied by him are covered up by the saint's life, his leelas, his sayings, etc. The essentials of the Bhagavad Gita for instance, which has always been regarded as a valuable religious mine, were and are found to be nothing but the embodiment of what is contained in Sri Sai's life. Sri Krishna and Jesus Christ are better understood after studying Sai Baba's life than without such study. Interpretations of what is found in the Bible and in the Gita occur to one as one deals with Sai Baba and as one goes on surrendering to Sai Baba's influence and seeing what happens. It is no exaggeration to say that without the fleshy embodiment of religion in the life and activities of Sai and kindred saints, religion would be a dead mass of writings or thoughts and would leave humanity cold and helplessly struggling in the mire of darkness and ignorance. Sri Krishna is not usually understood by a person who merely reads the Gita, Mahabharata, or the Bhagavata. What Sri Krishna was and what he said puzzled this author and puzzled so many other persons, and, after seeing what Sai Baba said and did, all these puzzles disappeared, and clear light dawned upon everyone. When Sai said, 'I am Sri Krishna, I am Lakshminarayan, I am Vittal, I am Allah, I am God', etc., a moslem reader of Sai Baba's Gospel declared Baba a madman, but to the author and kindred spirits, dicta like these found in our ancient scriptures began to produce a clearer impression on the hearts. '*Aham Brahmasmi*' sounds most queer at first. But Sai's life shows what '*Aham Brahmasmi*' or '*Maim Allah hum*' means and how one can have that feeling and yet live amongst fellow creatures. The description given of a perfectly realised Brahma Jnani or Iswara Bhakta

found in the Bhagavad Gita and other sources is found to apply word for word, letter for letter, to the case of Sri Sai and get a meaning only when we see how Sai Baba (or for that matter any other great soul like Him) acted. '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' (interested in the welfare of every creature) is given as the description of a perfect realiser or perfect devotee. One must actually see or feel what Sai did and said to get an idea of '*Sarva bhuta Hite ratah*' or *Sarvabhutatma bhutatma*. God's omnipotence and omniscience and equal mercy towards all and immanence in all creatures (*Aham Atma*) are well known to the intellect of religious students, but for realising them at heart, one must devote one's deepest attention to what Sai said and did. A person like Sri H. S. Dixit, who noted almost every minute of his life after he approached Sai Baba, that Sai knew everything and looked after everything connected with himself, whether he was at Bombay or Shirdi or elsewhere, and controlled events for securing the greatest happiness of himself or other devotees and their families, would at once form the conclusion that Sai was divine, and could say with perfect sincerity as H. S. Dixit did when Sai Baba asked a question as to what took place in the wada, 'Baba, you knew it all.' There was nothing unknown to Baba whether as to the contents of any book or as to the contents of the minds of persons near or remote or as to the events that happened in any place at any time. The distant past, the present, and the remote future or the near place and the remote were all one. This we find is the description given of a divine personality in the Gita—(7) 26.

Vedham samatitani vartamanani cha arjuna,

Bhavishyaani cha bhutani maam tu veda nakaschana.

This means, (Krishna said) 'I know the past, the present, and the future. But no one knows Me'. The same has been said by Sai and the same has been proved by him in innumerable instances. This is as to knowledge. Similarly as to power, equality of vision, kindness, etc., Sri Upasani Maharaj correctly summed up the way in which people derived the notion that Baba was God in these words of 'Sai Mahimna Stotra' composed by him in 1912—

Aneka aascruta aatarkya leela vilaasaih Samaavishkrita iscana bhaasvatprabhaavam Ahambhaavaheenam prasanna aatmabhaavam Namaami iswaram sadgurum sainatham.

This means, 'I bow to Sadguru Sainath who is God, who manifested or betrayed his divinity by many inscrutable, unheard of, miraculous leelas, who yet has no egotism (ahambhava) and who is benignly gracious'. This Upasani's process of arriving at and appreciating Sai's divinity is adopted almost unconsciously by hundreds of persons in their every day life, after Baba left the flesh. All of them with one voice acclaim Sai as Divine, and that is the same as saying that He is Sri Krishna or Sri Rama or any other name or form that one has been applying or adopting to denote divinity, *c.f. Sairupadhara Raaghavotamam Bhakta kama kalpatamtn*. There are numerous, or one might say innumerable, instances of Baba's conduct and mode of life running on exactly similar lines to those of Sri Krishna or Sri Rama in respect of their divinity. It is thus that the conviction gained greater strength and depth in the mind of this author that, apart from name and form, Divinity is the same, whether manifested in Sai Baba or in Sri Krishna or for that matter in Jesus Christ etc. 'Thou art human and divine' is a statement that can be applied to all these. The divine portion within the human frame has so powerfully radiated its light as to throw out or drown out the human side and impress on us that we are dealing with the divine when dealing with Sai Baba as with the other great names mentioned above. The divine and the human blend together and are both necessary to make up the entity that gives human beings their impression of God. Without the human element, no approach is possible, and without the divine element, the approach is worthless, for we do not wish to approach mere finite entities like human beings but rather wish to approach the divine, though the divine may be enshrouded for the time being in a human casing.

Therefore, the author has felt that if any work is written about such a divine person and if the author is able to express or shadow forth what is really divine in him, then the work should be considered to be highly imperfect or useless if the reader is not impressed in the same way as the author has been

with the divinity of the subject and the reader is not enabled to derive at least as much benefit from a study of Baba and contact with him as the author has had. A properly written life of Sai (like all saintly biography c.f. *Sant toch Dev*, i.e. Saint is himself God) would therefore be a scripture in itself. One should rise from that study with the feeling that he has been through scripture and mentally keep in touch with God and derive all benefit necessarily flowing from such contact. The benefits are temporal, intellectual, moral, spiritual, etc. There is no limit to the benefit one can derive from such contact. Therefore one would expect that a proper book on such a subject as Sai should attract the earnest soul to read it over and over again, may be scores of times, without exciting any feeling of tiredness or disgust. One ought, on the other hand, to experience increasing delight and increasing joy at noting that new readings open up new lights and vistas before the mind's eye and that benefits are derived over and over again. Even in respect of poetic classics, e.g. Hamlet or Sakuntala, such experiences are derived by enthusiastic souls. A study of holy lives properly written must have at least a similar effect. It is the ambitious aim of this writer to put forward as perfect a study as is possible of this great and wonderful Being that is the subject of this volume.

CHAPTER I

MAHLSAPATHY

To some it may be surprising that an account of the universalistic Sai movement and its leaders should begin with Mahlsapathy, an uncultured poor village goldsmith. But that fits in with the movement starting from the obscure wretchedly poor hamlet of Shirdi in a nook of a nookshotten Kopergaon taluk (Kopergaon means corner village) and also with the lodestar or dynamo of the movement being Sri Sai, an unknown and supposedly crazy fakir as he was taken to be at first. If absence of literary culture were an objection to Mahlsapathy being the leader of the army of Sai bhaktas, it must be applicable equally to Sai himself, the centre or pole star of the Sai movement. Sai who knew everything had no school or book education; no University conferred its diplomas on him. The man who began his worship (M) had only the elementary education which the village veranda schools impart. He would however read his castemen's Bible, namely, Mahlsapathy Purana, and would carry on the traditional worship of Mahlsapathy at home and abroad. In one respect, it is a fact of happy augury that the person who started Sai worship was a pious and orthodox Hindu, who first raised the orthodox objection to Baba's stepping into and residing at the Khandoba temple in his charge, but soon developed into the most zealous admirer and ardent worshipper of Baba. It is this zealous admiration and ardour of the highly virtuous goldsmith that forced Baba to reverence him in turn and to accept the flowers, sandal, and other things placed on his feet by way of homage. His self dedication and great attachment to Sai Baba were irresistible for a large-hearted soul like Sai, and so he (Mahlsapathy) was the first and only person allowed for a long time to worship Sai. The worship no doubt was hardly worship at the beginning. It is difficult to distinguish worship from regard, reverence, and honour evidenced by offer of flowers, sandal, and eatables. Worship has grown throughout the world out of regard, reverence, and a desire to placate. All these were in Mahlsapathy, and his placing flowers and sandal at the feet of Baba and offering him milk were obviously marks of respect. Sai Baba the fakir could not object to them even though these were offered in the Mosque.

When these grew definitely more and more like worship, then Baba himself felt how incongruous Hindu worship of himself was in the Mosque, though it had to grow and develop from there. Its growth in the Mosque turning it finally into a "*Dwarka-mayee*" controlled entirely by a Hindu Board reminds us of a small shoot of a banyan creeping through the cleft of a rock, which a plant cannot easily go through; but yet the banyan grows through it and pushes the pieces of rock aside and grows into huge dimensions. Such was the growth and development of the Hindu puja of Baba. Mahlsapathy the weak Bhikshuk was pre-eminently fitted to be the person who should play the part of the banyan seed. Hence it is not inappropriate to begin the account of Sai history and Sai movement and its leaders with an account of Mahlsapathy.

Mahlsapathy was, as already stated, a hereditary goldsmith (sonar) of the village of Shirdi- The sonars vie with Brahmins and others in their social and religious observances and sometimes style themselves Brahmins and wear the sacred thread. Even in that community, he was noted for his fervent devotion to his tutelary deity Khandoba (known also as Mahlsapathy). Mahlsapathy Purana was his Bible or Ramayana for daily study and for sacred reading at the periodical gatherings of sonars and at the temple (family temple). Every year he went on a pilgrimage of 150 miles to distant Jejoori carrying a Kavadi or palki along with a band to worship at the great temple of that deity. Full fruition of Mahlsa bhakti resulted in his getting that god's obsession in trance (Avesa); and oracular utterances came from that god through his lips. He was Khandoba. He was perfectly pure, straightforward, righteous, and truthful, for only such a guileless person can be favoured by the god coming on his body (Avesa). He was fairly free from worldly desires. The family had a scanty income from the voluntary offerings at their temple which went to the temple maintenance; and all that he owned was a mud house in the village for residence, yielding no income, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land evidently barren land without water supply, which also yielded practically nothing. The very old building outside the village, the Mahlsapathy temple, a poor mud structure, was dedicated to the public or to God. To eke out his living therefore he had the hereditary profession of a

goldsmith. But in a poor village with very few houses and very few visitors, even this brought very little income. Mahlsapathy was not much perturbed about it, being absorbed in his religious ideas and practices. He had frequent Avesa, i. e., visions and trances with obsession; and his goal in life like that of most pious Hindus, was to get free from the cycle of rebirths (Samsara) and attain Liberation (Moksha) through the grace of Khandoba. Khandoba is an Avatar of Siva and thus the Grantor of liberation. 'Moksham Ichchet Maheswarat' (which means, 'If you want liberation, go to Maheswara—Rudra or Siva), is the popular Neeti sloka. To achieve this goal, Mahlsapathy, besides having a satvic temperament, had the great help of Sat Sangha, i.e., contact with holy men (Sadhus, Saints, etc.) (Cf.B.S-XI (II) 25). Though conservative he was not fanatical; he had no hatred of Moslems or men of other faiths. On the other hand, he and other friends of his own temperament, viz., Kasiram Simpi and Appa Bhil, used to receive and help not only Hindu saints such as Devidas, Janakidas, etc., but also fakirs when these visited the village or stayed there. Kasiram and Appa had some means, but poor Mahlsapathy offered his services and zeal, and these three worked together. It was Mahlsapathy's good fortune, due perhaps to Rinanubandha, that he had very close contact with Sri Sai Baba for a very long period—over 40 (nearly 50) years. It was about 1872 perhaps that Sai Baba entered the village along with a "Barat", i.e. a bridegroom's party of Moslems headed by Chand Bhai, Patel of Dhupkeda (in the "Nizam's State"). Then Sai Baba separated from the marriage group very near Khandoba temple at the outskirts of Shirdi and sauntered along almost till the threshold of Khandoba temple. Mahlsapathy, who was inside worshipping Khandoba, noticed Baba's presence and, with usual civility and regard, invited him to sit. After a few minutes, the fakir Baba remarked- "How secluded and quiet a place is the Khandoba temple, best fitted for a Fakir to be in". Then it was that Mahlsapathy put his conservative back up and protested against the proposal that a Moslem should reside in Khandoba temple which in his opinion was unthinkable. Most Moslems are iconoclasts, (i.e. breakers of images) and,

therefore, Mahlsapathy prevented Baba from entering the temple which contained the images of Khandoba etc. Finding Mahlsapathy's objection to be natural, Baba said, 'God is one for Hindus, Moslems, and all, but, as you object to my entry, I shall go'. So saying Baba went away.

Baba in his earliest days was acting in ways wholly unintelligible to the villagers, and even Mahlsapathy considered that he behaved at times like a mad man (See M's reminiscences). But while others lost their respect for Baba on that account, Mahlsapathy always had great regard for Baba, perhaps remembering, as many Hindus do, that there is always a class of saints known as the Unmattha siddhas, crazy saints. Anyhow, the occasional crazy conduct of Baba at least in the view of Mahlsapathy and some others did not bulk large enough to prevent the great esteem which the general conduct of Baba evoked in serious and thoughtful minds, Baba was an absolute "Vairagya Purusha" and never cared for wealth or women. Mahlsapathy, being himself highly detached i.e. of a vairagya temperament and not being overruled by lust or other low urges, could easily appreciate Baba who had the same virtues of purity and non-attachment in a higher degree and therefore, from the very beginning was drawn to Baba. Other people began to worship Baba only when they saw Baba's psychic powers e. g. when he turned water into oil to feed his lamps, and then they regarded him as God. But Mahlsapathy esteemed Baba for his good qualities of purna satva and vairagya, that is, purity and non-attachment; and he found that compared even with Devidas, Janakidas, and other saints with whom Baba was often keeping company; Baba shone brilliantly, and that even those saints, highly regarded Baba. So, Mahlsapathy and his friends considered Baba as well fitted to be a Guru for themselves. Mahlsapathy in that group was the first to honour and then to worship Baba. He went to Baba's Mosque and placed flowers and sandal on Baba's feet or neck and offered him milk. Baba would not allow others to do even this; only Mahlsapathy was allowed to do it. This developed later into regular puja by the use of sandal paste and flowers on Baba's feet, neck, and finally on his forehead also. Even after that, local magnates like Nana Saheb

Dengle, who wanted to do Baba's puja, were not allowed to do it. Baba would tell them: 'There is the pillar in this Dwarakamayi (Mosque). Do puja to the pillar'. That of course, they did not care to do. Nana Saheb Dengle later requested the intercession of Dagdubhai, a constant companion of Baba and, encouraged by his words, did puja and became Baba's second worshipper, Baba gradually allowed others to do his puja, and then Baba's puja became general. Few realised the part played by Mahlsapathy as the pioneer of Sai puja and the Sai movement.

Mahlsapathy's contact with Baba was on very close terms. By reason of the death of his only son (in the eighties of the last century perhaps) and his having only three daughters, he was disgusted with life. His land yielded nothing, and the goldsmith's profession yielded also practically nothing. So, he was ready for the orders of his own Ishta Devata, Khandoba. Khandoba came upon him, that is, possessed his body, and gave him Drishtanta, that is, visions. In the first vision, he was told that he was to take Khandoba (i.e. movable images) from the Khandoba temple to his own house, and worship him there with concentration. In another vision, Khandoba appeared as an old Brahmin and said to him, "What? Can you not get your bread without your profession of goldsmith?"¹ Then Mahlsa-

¹ *Though sonars follow Brahminical rules or Achara-yet a goldsmith's work is worldly. Further, as a rule, goldsmiths filch part of the gold or silver given to them for making ornaments. This filching is done very cleverly with a sense of duty i.e. the feeling that filshing is the goldsmith's duty or dharma, the violation of which entails punishment. Here is an of quoted instance. A young goldsmith suffered from intense stomach trouble and informed his mother that it was due to his failure to filch part of the gold when she had given him her gold "Tali" or mai.galya bhushana to melt and remake. A story illustrative of the great cunning with which the gold (or silver) is filched is as follows. ^uuuuir
^liirttir/r.

pathy answered the vision. 'Yes. I shall give up'. Then the vision said, 'Touch my feet, and hold to my feet This meant evidently, 'Hereafter, regard your subsistence as being dependent purely upon your holding to my feet and not upon your doing goldsmith's work*. From that time forwards, he gave up goldsmith's work in perfect trust (NISHTA AND SRADDHA) and lived by begging, that is, he became really a Sanyasi "Monk" or Bhikshaikari, though living with a family of a wife and three daughters. Being disgusted with life, he did not care to sleep at home for that would develop his family cares and burdens, i.e. Samsara, still further. He enjoyed Baba's Company day and night and was

A military officer wanted to have a gold plate or strip put on his cane. He came to a goldsmith, gave him a sovereign and sat in front of his anvil with a bare sword. He said that if the goldsmith filched any of the gold, he would be stabbed with that sword immediately. The goldsmith had his fire ready and made the sovereign into three plates and began applying one strip of gold to the cane. Meanwhile some boys were playing marbles in front of the smithy. To divert the officer's attention, the goldsmith pointed to the boys and told the officer "See, Sir, these boys are ruined by their marble play". The officer diverted his gaze to the boys just for a few seconds and within that time, the goldsmith picked up one of the gold strips from the ground and hid it in his palm in which he was holding his pincers. But as he would have to stretch his palm, holding it up to receive his wages, he hit on another device. He asked the officer what for he held his bare sword in his hand. The reply was "To stab you if you steal any of the gold". At once the goldsmith, as though horrified, put his hand to his mouth saying "Appa Appa Amma Amma". It is usual for horrified persons to beat their mouth with their palm. While doing so, his palm slipped the gold strip into his mouth where it was safe from discovery. The work was then completed and the poor officer paid the wages into his palm, fancying that nothing had been stolen. Such is the proverbial cleverness and pertiracy of goldsmiths in 'stealing precious metals, etc.

greatly benefitted thereby. At the Mosque and at the chavadi, Baba slept on alternate nights and to both places Mahlsapathy went and had his bed along with Baba.² Mahlsapathy's main work was to be with Baba, and he never failed to be with and sleep with Baba. But on one occasion, early in life, about 1896, Baba himself said, "Arre Baagat, listen to my fakiri words, which are always true. You are coming and sleeping here and not with your wife. But you have got only daughter (the only son *he* had must have died before 1896.) Daughters are like tamarind fruit but a son is like a mango fruit. You go and take bed in your house, and you will then get a son," In spite of Baba's pressure, he declined to go home as he did not want his family (samsara) to increase. But his friend Kasiram Simpi compelled him and took him home and left him there. Thereafter he took his bed in his house. He started it on the Janmashtami of 1896, and on the next Janmash-tami (1897) a son was born to him. Baba's words are ever true and never false. But, having got a son, he resumed his old vow of not developing Samsara and ever afterwards slept only with Baba, in the Mosque, and at the chavadi. Mahlsapathy would spread his own cloth and on that Baba (when not lying on the plank) would lie on one half, and he would lie on the other. Baba also gave him very hard duties which others could not possibly undertake. Baba would tell Mahlsapathy, "You had better sit up. Do not go to sleep. Place your hand on my heart. I will be going on with remembrance of Allah, Nama Smaran, that is, a half conscious trance, and during that Nama Smaran, the heart beat would clearly show you that I am still having Nama Smaran. If that suddenly goes away and natural sleep supervenes, wake me up." The heart beat during natural sleep would be evidently different from the heart beat of the contemplative trance. Thus neither Baba nor Mahlsapathy would sleep at night. Both would keep awake, Baba for

² *To both places, only after Baba broke the small plank on which he kept lying wide awake at the Mosque. Before that, evidently, it was only at the chavadi that Mahlsapathy slept with Baba. Baba's breaking the plank may have been about 1898.

directly communing with God, and by that means doing service to numerous devotees in various places, and Mahlsapathy for sharing the merit (*punya*) by keeping the vigil with Baba and benefiting himself morally and spiritually by his pious service. His *tapas* was the same practically as the tapas of Baba, that is, vigil for holy purposes. He also had great control over all his senses (Indriyas), not merely over the sex urge but also over hunger and other urges and cravings, though he was not able to overcome sleep always. At times for a fortnight he would go without food, purely by the power of his will, and sometimes his family also would suffer as shortage of food was the consequent of Mahlsapathy's having no profession and no earning and his rejection of offers of money and goods. This is a very important point to note about Mahlsapathy. His attitude towards acceptance of alms is one which very orthodox Hindus would understand. He regarded all acceptance of alms from others as a direct interference with his own perfection of power. (See SB XI (17) 41). Pratigraham manyamanah Tapas tejo Yesconudam i. e. "accepting gifts as destructive of austerities, power, and fame". His "*Apoorva*" i. e. stored up merit was heightened by lasting, vigils, and other "punya karma," such as reading of sacred literature, etc., and if he accepted gifts (dana) from others, he believed (as many other orthodox Hindus believe) that his merit or *Apoorva* would be lost, "diminished, or transferred at least to some extent to the donor whose gift he accepted. Therefore he was strongly opposed to accepting any gifts (except Biksha food) even though he and his family might be starving. His family also completely accepted that axiom and they also would generally reject offers of help in money, materials, etc.³ Baba himself several times tried to press him to accept money.

³ *Chintaraan Rao's offer of Rs. 1000. M. A. Sait's offer of Rs. 100. Some one's offer of Rs. 10 was rejected. Baba asked what it was M- refused. 'Rs. 10,' he was told. Then Baba himself received the Rs. 10 and immediately gave it away to some one present. M was a sadhaka still and feared contact of wealth. But Baba, realising himself as the Atman had no fear of being tainted or tempted by touching money, etc. See S. B. (Bhikshu Gita) Ch XXIII 57, Ch. IV (17) which

When Baba was getting large incomes, (1880-1918) he was daily showering Rs. 30 on one, Rs. 15 on another, Rs. 10 on a third, and so on. Baba told Mahlsapathy several times;-'Take this Rs. 3. Go on taking it'. Mahlsapathy invariably refused. Baba even added. 'Go on receiving Rs. 3. I will make you well-to-do, and other people will come to you and depend on you and look to your favour; make your life comfortable." Mahlsapathy invariably replied: 'I do not want all that. I want only to worship your feet.' He counted his avoidance of gifts and contentment with his lot as far above his attaining or retaining material wealth. He (M) would not sleep on cots. He would not care to have comforts of any other sort, even though these were available or offered to him. He strongly reminds us of the holy poverty of St. Francis of Assisi, the Akinchanya, which is so highly praised in scripture (see especially M. B. Moksha Dharma Scanti P. ch. 165 Samyaka upadesa. 5-11, 16 & 22). Baba had to offer inducements of "Abhaya" and support, etc. to various people to raise them to high spiritual effort. But in the case of Mahlsapathy, no inducements and assurances were required, as Mahlsapathy had already achieved the high, water mark of purity, virtue, austerity (tapas), and wisdom (Jnana), so far as that was possible in his circumstances.

An important event in Mahlsapathy's life that he was connected with was Baba's trying to leave his body about 1886 and returning to it three days later. Baba had made him the guardian of his body and told him, *Arre Bhagat, look after this body for three days. I am going to Allah. If I do not return, then get it buried in due course at that place, (that is, near the sacred gode neem tree).'

Mahlsapathy supported Baba's body on his own knee, and when officers, including the village headman karnam, etc., held an inquest over the body, declared it dead, and wanted it to be buried he with the help of others stoutly opposed their proposal and saved Baba from losing his body, as

runs thus " Arthanjnshan api hrishikapate na liptah, ye anye svatah parihritadapi bibhyati sma" (i e. O! Lord of your senses, you are unaffected by objects you enjoy, while others are afraid of them even in the absence of those objects.)

Sankaracharya's is said to have been lost (See Sankara Vjaya) when he tried a similar attempt to leave and re-enter his body in order to enter a grihasta royal body by *parakaya pravesa*. Thus, he rendered a valuable service in 1886, after which Baba lived for 32 years to create this huge Sai movement that has covered this land. If Mahlsapathy had failed in his duty, and Baba had been buried perhaps the course of history might have been different.

One incident we may mention as to how he (M) served Baba and carried out his pious efforts. As usual, he had spread his cloth and Baba was lying on one half of that cloth, and he was lying on the other. Then Baba told him. 'I say, come on. To-day we shall be on the watch. The rude Rohilla (death from plague) is wanting to take away the wife of the Nigoj Patil. I am praying to Allah to prevent that by Nama Smaran. You had better see that no one comes and disturbs me in my Nama Smaran.'

Accordingly Mahlsapathy kept awake to try and see that no disturbance took place. But, unfortunately, in the middle of the night the Nivas Mamlatdar had come. He and his peons took a fancy to take Baba's darsan, which could be had for nothing, so, at midnight, the peon of the Mamlatdar came and stating that Darsan was wanted and udhi was wanted, made a noise. Mahlsapathy tried to prevent it but who could prevent official *hauteur* or *jabardas* ? Mahlsapathy was trying to oblige the peon by getting down the steps to give him some udhi, but the noise made disturbed Baba's trance (contemplation), and Baba sat up, and hurled foul curses and told Mahlsapathy. 'Arre Bhagat, you are a man with family! And don't you know what is taking place at Nigoj? This disturbance has caused a failure in my efforts. *That Patil's wife is dead*. Let that go. What has happened is for the best'. In his anger, Baba threw away Mahlsa-pathy's cloth on him, telling him that he should not allow disturbance like that to Baba's holy work of contemplation and prayer.

Baba, for about 40 years must have benefited Mahlsapathy in innumerable ways the details of which are not available, and above all kept him to the high water mark of devotion, surrender and self abnegation. As usual, Baba used his wonderful Supranormal powers and knowledge e.g. His

knowledge of the present in all distant places, which is called "clairvoyance" and knowledge of the future, immediate or remote, to benefit Mahlsapathy. He used also his control over minds and matter (including human bodies) for his devotee's benefit and kept watching him to secure his welfare whether he was near or far, even 150 miles off and gave him warning and afforded relief where necessary.

Baba's "eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love him". Baba's watch over Mahlsa saved him from shipwreck in his food problems. At times, for long periods the starvation of the devotee and his family came perilously-near the danger point. Then Baba suddenly made the devotee relax his vow. On one such occasion, H. S. Dixit was somehow made aware of the danger. He wished to send up a ten rupee note to Mahlsapathy- To make sure that it should not be rejected, he enclosed it in an envelope and took it to Baba and without any other words asked Baba "Shall I send this"? Baba Said "Yes" He sent it, and it was accepted. Baba had his Antarjnan of the gift and had told Mahala's wife some hours earlier: "Tell your husband, Baba is coming to the house, and he should not reject Baba". So when the envelope with the 10 rupee note came, Mahlsapathy was sure that Baba's message referred to the envelope and he accepted it.

The snake infested Shirdi was full of danger to its inhabitants. One evening as Mahlsapathy was leaving Eaba's Mosque, Baba told him that he was likely to meet two thieves (snakes) on the way, and accordingly Mahlsapathy found one at his doorsteps and the other at the neighbouring house. One day Baba told him. 'When you return, come with a lamp, for you will find a thief at the gate'. Accordingly, Mahlsapathy came with a lamp in his hand, and found a snake at the gate, and cried out 'snake, snake'. The neighbours gathered and killed it.

Baba once warned him in general words, 'Don't put your back against the earth'. Not remembering this advice, and in his usual slovenly way, Mahlsapathy, having consumed too much of Burfi got giddy, sat on the floor, and losing his consciousness, glided down. He then was with his bare back on the ground He was dreaming or delirious and talking in his dream, keeping his legs stretched on

the bare earth all the time. When he returned to consciousness and sat awake, he found he could not bend his leg. His daughters had to massage his knees and legs, and thereafter he was able to walk upto Baba. When he arrived there, Baba told him, 'Did I not tell you not to put your back against earth?' On one occasion, Baba gave him warning that something wrong would happen at Khandoba's, and that, however, he need not be afraid as Baba would do the needful. Then very soon, his wife and daughter fell ill and soon after, the other members of his family also fell ill. This was after 1908, after which date the number of Shirdi visitors increased including many doctors. Meanwhile Baba told Mahlsapathy, 'Let the sick people keep to bed', and walking round his Mosque with a short stick in hand Baba was waving his short stick and using threatening words :—'Come, whatever may be your power, let us see! I shall show you what I can do with my chota stick, if you come out and face me'. This was Baba's treatment of the disease. However, amongst the numerous visitors, there were doctors who gave medicines to Mahlsapathy to be given to his sick family. Mahlsapathy consulted Baba regarding the medicines, but Baba dissuaded him from administering the medicines to the sick at home. In the result, all got well without medicine. Baba's way of fighting disease is not the modern way of medicine, but it was unmistakably effective.

Baba's watching was often of great benefit to Mahlsapathy in other domestic matters also. Once M's wife had gone to her mother's house at a distant village. When she was there, she developed a painful tumour near her-neck, but she did not communicate that to her husband. But Baba's watching eye of supervision, which rests on all those relying on him with loving trust, noted this fact. He told Mahlsapathy at Shirdi : 'Your wife has a tumour in the throat. None can cure it except myself, and I shall cure it'. Mahlsapathy knowing nothing about his wife's health simply said 'Yes, Baba'. Later he received a letter mentioning the painful tumour, and adding that it had been cured.

Baba used his knowledge of coming events for "Bhagat" as Baba called this *bhakta* Mahlsapathy, and revealed them to him when necessary. He was a poor man, whose three daughters were married to people at various villages. His

Sambandis (i.e. fathers-in-law of those daughters) had no regard for him. The reader may remember Lamb's essay on "A Poor Relation". On one occasion, one of the Sambandis at a distant village invited him to dine with him, and Mahlsapathy went to take Baba's leave. When granting leave. Baba said, "You are going to be insulted there'. Mahlsapathy went along with his friend, but when he went to his Sambandi's house, he found the Sambandi's people had already finished their meal and were washing their hands without caring to wait for the arrival of their poor relation Mahlsapathy. This was an obvious insult and he returned refusing to take his meal. He returned to Baba and told him all the facts.

On another occasion, one Ram Bhav Harde, a Sai Baba bhakta, invited Mahlsapathy to go to his village 'Astinagram' some six or ten miles away from Shirdi. There was to be a Mahlsapathy Purana reading by Mahhapathy to be followed by a dinner. So it was an interesting occasion, and Mahlsapathy went to take leave of Baba. Baba said, 'Do not go. There will be a fight there'. Yet having been invited, he could not avoid goiig, and he went to that village. He sat and read Mahlsapathy puraram there, and while that was going on the host's graceless, sturdy and rowdy boys with other boys sat for their meal and began to exchange hot words. From words they quickly came to blows with sticks, and on account of the free use of the cudgels, the audience that was present for the Purana reading fled in fright and Mahlsapathy also had to pack up his purana and follow their wise example. He returned to Shirdi and told Baba, 'Your words have proved true to the letter'.

Long before N. G. Chandorkar and others arrived, i.e. in the eighties of the last Century, Baba spoke of the future of Shirdi. Baba told Bhagat and others who were with him at the chavadi, 'In this place (Shirdi) there will be huge storeyed buildings rising, big fairs will be held, and big men, Subedars, and others will be coming. My Brahmins will gather and elephants, horses and Shankar Nana will also come' Guns will be fired (Dhadanga Dishe Udenga)'. People hearing this began to smile. They thought, 'What, all this for this worthless nook of an insignificani hamlet'. But some decades later, every one of Baba's statements came true, and that nook of an insignificant village has already

become a small town with big storied buildings, sugar factories with machinery, annual fairs, festivals, etc., and the daily puja of Baba attracts thousands including ladies and gentlemen of the highest position from all parts of India.

Baba knew the future of this devotee but gave him only hints. When Mahlsapathy got a male child in 1897 and took him to Baba and talked of Namakarana, i.e. the name to be given to the child, Baba, evidently to prevent his being too much attached to the son, told him "*Look after* the child for 25 years and that would be sufficient". The father's business is only to *look after* this new arrival in a detached spirit, knowing that the connection is only for a fixed time. Mahlsa did not understand all this, or that 25 years period indicated the length of his life which was to end in 1922; but with true humility and submission he told Baba that "looking after" the child was not in his power-but only in Baba's power. Baba's reply was still more significant. "Be thou, the Nimitta" i.e. the apparent instrument, said Baba, reminding us of Sri Krishna's direction to Arjuna to fight the MahaBharata battles as a mere instrument in His hands "Nimittamatram Bhava Savyasachin". Mahlsapathy though a surrendered soul could not have banished his ego and risen then to the full height indicated above i.e. to treat all acts done by his body as the acts of the Supreme. Baba was leading him on to that height on the above and other occasions.

But more interesting to common folk than this is Baba's keeping watch over him night and day. When Mahlsapathy often obtained leave of Baba to go for his night meal, Baba used to say, 'Go. I am with you.' No harm then befell M. Though Baba was not physically accompanying M, his invisible guardianship was evident.

Baba's watch over Mahlsapathy was also for his moral benefit. Though Mahlsapathy was generally of a pious disposition, sometimes he committed mistakes. Every night he used to feed a crippled bitch, and one day, having fed it, he said, 'Go', But the creature did not stir. He took a stick and gave it a beating, and then it howled with pain and ran away. That night when Mahlsapathy went to the Mosque and shampooed Baba's legs, Bapu Saheb, Dada Kelkar and others were with him. Baba said, 'Arre, there is a bitch, sickly like me, in the

village. Everybody is beating it'. Then at once Mahlsapathy, remembering his behaviour repented his mistake. This is not trivial, as we shall see further on.

Baba's company, Seva, example and help kept Mahlsapathy very high up in his spiritual level. He bore great love to Baba. When Baba passed away in 1918, he, on account of his attachment, declined all food and fasted for 13 days. Probably to prevent a shock, Baba had given him hints of his (Baba's) impending final departure. It was Mahlsapathy's custom to spend all his time with Baba except when he went for his meal, etc Later Baba would send some one or other to fetch him from his house. Then he would light up *chilm* (i.e. smoking pipe), do odd jobs for Baba, and prepare Baba's bed, which was a very peculiar arrangement. Baba always kept his head on an old brick (which is believed to be the brick given to him by Venkusa with a torn cloth). Madhav Fasle, a servant of Baba used to hand over that brick to Mahlsapathy every night and along with it, a tattered cloth (believed to be Venkusa's gift) to be placed over it and other cloths to be spread on the ground as bed for Baba. Mahlsapathy would first place the brick and then the tattered cloth, and then spread the other cloth or cloths. Ten or twelve days before 1918, Dassara, Madhav False, in handing over the brick, allowed it to slip down to the ground, and it broke into two. Then the broken pieces were placed as pillows for Baba. Baba asked 'Who broke the brick?' Mahlsapathy mentioned that Madhav False broke the brick. Baba got very angry with Madhav and placed his hands on his own head and felt extremely sad. Baba said 'Sopat tutali' i.e., the companion is broken. Next day, Kala (HS. Dixit) came and said there was no need to deplore the breaking, as he would join the pieces with silver joints. Baba said: "Even if you join them with gold, what is the use? *This brick is my Sobatya (companion)* (evidently from his Selu days) and its breakage betokens evil." From that time onwards Baba was disspirited. At least Mahlsapathy thought so. Baba, even before this, had given Mahlsapathy a hint. He told him once when he (Mahlsapathy) was preparing to light a lamp and fill up Baba's pipe, 'Arre Bhagat, in a few days from this, I will be going somewhere. After that, you come at night for 2 or 4 years'; This was not understood by Mahlsapathy. But Baba's spirit passed beyond our ken into AVYAKTA on 15th

October 1918, and Mahlsapathy was able to do his nightly usual puja to Baba only for 2 or 4 years, for he passed away on 11—9—1922.

Baba's help to Mahlsapathy in his religious efforts and in securing a good end may be noted, because dying on an Ekadasi day is conducive to or indicative of Sadgati. Mahlsapathy passed away, in circumstances to be described more fully later, on an Ekadasi day in 1922 after a life of religious striving. In the case of Mahlsapathy, his firm faith was in Khandoba, and Baba treated Khandoba, Vittoba, and Allah as the same c. f. BGIV 11 & VIII 21-All worship is God's worship. God reaches us in the form we choose.' Khandoba's grace to Mahlsapathy was manifested several times, and whenever there was a difficulty for Mahlsapathy, Khandoba gave him visions. In one of those visions, Khandoba asked him to go and see Vittal at Pandharpur, and in the case of such a poor man like Mahlsapathy, who had to beg his bread for himself and family, a pilgrimage to Pandharpur was no joke. But by Khandoba's grace, he got some pecuniary help for the journey, and a well-to-do family as his companions. With them he reached Pandhari. At Pandharpur, the crowds were always unmanageably large, and it was not easy for one to cut his way through the mass to Vittal. Then there were the professional priests demanding coins to take a man to the Vittal image. But Mahlsapathy had no coins, and so special interference on his behalf by Khandoba was necessary. As he was moving with the crowd nearer and nearer to Vittoba, suddenly people began to note that Mahlsapathy's face was exactly like Khandoba's and said that Khandoba had actually come to take darsan of Vittoba and cleared a way for him. The Pandas also must have been similarly impressed. That made Vittal darsan easy for Mahlsapathy.

Similar instances of help for himself and party were manifested at his pilgrimage to Jejuri. Once when they were going on their horses, the police intercepted them on the way and examined their passes. Finding one having no pass, they stopped him and put him into the police station; and the procession could not start from the village. That man had to go and get a pass from the Kulkarni. That Kulkarni showed his talent for taking work gratis from all persons. A Niti sloka says rightly :—Makshiko Maruto vescya yachako mushakas tatha

gramanirganakas chaiva saptaiate para badhakah". i.e gnats, winds, courtesans, beggars, rats, village headmen and karnams (i.e. kulkarnis) these seven are pestering parasites. He delayed the issue of a pass and said 'You go on splitting fuel for me'. He gave Mahlsapathy's man an axe to split fuel i.e. to do work gratis. Then the man took up the axe and after a few strokes, the handle was broken. Then the Kulkarni gave him a second handle. The second handle also broke. Then a third handle was given, and that also shared the same fate. Then the Kulkarni said, 'God does not allow you to work', and gave him the pass.

Baba's watch over the pilgrimages of Mahlsapathy and his other movements shows Baba's great and mysterious power and His wonderful love and guardian-stip of the bhaktas. These are well illustrated in many instances of which a few more may be mentioned, On one occasion when Mahlsapathy and party reached Jejuri, 150 miles from Shirdi, plague was raging there, and Mahlsapathy sat down dejected leaning against his palki (Kavadi), not knowing what to do. Suddenly he saw Baba behind him; and Baba vanished. Then he got embolde-and told his companions : 'Baba is with us and we need not worry'. Accordingly the pilgrimage was satisfactorily over, and there was no loss of life. When he returned to Shirdi, Baba told him, 'I found you leaning against the Palki at Jejuri'. Mahlsapathy was convinced that his eyes did not deceive him at Jejuri and that Baba was everywhere guarding his bhaktas.

On another occasion when Mahlsapathy and his group had gone for an annual Jejuri pilgrimage, they were returning followed by another group i.e. Malam Bhagat Pilki. Then they met thieves who were armed with axes and who wore masks or were covering their faces with thick blankets. As they approached the Palki to rob it, Mahlsapathy courageously took out a handful of Bhandar, i.e. coloured rice and sandal and threw it at them as prasad. Then they quietly retreated to an adjoining wood. Then Mahlsapathy and his friends went on followed by Malam Bhagat palki, and they noted that there was no image in their own palki. All the party looked into it (i.e., Mahlsapathy's palki) to see whether all their images were there. They found none. Then some one said. 'Are we to carry an empty palki to Shirdi?. That day was a Sunday, which is Khandoba's day. At

the very outset. M said, 'No pilgrimage on Sunday' But the others had disagreed, and now Mahlsapathy told the others, 'This is the evil of doing pilgrimage on Sunday'. Suddenly Mahlsapathy got in .to a trance, and Khandoba talking through him said, 'Arre, what day is this? Is it not my day? Why are you carrying palki? To-day I am busy hunting out on a hill. After hunting is over, I will come to Shirdi. You had better go now'. Then he woke up from trance, and the palki went on and came to Kandoba's temple at Shirdi. People at Shirdi, for instance, Shakaram Kandukar and others came to the palki to take Darsan. Shakaram looked into the palki and found all the images ' there. 'What is the talk of all the images missing?' he asked the people. He showed them, and said 'Here are alt the images'.

Mahlsapathy's case is an excellent instance of Baba's method of unifying religion and creeds successfully. Mahlsapathy was only an ordinary, conservative, orthodox worshipper of Khandoba. Sai Baba, he considered a Muslim and even objected to his entry into Khandoba's temple when Sai Baba came to Shirdi with Chan Bhai Patel's party. This same man became Baba's ardent devotee and worshipped him. In fact not only was he the first in point of time amongst the worshippers, but he was also the foremost in excellence. Mahlsapathy felt that Baba was God. Whatever may be the difference in name and form, Scanker, Scani, Ganapati, and Khandoba are all one, and Baba with divine power was the same. M also went to Pandharpur to worship Vittal (a form of Maha Vishnu and had no sectarian i.e. (Siva Vishnu) prejudices. He and his group honoured all saints, Hindu and Muslim, and they applied Tukaram's famous saying 'Jo Sant, Toch Dev! o Dev, Toch Sant', meaning 'God is the same as the Saint and the Saint is the same as God' to fakirs as well as Hindu saints. He was the first to do puja to Baba and even apply sandal to him. Baba's objection to his being worshipped in that fashion melted away under the keen sense of Mahlsapathy's love and devotion. As Mahlsapathy made no difference between Khandoba and Baba, and as all thoughts of men were known to Baba, Baba could not object to any of the ways adopted for worship at the Khandoba temple being applied to him. Baba's divine heart of love responded to the outpourings of Mahlsapathy's love; and so, Mahhaphy became Baba's ANKITA

SISHYA. Baba said (if not expressly at least by unmistakable utterance and conduct). 'He is mine'. The Arati song says.

Jo Sanduchya *ankita* Jiva Jhala,

Tyacha Ase Bhara niranjanala.

This means, the devotee who is stamped as mine by a Sadhu, has no more burden or responsibility to bear, as all his burdens and responsibilities rest on the Saint (or the Guru God). Baba showed his assumption of responsibility in innumerable ways. Especially when he sent him in the evenings away from the Mosque, he would be saying 'Go, I am with you' i.e. *I will protect you.' And he did. Baba's cure of Mahlsapathy's wife's tumour at a distant place far off from Siiirdi, and the cure of her children of their disease at other times are excellent instances of Baba's protection and love. When the bhakta had no son, and yet refused to go and live with his family, it was Baba's repeated assurance that he would get a male child that induced him to go and sleep at home and thus get a son. This son is named Martanda and is still living and worshipping at his father's tomb. This is considered important, as dying without a son will take a man to Hell (Put Naraka). Mahlsapathy's response to Baba's love was evidenced by M's dedication of himself to Baba's service. Mahlsapathy not only shared his cloth bed with Baba every night at the Mosque and chavadi, but also shared his night vigil. Mahlsapathy's help to rouse Baba when the vigil stopped and gave way to natural sleep was a special help to Baba, and through Baba to everybody. Mahlsapathy's effort to keep the Baba body for three days in 1886 against the mischance of being buried on the compulsion of the officers was a signal service not only to Baba but to the entire Sai bhaktas and the public at large. Baba's recognition of this attachment closely resembling Hanuman's attachment to Rama was expressed by Baba's calling him Bhagat i.e. Bhakta. B. V- Dev calls Ma Bhakta Manickya and a Mahatma in his preface to M's reminiscences. Both epithets are apt and just.

The end of such a soul when life passes away must necessarily be a good end, (sadgati). Baba made this assurance doubly sure and granted him the merit of dying on an Ekadasi day (with God in his mind and on his lips) just as he did

this for several other bhaktas of his. Dying on an Ekadasi day is conducive to departure in a holy mood from this life (through the bright and smokeless path). B, Gita VIII 6 says.

Yam yam vapi Smaran Bhavam

Tyajati ante kalebaram

Tam tam eva eti kounteya

Sada tad bhava bhavitah

That is 'Whatever a person thinks of (being in constant touch with it) at the time of death he reaches'. When Mahlsapathy's death was approaching, he retained full-consciousness and control of his mind. That was on 11th Sep. 1922 Monday (in the month of Badrapada, Ekadasi Somavara, sacred to Shiva and Khandoba) Having finished all his puja, he said to his family, 'To-day is my father's Shradha day. Finish cooking soon. To-day I close my earthly life and go to Heaven'. So, Laxman, the Brahmin, came and finished the Shradha at once and finished the gift of balis to crows, cows, etc, and guests were fed. Then the family meals were finished. Mahlsapathy took betel and nuts after his meal. After chewing a bit, he put on a *kupni*. Having near him, Bala Gurav, Ramachandra Kothe, etc., he told them ;all to do *Ramachandrajapa* Japa went on. His son was there, and he gave him his stick. Mahlsapathy said to his son, 'Spend time piously in Uttama Bhakti Marga i.e. in holy devotion. All that I told you will happen." Then Mahlsapathy uttered the word '*Ram*' and breathed his last. Thus he passed away in calm faith and cheerfulness on the 11th September 1922. This death was a fitting termination to a pure, lofty and dedicated life—a life of Love, faith and total surrender— a death that may be envied by many who may not be prepared to adopt the rigorous course that led up to it and ensured it. His remains are interred in a tomb at Shirdi which is still worshipped by many.

Some may fancy that merely rebuking Mahlsapathy for mercilessly hitting a bitch for not moving out when told to go is a mere ordinary lesson in *Ahimsa* or fair treatment of brutes. But from the standpoint of Baba's development of pupils, it is much more. Any one who is capable of hitting a bitch naturally thinks poorly of a bitch and highly of himself, and does not hesitate to injure a "lower creature".

This is not merely a vice but evidence of Rajasic Tamasa obscuring the soul's light—a very serious obstacle to the attainment of equal vision, c.f. (1) Somatvam yogauchyate (2) Nirdosan hi *samam* Brahman Tasmāt Brahmani te sthilah BGV. 19 to the attainment of 'Sarvabhutatma bhutatmatvam', that is, realising God or the Self in every creature and paying reverence to it. BGV. 7. First, about equal vision, it will be noted that alike In the B Gita and Krishnoddhava Samvada, (SBXI) *samatva* of Equal View is repeatedly stressed as a qualification for and a mark of the Jnani. If a man has realised Brahman (i.e. got Jnana), then all creatures are alike Brahman, and he treats them all equally and makes no invidious distinctions between them, worshipping one, beating another, etc. Vidya Vinaya sampannc Brahmane Gavi hastini Scuni chaiva Scvapakecha Panditah Samadarscinah. BGV. 18. The want of *samatva* denotes a failure to rise above vulgar mediocrity; and beating shows the need for a great deal of effort to rise to heights of equal vision. Equal vision is sometimes considered a mere poetical ideal which is not practical—Many may think it not worthwhile, when they are in active life, when still living in the family, to aim at equal, vision-*samatva*. But Baba did not take that view. Mahlsapathy was a family man, '*grihasta*' living with his family up to the last and died in the midst of his relations, Yet Baba raised him nearer and nearer to the level of equal vision, and the first step in that effort is to stop cruelty to animals. So his warning against the beating of the bitch must be viewed in the light of the need for achieving equal vision. Higher steps are not achieved merely by stopping the beating of animals. Higher steps are accelerated by Baba's highest plank, namely, seeing of Himself or God in all creatures: *Sarvabhutatma bhutatmatvam*. That is Baba wanted his highest bhaktas to feel strong enough about his (Baba's) being God. They should feel his being in all animals and consequently God being in all animals, a result which should be manifested by either mental or even actual physical worship offered to some animals at any rate. Namdev's recognition of Vittal in a dog, after he had been trained by the Guru Visoba Kesar in equal vision and in the treatment of all objects as manifestation of God, has already been mentioned in the previous volume, Mahlsapathy was the best fitted to gain that faculty of seeing (Sai) God

in a creatures or to sing or feel with Kabir "Sabghata Atma Rama Govinda-Hari Bole Hari Bole Bhai". In the Bhagavata recognising the difficulty of actual physical worship being offered to all creatures, the advice is given that the worship may be mental, and the stanza runs—

Manasaiva etani bhutani
Pranamet Bahumanayan
Iswaro Jiva kalayo
Pravishto Bhagavaniti

This means, 'Remembering the fact that all these creatures have an Atma or Soul and that the Soul is but the reflection or part of God, one should feel that God is in all these creatures, esteem them and worship them only *mentally*'. It is not known whether Mahlsapathy, Chandokar, or any other devotee actually did this worship as a sadhana when he met creature after creature or any creature or succeeded in feeling that God's reflection, that is, God Himself in another form was in every creature. But this was evidently Baba's intention, and one might presume that some of the bhaktas of Baba did achieve a fairly high degree of progress in this sadhana. One Lakshmi going to Baba's tomb, shortly after He passed away, was bemoaning his loss and prayed to him to show his form to her. As she was moving out, she met a serpent on her way. At once she cried out, 'Baba, if you show me your form in this serpent shape, how am I to get on?' This is an interesting instance. If even a rustic woman, not presumed to know anything about higher culture or the higher sadhanas in the Sastras was able to recognise or treat Baba as being in a snake, surely other bhaktas of Baba may be presumed to have made some advance in this all important matter. The great importance of this step of recognising God in all creatures can be inferred from the fact that the lesson is repeated more than a dozen times in the Bhagavata Gita and in the Ekadasa Skanda of Bhagavata i.e. Uddhava Gita. Naturally the utterance in the Upanishad 'Sarvam kaluidam Brahma', that is, 'All this manifested Universe is God' cannot be achieved by one who fails to go even through the first step, namely, treating the living creatures in the Universe as manifestations of God. God is power plus mercy, plus sameness, or equality and

omniscience and omnipresence. One can magnify the bits of these qualities found in animals and treat them as potentially infinite or as tiny reflections of Godhead. So one ought to first view the creatures around him as manifestations of God, and their bodies as temples (Deho Devalayah Proktah Sivo Jivah Sanatanah) and mentally reverence them. The practical difficulties of reverencing all creatures and observing equality of vision have been referred to by great saints like Sri Ramakrishna and solutions have been given by them for practice to overcome such difficulties. If a tiger is to be treated as God, when it is coming to attack one, it will be over with the man, and there is no further sadhana practicable for him. So one has to keep the tiger or lion (Mriga-namcha mrigendroaham BGX, 30-) at a distance and mentally reverence it, overcoming one's fear as part of one's sadhana, no doubt taking good care to see to one's safety. The same applies to snakes and other destructive creatures. Amongst human beings also there are unfortunate specimens of uttermost heights of vice and cruelty and other and unsociable features, and these cannot be approached by any ordinary sadhaka. A Chaitanya may no doubt go out and beard the lion in his den and meet the murderous robber in his own haunt and may come off victorious, but that, however, cannot be copied safely by ordinary sadhakas. Hence, one may stress the word '*Mansaiva*' in the above quotation from the Bhagavata with reference to this practice.

After reverence is achieved, then comes the question of identity. Sri Sai Baba, the highest realiser and teacher of Brahma Nishta, viewed everything as Brahman. 'I am Brahman; all this is Brahman; I am all' said Sai, as a great realiser that he was might be expected to say. As a stepping stone to that position, reverence to all is an important achievement and that reverence is made possible by the Ahimsa lesson taught by Baba to Mahlsapathy, This is the chief recorded lesson in Mahlsapathy's memoirs taken down by his son to his dictation, but one may be sure that when Mahlsapathy lived for four or five decades at least along with Baba, day and night, in the Masudi and Chavadi, up to the last moment of Baba's earthly life, numerous other instances of ahimsa and view of creatures as manifestations of God and identification of oneself with

all that is, must have occurred and must have been noticed by Mahlsapathy to his great advantage. Mahlsapathy however was not a cultured man and the few memoirs that he dictated at the fag end of his life to his less cultured son show that he had no neat power even of recalling, arranging, and narrating-all his experiences. Taking, for example, the account he gives of Baba's *Svecha marana* and return to the body in 1886, we see how poor his powers of narration are and perhaps also his powers of observation understanding and remembering incidents after 36 years passed. Anyhow, Mahlsapathy, after so many decades of his living with Baba. would surely have imbibed Baba's ahimsa and Baba's regard for life in every form. Incidentally one may note that it is not merely worship of creatures that is required for ore's equal vision and rising' to the '*Sarvam kaluidam Brahma*' plane. The inanimate world also including the mineral world must be treated as Brahman e, g. the earth, mountains, etc, B G. VII-47, Here comes the difficulty. How is one to treat a clod of earth as Brahman. One may retort, 'Are not persons worshipping a handful of clay moulded into the shape of an elephant faced Ganapati or of Kali for days and days, (though after Prana Pratishta ceremony) and feeling the presence of God in that object every year. If one can feel God in clay in a particular form, one may next proceed to view the same clay with-out that form us still being God, even when the clay has been thrown into the Ganges. It must be recalled that earth, air, fire, water, and ether, (which are parts of God's Apara Prakriti. B. G, VII 4 & 5) are all full of life, in some form or other, Life grades down from the human to the animal, thence into the vegetable, thence into the mineral life, and finally into the siderial life. It is easy for one acquainted with animal life, (from the science of physiology or Biology) to note vegetable life dealt with by the science of Botany. In studying these sciences, one notes that there are hybrid or indeterminable entities which one finds it difficult to bring under either of the heads specifically. There are some cells or objects which look like vegetables in one respect and animals in another; for instance, the fly eating flower, which catches at the fly as soon as it sits on it, dissolves it in its acid secretion and digests it exactly like an animal. Yet all the while it is only a plant, a vegetable. When vegetables eat animals, just as

animals eat vegetables, it is difficult to say that there is not the same life in both. Taking up cell and crystal life, it is very difficult to distinguish the mineral, the animal, and the human. Man is supposed to be able to draw geometrical figures, but the crystals beat man in their aesthetic perception and their unerring geometrical faculty of building up correct crystals even when intercepted. And beyond all mineral, there is the siderial life on which light is thrown by the recent ray research and atomic or nuclear fission. All objects known to us are : supposed to consist of atoms. 'A' (not), 'tomas' (to cut) is the derivation of the word 'atom', and the older chemists believed that matter goes down to a stage where it cannot be further cut, and that, they called the atom, But that atom has now been cut and nuclear fission reveals to us that inside a cell of an atom, what is contained is a Universe, protons and electrons of various sorts gyrating round and round and producing different results by their varieties of combination or position. The power generated by cutting an atom of uranium or hydrogen now threatens the peace and safety of the world and the gamma rays produced in the operation are the biggest Yama that science has revealed, more terrific than the Yama of Hindu mythology. The world's end, Pralaya, which is merely poetically described in Puranic Mythology is now an actual terrible spectre across the path of scientists and statesmen. Anyhow it is now scientifically proved that there is life in even the least bit of the Universe and, if power and intelligence be regarded as basic elements in God. worship of plant or the mineral is quite as easy as worship of the animal or the human being,

It is unsafe to generalise from a few facts of science and draw conclusions in the field of religion, but on the whole following Baba's guidance, one is safe in drawing the conclusion that, the Upanishidic declaration 'Sarvam kaluidam Brahma, and the Puranic direction that all creatures ought to be worshipped, are perfectly safe and legitimate for one to follow, under proper guidance. Mahlsapathy had the immense advantage of the company and guidance of Sai Baba and that was more than a University training for him, for it enabled him to rest securely on Baba's help and support for all his religious strivings and for life in general. When he died with "Ram" on his lips, it is quite clear that Mahlsapathy

had conquered his baser nature and advanced very far in his spiritual welfare under the guidance of Baba. Who has achieved more ?

While closing this chapter, we may stress certain points once again. An account of Mahlsapathy's training under Sai Baba may serve other purposes while noting the grand truths just stated. Some very orthodox people think that either it is impossible for them to use Sai Baba for their religious advancement as he was so heterodox and apparently a Muslim or that, in any case, there is no particular benefit to be gained by contact with him (Sai Baba) for the highly orthodox people to whom the Supreme Authority the Vedas, the Agamas, and the methods mentioned therein serve all the purposes that they can think of. With their sanctimony of acharas, pujas, and dhyana. they think that nothing more is left for them to do. Several orthodox gentlemen have asserted that Sai Baba cannot be of any use to them at all. Mahlsapathy's life and development under Sai Baba serve to prove the contrary. Those who are highly content with the steps they are taking in the orthodox direction with the use of their ancestral methods, images, etc., will find that Mahlsapathy also was a person of the same sort. If Mahlsapathy could derive very high benefit from Baba, others also can. Mahlsapathy had his Khandoba worship and Khandoba image inherited from his parents. Khandoba is an Avatar of Siva, and he had implicit faith in Khandoba and his religious practice was strict. His observance of fasts, feasts, and ceremonies was almost perfect. He had developed some powers such as leading the Khandoba purana and with its help informing people of Khandoba's message or reading for the future. He felt fully convinced that Khandoba was protecting him in everything. In short he had such intense faith in Khandoba that really Khandoba developed into a fairly perfect idea of God for him. As the Vedas point out, and as Baba also frequently pointed out, any name or form of God would become the perfect God that one needs. "Namaste Vayo." 'Tvameva Pratyaksham Brah-masi" is what the Vedic worshipper of Vayu said to Vayu. *i. e.* Obeisance to Thee, Wind-God! You alone are the Visible embodiment of Divinity (to me)." He found that the worship of Vayu, which is only one of the Forces of Nature, if carried on long enough and with sufficient

intensity, served his purpose, Similarly worshippers of Ganapati and other forms also thought that each form could be developed into full God under proper circumstances when the fullest *blaze* of devotion, faith and receptivity ensouled the devotee. In Mahlsapathy's case this was very well illustrated. He up to the last stuck to Khandoba and Khandoba protected him. Baba used the term Khandoba to mean God. For instance when addressing Upasani Baba, who was living in Khandoba temple, Baba said, 'After four years' service, Khandoba will give all his powers and make you perfect'. In the case of Mahlsapathy, his increased perfection was getting more and more patent to those associated with him. The heights of self-sacrifice that he reached were most astounding. His selflessness, which was copied by his wife and daughters, resulted in their being left them without the barest necessities, in some cases such as a woollen cover (Kambli). Yet he kept cheerful, contented and ready to crush out self-interest to protect others even if they should viciously work against his interest. Here is an instance reminding us of the Palestine Samartha's advice to do good to those who do evil and to give the person robbing you of a coat your cloak also.

When M lost his kambli and that was traced to a receiver of stolen property in another village where his daughter, who was there, traced it, that receiver swore that it was hers and not Mahlsapathy's. The Village Munsif said that she ought to be jailed and the property recovered. Mahlsapathy was shocked at the idea of seeing a woman jailed and tormented for the sake of recovering his "kambli", and so said he would not claim the property or say it was his—just as the saintly Bishop refused to claim the silver candle stick stolen by Jean Val Jean in Les Miserables.

Some people may fancy that self-abnegation carried to such severe extent may ruin the physical and material well being of the devotee and those depending on him. But here comes the service of Baba. Baba, the watchful the all knowing Providence who was always with him wherever he went, made sure that he and his dependants should not be irreparably damaged by his development of virtues, and therefore in every incident he came off safe. This will suffice to show that even for very orthodox people great help is derived in

proceeding on their accustomed lures of religious development by being in contact with or under the protection of the guardian angel Baba or rather of Sai Krishna who undertook to provide everything needed "Yoga Kshemam (B.G, IX 22). Even very orthodox and very devout persons would note how useful it is to have all one's affairs about body and family looked after by an omniscient, omnipresent and kind guardian. Several orthodox people fancy that God is looking after them and their families but are disappointed to note the absence of any provision in several cases. Such persons would gladly note that by resorting to Sai they find the same God that they have been appealing to comes under a new name ready to serve them and their purposes. God fulfils Himself in many ways.

YE yatha Maam Prapadyante.tams tathaiva bhajamyaham
Mama vartma Anuvartante manushyam partha sarvascha
Yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktam
Labhata cha tatah Kaman Mayaiva vihitan

BG VII(7)21-2

is what Sri Krishna said in the Gita. This means, In whatever from people surrender to Me, in that very form, I serve them. Every one following his own form of worship is really following My worship'. God can be approached under any name and in any manner, and Mahlsapathy, though sticking to the idea that Khandoba was his God, derived the advantage of getting all his other needs safeguarded and provided as far as possible by Baba acting as his Providence. Other bhaktas also who have their own particular forms, who however note the need or importance of food, shelter and other things for themselves and their families being provided by Baba, would be thus encouraged by Mahlsapathy's example to seek Baba and place themselves under his protection. Baba never interfered with anybody's orthodoxy or religious worship, and the orthodox now in various places need not have any fears about the loss of their existing spiritual position by contacting Baba. All the while, they would get unconscious expansion and refinement of their idea of God and gods, and become ready for reaching the "Ekam Sat".

Some of the readers of this sketch of Mahlsapathy may envy him in respect of his holy service to tie Guru & the resultant benefits both temporal and spiritual, and exclaim almost in the words of Thyagaraja,

(Mukhan-Rupaka)

Ehtanine Varnimtunu Sabari Bhagvamu

(or Bhakta Bhagyamu)

(i.e. How can I describe how great was the good fortune of Sabari, a hunter class hill tribe woman, who served and gave offerings to Sri Rama and thereby attained Moksha?)

But such envy and despair of emulating this Bhakta ought to be more usefully diverted into active channels of *service* of Sai Baba, who is still with us and carrying on his divine plan of helping people to attain virtue and Moksha. This book would be written in vain, if even a handful of readers or listeners are not hereby inspired to rise high in their devotion and service (to sai in any form, or he has all forms of Krishna, Rama Siva Marutyadi c.f. Ashtottara Namavali)

In concluding this chapter one more observation may be made throwing some light upon Baba's methods and ways. Mahlsapathy undoubtedly made a good end. In fact, he was fully conscious and knew when death was approaching, and told his friends 'I am going to Heaven'. He was fully conscious of the merit he had stored up as a Khandoba bnakta who had read Khandoba purana times without number, and made numerous pilgrimages to Jejuri, etc. What did Mahlsapathy mean when he said that he was going to Heaven at death? Readers will remember that when any pious man's death is announced, it is said that he has become a Kailasavasi if he is a Saivaite or Vaikuntavasi if he is a Vaishnavaita, that is, he has gone to the feet of the particular god whom he worshipped, which god is dwelling in Heaven, each god having his own Heaven. Siva has Kailas for His Heaven and Vishnu has Vaikunta. Jehova would have his own and other gods would have their own. In experience, the difference between these may be practically nothing, but yet most people believe that each Heaven is a place, separate from other Heavens, The Gita refers to these ideas and ideal; in Chapter VII, verses 20 to 23, which are worth deep study and cogitation

at the hands of every serious reader. First we shall mention what Mahlsapathy's ideas were as to his god and his Heaven, Mahlsapathy unwaveringly believed in the supremacy and power of his Ishta Devata, namely, Khandoba, who was a particular god in a particular place with a particular Form of bliss. When he tried to propitiate Khandoba by carrying his image in a palki with others, 150 miles to Jejuri and back, on a Sunday, he declared 'Our Khandoba does not want procession, he is out to-day being a Sunday enjoying himself with hunting on some hills', Therefore, his notion of Khandoba, in whome his soul was concentrated, was a god that delighted in hunting and wanted a particular hill on a particular day and so had a particular locality or Heaven in which he would be rejoicing and his bhaktas would rejoice with him. This is more or less the outline or rough explanation of what Mahlsapathy meant by saying that he would go to Heaven on the day of his death. No doubt he worshipped Vittal, Scani, Ganapati, and Baba- But none of them deeply entered into his soul and captured him like Khandoba. They were all fit to be worshipped or respected like the relations of a husband whom a woman respects though it is only the husband whom she embraces. The exact connection between one god and another, the exact definition of our divine ideas, is not possible at least to most persons in ordinary circumstances. Accepting, current Hindu, Christian and other ideas, we might state that Khandoba was Mahlsapathy's chief God though in a way, he recognised that Sankar, Scani, etc., were also Gods and should be respected. Adopting current ideas we would be entitled to say that perhaps Khandoba was Mahlsapathy's God in the sense in which Bhagavad Gita uses the term 'god' in verses 20 to 23 of Chapter VII. In verse 20 the Gita points out how by strong desire based perhaps upon innumerable repetitions or habit, one's ideas are pulled away in the direction of worshipping one particular god other than Lord Krishna or the Supreme. The Prakriti or Nature (formed by habit) compels these persons to be at their particular god other than Krishna. In verse 21 Lord Krishna says, far from objecting to this, he approves and seals this attitude. Whichever Murti (all Murtis are -but forms of the Supreme) a devotee wishes to

worship with faith in it, the Lord develops his faith therein. Verse 22 adds 'with that faith that devotee pleases that god and obtains particular gains or desires of his, and these are according to the order of the Supreme.' Verse 23 adds 'At death, those who worship particular gods go unto them, and those who worship the Supreme in the form of Krishna go unto Him.' We may infer from the above that so long as a man makes a difference between the Supreme and his Ishta Murthi and insists upon following the particular form suited to gain his Ishta Murti's favour, he goes in the end to the feet of his Ishta Murti which, of course, is Heaven, Heaven being a relative term which would apply to the position or level occupied by any of the gods. Therefore when Mahlsapathy said that he was going to Heaven, he had undoubtedly Khandoba at the back of his mind and was reaching Khandoba. After all, as Baba made no difference between Khandoba and the Supreme and also added. 'I am God,' i.e. Aham Brahmasmi', Baba is the same as Khandoba. When a man goes on unconsciously differentiating between one form of God and another, whether that is harmful or less advantageous is not a question that need be discussed here. As stated in the Gita, when a man starts all right, he goes ultimately to the Supreme. From the Upanishads one sees that those who go according to the lines of Kramamukti go on from loka to loka till they gain Brahman or Brahma loka that is, till they reach the Supreme. Tai U II (8) Brih U ch. VI (2) 13-16. These are highly abstract and metaphysical or theological distinctions and discussions. Some readers may not like to have any of such discussions while others may want them very much. That is why the matter is raised at all and why it is left not fully discussed in this paragraph. To understand Sai Baba aright, we have to study all phases of the bhakta at all his stages and even his final stage. The end reached by Mahlsapathy and that reached by H.S.Dixit and some others are briefly set fourth in this volume. Some readers might try to analyse these and see what Baba's methods are in developing a devotee and leading him on to the supreme end. It is not necessary now to decide whether Mahlsapathy reached the Supreme end in 1922 or at any any later date.

Nahi Kalyanakrit kaschit Durgatim Tata Gachchati

That is, 'No one following the right path need fear that he would attain-a bad end. There is God, Lord Krishna or Lord Sai to see to it that everyone reaches the right end'. We are sure of that, and this analysis only helps those who wish to have some more light or religious speculation or discussion to satisfy themselves. We should never dogmatise on these matters—especially when the account given of the various lokas in the above and other Upanishads and the Itihasas and puranas are so puzzling and apparently irreconcilable.

CHAPTER II

Narayan Govind Chandorkar

Nana Saheb Chandorkar is the next of the most prominent amongst Baba's bhaktas, not merely because he was sent for, and the only one openly sent for, by Baba and specially trained and prepared for his mission, but also because of his magnificent work and grand personality. He was the first and foremost of Baba's apostles whose labour was the basis of the spread of Sai faith for many decades. If Mahlsapathy was the seed, Chandorkar was the stem and trunk of the spreading Banyan of Baba, i.e. Baba's St. Paul. A study of his relations with Baba, and the way in which Baba moulded him is a typical and highly useful study of Baba's methods for advancing educated disciples and of Baba's work for society.

Chandorkar was born of highly respected parents, who were good and pious Hindus, held in high esteem in their social circles and following the sastras to the best of their ability. They did their daily Vaiswadeva and fed Atithis, i.e. kept open house; and visitors to Kalyan expected to be and were actually welcomed and fed by them as guests. His father was a retired Government officer, and had built a decent storeyed building there, the Chandorkar Wada, which became, and which still continues to be, the family mansion for so many generations. Chandorkar's capacity and talents can be seen from the fact that by twenty he was already a graduate, and that entering Government service at once he rose to the position of a Gazetted officer, a Deputy Collector, in seven years, which was in those days considered (and must be considered even now) to be an exceptional or marvellous feat. His conduct, character, and spiritual fitness were

those of a good Hindu. He had taken up Philosophy for his special subject for the B. A. degree and supplemented his college study by careful attention to the Bhagvad Gita with Sankara Bhashya.

In these and other ways, he was anxious to get the best out of the Hindu sastras for his own moral and spiritual equipment and progress. His basic equipment being so good, what was wanted was only the hand of a perfect master to turn him into a brilliant apostle, one high up in the spiritual ladder. Even under ordinary circumstances he would have shone well in life but with Baba for his Guru and guide, he shone resplendently well, and he was known throughout the Bombay Presidency as a gentleman of an excellent and noble character and of great attainments, and was revered as a Guru by eminent devotees like Sri B.V. Dev and others. His case illustrates the truth of the saying that it is not the sishya that seeks the Guru but very often the reverse. It was the Guru who sought him out. He had no idea of his previous births. But his Guru Sri Sai Baba was full of jnana. That is, he had *Rnambhara Prajna* or *Pratibha*. The present, past and future floated before Sai Baba's mind's eye, if we may so term it, as one moment, and he could see every bit of it clearly. He remembered that in the past four janmas N G Chandorkar was his sishya; and so he was determined to make the pupil continue the contact and derive further benefit till he achieved life's goal. That is why he sent for him even though he (Baba) did not care ordinarily to meet persons in high official position which, in his eyes, counted for nothing at all. The details of Baba's invitation and its fate are fully set out in Part 1. But as each part may be studied independently of the others, we may summarise the facts about that invitation.

The karnam or Kulkarni of Shirdi, Appa Kulkarni, went to take leave of Baba before leaving Shirdi for Kopergaon where Nana Chandorkar, the Collector's chitnis, was camping for jamabandi. The diffident karnam finally undertook the task of inviting his big officer to his hamlet. When he actually mentioned the matter to the officer, the latter could not believe that a fakir would invite a DC or chitnis and declined to visit Shirdi. Nothing daunted by the rebuff, Baba repeated the invitation a second time, and when it failed, even for a third

time. At last, Nana agreed to see Baba at Shirdi, came up and inquired why he was sent for. Baba's answer was that for four janmas he had been connected with Baba, and Baba desired that he should renew the contact. As Nana still hesitated to renew his contact, Baba revealed to Nana his watch over his interests using his *pranbha* and other powers to foresee or control the future. The Collector was pressing Nana to inoculate himself with a new serum against Plague that was playing havoc with public health. Nana feared the inoculation and hastened to Baba to get his assurance about the safety of the operation; and Baba gave it. Again his father's objections to a Moslem's connection with any one in his family was an apparently insurmountable obstacle. But it was overcome by Baba's power to control the father's mind. Baba made the latter approve of Nana's acceptance of Baba (apparently a Moslem, for he lived in the Masjid) for his Guru.

Having sent for Nana, Baba did everything to see that the course was properly begun. The first essential of progress under a Guru is faith. We need not go into Dasabodha or other standard works to define or describe the sishyas' (the disciples') qualifications. It is enough for us to note what Baba himself has declared and stressed as the important qualifications. The first and foremost is complete faith (*Nishta*) and the second is *Saburi* i.e. patient, cheerful awaiting the future with self-possession. One must get to believe that the Guru is full of all divine power, divine mercy and love, directed especially towards the pupil. So Nana had to be impressed with Baba's divine nature and Baba's personal interest in him or attachment to him. As for nature, Baba declared time and again that He is God, that is, that he has completely realised God or merged his identity with not merely the Impersonal Brahman but also the Personal God known under various names and forms such as Lakshminarayan, Hari, etc. Baba has used the terms, 'Maim Ailah hun' and 'I am Lakshminarayan' etc. as synonymous. To Baba, God is the same under or without any name and form (most of us firmly believe in differences of personality in God according to Name and Form). What are the nature and powers, etc. of Lakshminarayan? Every one knows Lakshminarayan is a form or name of "Maha Vishnu", the supreme Iswara's

Protecting Aspect though it is inseparable from creation and salvation, which are the other aspects. So, Baba's mission and work, as Lakshminarayan, were and are to protect devotees anywhere and everywhere and under all conditions. Baba declared (see Baba's Charters & Sayings)—

'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.

If one ever meditates on me, repeats my name, sings my deeds, and is thus *transformed into me, one's karma is destroyed, I stand by his side always*'.

[What is this but Divinity?—Divine Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence and Mercy.]

Thus, it was Baba's lookout to see that his nature and attitude towards his devotees should be thoroughly well impressed upon Nana's mind- Baba was watching over not merely Nana but numerous others and looking after their welfare. But we shall just now note first how he dealt with Nana so as impress him deeply with this divine (Gurudeva) function of his.

Baba's work (like most divine work) is subtle (sukshma), unseen, easily forgotten, and not properly interpreted. See Kena Upa 9, 14—26 where gods fail to see God's working through them to attain victory or to make out God's manifestation in a particular form. Note also how few realised God in Rama Avatar during his life time. So Baba had to repeat his efforts to ensure the thorough fixing of these valuable truths and impressions in Chandorkar's mind. The most common and trifling things one would suppose in the list of an ordinary man's needs are water to drink and food to eat. Yet at times these assume extraordinary importance, and provisions of drink or food under extremely difficult circumstances becomes clearly a kind act of Divine Providence. This was done for Nana Saheb Chandorkar by Baba under very peculiar circumstances.

Chandorkar was an orthodox Hindu, and, in spite of his corpulence, anxious to visit hill tops where there were temples. Harischandra Hill, forty miles away from Shirdi, was a noted hill with a Devi's shrine at the top. But the long stretch of barren rock between that temple and the bottom of the hill was one

vast treeless, wild, rocky waste, where there was neither water to drink nor any shelter to hide in. Over that hill, Nana was climbing on a hot, summer day, and, after he had gone some distance, the heat of the sun and the toil of the journey told upon him. He felt very thirsty and asked the Sheristadar friend by his side for water.

The latter replied that there was none and that it was a barren rock. Nana felt the fatigue of climbing also greatly and said he could not climb. The Sheristadar asked him to climb down. But Nana was unable to do that either and quietly sat on a huge slab and exclaimed 'if Baba were here, he would surely give me water to slake my thirst'. The Sherishtadar, who was by his side, remarked that such observations about 'ifs' were useless. He added 'Baba is not here. What is the good of thinking what would happen if he were here?' The Sherishtadar had only fleshy eyes and matter-bound brains. He could not see with the eye of faith. If he had such an eye, he could have noted the presence of Baba not only on Harischandra hill but in every other place also. Chandorkar was in a slightly better position than the Sherishtadar. It is because of his faith in Baba that the thought occurred to him that Baba could save him even on that barren rock. But he did not feel certain that Baba was there and that water would be provided. Anyhow his thought of Baba was the tiny hairspring or switch working the magic, the turn that saved the situation.

Prayer saves. But what are prayers but thoughts? Many a person fancies that he must put forward a definite demand in prayer to the 'highest' powers and get it granted by force of prayer. There is some truth in this mixed up with much error and confusion. What comes often after prayer and is supposed to be the result of prayer, is very often something fixed up by a higher power which, as part of its plan, produces the thought of prayer first. Prayer often proves to be the immediate predecessor, but not the efficient and direct cause of the result. '*Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*' (i.e. 'After that; therefore due to that') is what we frequently say and believe. Many a man says 'I prayed; I got it. So it is prayer that got it'. But this is neither logically nor theologically sound. The fact is that prayer is a means of placing one in contact with higher beneficent powers and there it

serves its primary purpose. Incidentally when a devout soul is deeply concentrating on God, what happens is that the soul gets so thoroughly saturated with the divine that divine power infiltrates into the Jiva and the combined power or the higher power (both are the same, despite difference in names) produces certain results. It is the man of prayer that draws down divinity, i.e. turns divine at the moment of intense prayer and is responsible for certain results (*Etad hyeva aksharam jnaatwa yo yad ichchati tasya tatKhat U.I (2) 16*) 16, i.e. Having realised the Imperishable, if one has desire, that is fulfilled, even when the results have not been previously fixed up, as the result of previous karma. Anyhow, Chandorkar's thought and longing constituted a good prayer on account of its earnest faith and contact with Supreme Power and Mercy.

It is always good to pray, because it brings one in contact with God. The prayer, however, that is found most common in society is occasional prayer for a definite material object, and there it stops. It is always advisable to avoid the commercial spirit when dealing with God. We should not bargain with God. Nor should we say, 'I will pray to you only for such and such an object being gained'. The thought of God purifies the soul, and the purified soul gets power to draw God more and more into it. The commercialised soul, if too much oppressed with the contemplation of the worldly benefit is handicapping itself and preventing its purification, that is, saturation with God idea (purity means having God-idea and impurity is lack of God or God-idea). The very idea of material objects may so obsess a mind as practically to obliterate the thought of God. God then becomes only a secondary consideration, a sort of side element, a weak coloration when the main object before the mind's eye is worldly gain. Such approaches are deplorable, however attractive the object to be gained by prayer may be. One ought to have prayer without concentrating too much on worldly gains. Concentration on God alone is purity. Purity means power, and when a soul is thoroughly pure, then the objects entertained in the mind of the prayerful soul some time previously, that is even before the prayer began, remain in the subconscious, i.e. at the back of the praying party's mind and may come to fruition by the power of the purified and strengthened soul. This is an incidental

benefit which ought not to turn the scales when one considers how he should pray. Prayer is primarily and essentially only an affair of the soul with God. All intervention of outside objects is an interference with the soul's concentration on God. Prayer must be purified by very keen practice—i.e, it must be shorn of all undesirable gross elements just as we keep off the floating moss repeatedly when we bathe in a tank. In cases where however one is in dire extremity and prayer comes out from him for a much needed object, in spite of oneself, as was the case with Chandorkar on the Harischandra hill, then prayer cannot be condemned at all. Prayer is a natural vent for the heart. We leap out at what we want on the wings of prayer. It is God Himself that has implanted this tendency to seek God's help to attain objects of great importance to one's material or spiritual life and each time we so seek, we should stress in our mind that God is our first and final object and that other objects form a temporary and partial diversion or screen.

Let us see, how the thought of Chandorkar on the Harischandra hill intensified by his dire thirst operated. His thought was very intense and even if it had been less intense, when it was directed to Sai, it must have had immediate effect. That could not be seen by the Sherishtadar or by Chandorkar himself on the hill. Let us see what took place at Shirdi where the body of Sai Baba was physically situated. Sai Baba spoke out immediately in the presence of some devotees, 'Hallo, Nana is very thirsty. Should we not give him a handful of water?' To Baba all places and all times were open before his vision, and he could see and hear everything. But the persons around him, who had not the benefit of such a vision, were wondering why Baba should talk of Nana's thirst. Nana the Deputy Collector was not there, and if the Deputy Collector was in thirst, why a palmful, gallons of water would be quickly brought to him by number of persons. Why did Baba talk like that? People round about Baba could not make it out. Nor did Baba care to explain. But what followed on the hill gives the explanation. A little time after Nana made his exclamation about Baba, a Bhil, that is, a hill tribesman, was seen coming down the hill towards the party, that is, Chandorkar and his friends. Chandorkar accosted him and said 'Hallo! I am thirsty; can I get some water to

drink?' People wondered that this Brahmin Deputy Collector should accost a Bhil, who his considered an untouchable or a low-caste man, and ask him for water. But necessity knows no law, and the Bhil's reply was most surprising. He said, 'What! You ask for water! Under the very slab or rock on which you are seated, there is water'. So saying, he moved away and disappeared from view. Nana's subordinates and friends who were with him immediately set about lifting up the slab after Nana moved aside, and lo.and behold! There was just palmful of water on that rock, attractive and cool, just the quantity that is necessary to save a man from fiery thirst. Nana took that water, his thirst was gone; and he was able to march higher up and complete his pilgrimage.

After the hill ascent, the goddess' darsan at the temple and descent were over, some days later, Nana had occasion to go to Shirdi and as he stepped into Baba's Dwarakamayee the very first words that Baba uttered to him before anybody could inform him about Nana's experience on the hill, were these, 'Nana, you were thirsty; I gave you water; did you drink?' Nana's eyes opened with joyous wonder. He felt that his very thought of Baba had worked as a prayer and the appearance of the Bhil and his pointing out where the water was and the appearance of the water there on a waterless rock must all have been due to Baba. How Baba managed it, Baba only knew. And to confirm Nana in his view, devotees at Shirdi mentioned to him that on the memorable day and hour when he was on the Harischandra hill, with burning thirst, Baba spoke the above words. Nana was convinced more than ever that Baba was God omnipresent, merciful and omnipotent, for he had the power to bring water under a rock and a man to show it just at the exact psychological moment. This conclusion of his might perhaps appear to be too weak for a logician versed in inductive logic to accept. 'An individual instance does not prove a rule and guarantee the validity of a universal proposition' is what the logician would remark. But Nana was not pestered by doubts of Tarka sastra or logic. In the circumstances of Nana, there could be no room for doubting that Baba did respond to his very thought, which was an appeal for aid and did provide him with the water which was a necessity

to save his life at that perilous juncture. His faith was confirmed and grew stronger and stronger.

The unfortunate fact about most of us is that as most educated minds are fed on the Cartesian principle of doubting everything, the logician's axiom about insufficiency of individual cases to prove universal propositions and other similar doubts crop up over and over again. When 150 experiences of Baba's help had been derived by a man, on the occurrence of the 151st case of help, even a well-known devotee asked himself the question, 'Is this chance or is this Baba's help?' This wretched idea of 'chance helping' does not easily leave us. Luckily most of us by Baba's favour have some grounding in faith, and we gradually shake off the tendency to go on doubting and doubting for ever. Except for that, we would become "*Samscayatmas*", that is, persons in whose nature, doubt becomes a fixed trait, a part of their second nature. The Gita (BG IV 40) says, *Samscayatma Vinascyati*, that is. The man who goes on doubting and doubting *ad infinitum* will perish'. 'Perish' does not necessarily mean 'die', so far as the physical body is concerned. He is dead already whose faith is dead. A man that has no faith is a breathing corpse. Even in ordinary worldly matters, we find what an important part is played by our ability to believe what is reported to us. If in a new place before reaching the railway station, we have to ask for the road to the station at half a dozen places and answers are given, if at each answer we think that the answer may be false and hesitate, we should never reach the station in time to catch our train. This is the meaning of *Samscayatma Vinascyati*. Luckily in the case of Nana, far from his being a '*Samscayatma*', he was a *Shraddhatma*.

*Shraddhaavan labhate jnanam tatparah samyata indriyah
Jnanam labdhva paraam scaantim achirena adhigachchati.*

BG IV. 39

This means, The man of faith obtains knowledge and wisdom. Being a person who controls his senses and thereby effectively fixes his mind on that jnana, treating it as the goal of his life, he obtains Jnana; and having obtained it he soon reaches *scanti*, Supreme Peace.' This has an obvious application to Nana's case, and Nana, with very little of doubting nature, advanced in the strength of

his faith, obtained more and more of wisdom (Jnana) by the grace of Baba and was progressing rapidly towards that *scanti* or Peace, which is the goal of all spiritual life and endeavour.

Thus Nana was convinced that Baba had superhuman power, superhuman love, and made superhuman provision of needs for those who were attached to him and whom he loved. So, he found that Baba was really a Deva (God), and that Baba was preeminently fitted to take charge now of Nana's life, of his comfort, and of all his concerns, temporal and spiritual. Thus convinced, Nana was perfectly prepared to take the plunge of *Prapatti* to the Gurudeva, to surrender himself unhesitatingly to the directions of Baba, being perfectly assured that no harm would result thereby, and on the other hand much good—nay every good—would result therefrom.

Having provided for the thirst of Nana in one place, Baba marvellously provided for his hunger in another place. In Padmalaya forest, there is a Ganapati temple. It is ten miles away from the nearest Railway Station and the access to it is through ten miles of forest. Nana had made arrangements for all this, but trains have got a queer way of being late, and in this case, his train being many hours late, all arrangements were upset and there was no conveyance and no assistance forthcoming. Nana's arrival at the railway station was evening time, very near dusk. But he would not be thwarted. He determined to push along with his companions to the temple, come what may. In the absence of any conveyance, Nana had to dare and dared the risk and trouble of walking ten miles to reach the Ganapati temple. So he trudged on. But when he was about half way or more than half way, it was already 9 p.m. and the pujari of the temple would usually lock it up by 9 or 10 p.m. and retire to his cottage at some distance for his night's rest. So, Nana doubted whether he would get into the temple at all. Further, having walked wearily six or seven miles, he felt the pangs of hunger. Naturally he remembered Baba. He prayed, 'Baba, I am not asking for much. I am not overgreedy. I will be quite satisfied if, at the close of this journey, I can get one cup of tea to quench my hunger'. Then he and his companions trudged on. It was nearly 11 p.m. when they reached the temple.

Instead of the temple being closed (as it would usually be) the pujari was on the watch, and on seeing persons at a great distance (that is, Nana's party) coming, shouted. 'Is Nana coming?' It would be highly impertinent on the part of any priest to call a Deputy Collector by his pet name, as though he was his chum. But here there was no feeling of resentment, but one of gratification on the part of Nana and his friends when they heard the voice, 'Is Nana coming?' They approached and said, 'Yes. How do you know that Nana is coming?' Then the priest said, "I had an ethereal message from Sri Sai Baba in which he said, 'My Nana is coming weary, thirsty, and hungry. Keep for him one cup of tea'. Here is tea ready for you all." He then gave Nana his cup. This again proved that Baba's eye of supervision was not merely on hills but also in forests to look after the safety, comfort and health of his beloved devotee. Alike from danger of thirst and hunger, Baba had saved him.

What was it that saved Nana? The Sanskrit stanza says—

Vane rane scatru jalaagnimadhye

Mahaarnave, parvata mastakevaa

Suptam pramattam vishama sthitamvaa

Rakshanti punyani puraakritaani

This means, whether it is in the forests or in the battle field or amidst foes or in the ocean, or on hill tops, the merit acquired in former times or janmas saves a person even though he may be sleeping, disordered in mind or unbalanced. This is an abstract statement, which is very true. But abstractions do not save any one. It is the concrete person called Sai that actually saved Nana both on hill top and in the thick forests and not abstract poorva punya. After all, it is poorva punya (former merit) that had taken shape as Sai's body, which had undertaken the responsibilities of a Gurudeva and which therefore saved Nana. So it is alike poorva punya and also Gurudeva that saved Nana.

While on this subject we may point out the conclusions into which people fall when dealing with questions where the abstract and the concrete or the particular and the universal or the part and the whole blend as they invariably and necessarily do. I may say that I stir the milk with my right hand, emphasizing

'right' or I may say with equal truth that I stir the milk with a spoon in my right hand. Both are the same and not conflicting, and similarly a particular person protecting a devotee is not inconsistent with his poorva punya protecting him. Forgetting this obvious truth, recently at the Thotapalli hills (Visakhapatnam District) there was a confused distinction without difference. A lady, who was proceeding at dusk from Sri Omkar Swami's chambers to her own room, trod on a snake, and cried out "Om Sai". The snake did not strike her, but bent its head and went away quietly. Some said, 'This is Sai's protection'. Others said 'This is poorva punyam protection'. The obvious truth is that the poorva punyam of the lady taking the shape of her contact with Sai, saved her. Similarly in the above two cases of Chandorkar's troubles in forest and hill, it is his poorva punyam that saved him, in accordance with the above stanza. The poorva punyam in Chandorkar's case was continuous punyam, a punyam which tended to perpetuate itself because it consisted of a surrender to a most loving and beloved Guru, janma after janma, who took it on himself to protect his disciple right through in every detail, and that too life after life.

We shall see how the loving Guru's supervision and watch helped Nana Chandorkar in his latest birth (which is the one janma known to us) in matter after matter essential for his temporal and spiritual safety. Baba having implanted in Chandorkar sufficiently strong faith in and reliance on the Guru was constantly watering this plant with fresh instances of his loving watch and care. Even in apparently trivial matters such as catching trains and meeting official superiors, Baba (as was usual with him) showed his concern for the disciple and helped him as also so many devotees. It is this enduring and endless concern of the Guru that grips the disciple, and makes him understand God.

Nana Chandorkar and Haridas, a Kirtankar, were both at Shirdi, and both had to be at Ahmednagar the next day, and so had to catch a train, the scheduled time of which required their immediate leaving of Shirdi. So they went to take leave of Baba. Baba quietly told them both, 'You had better take your meal and then go for your train' Nana, having implicit reliance on his Guru did so, though it took some time for him to take his meal. Haridas did not wish to risk the

loss of money which he would get at the next day's engagement, and so, remembering the scheduled time and not Baba's words (on which he did not place much reliance), started off immediately without food and reached Kopergaon station and waited there for some hours, for the train was late by some hours. Baba knowing the lateness by his Antarjnana (or Ritambhara Prajna) gave the benefit of his knowledge to Nana who went up leisurely after meal, and found Haridas waiting at the station with a hungry stomach, for the late train. Nana was in time to catch the train, and Haridas learnt a lesson, which he no doubt would preach to others but did not practise himself, namely, that one must put implicit faith in Great Souls like the Guru Sai Deva, and not throw aside their words and rely upon one's own wisdom. This is the correct interpretation of the last line of the Niti sloka:-*Ushas Sasamsca Gargyastu, Sakunamtu Brihaspatih, Manojayamtu Maandavyo, Vipravakyam Janardhanah*, which means :—

(When one wishes to consult augury of success before starting on any action) Gargya praised starting at dawn; Brihaspati held omens e.g. flight of birds etc. to be the best guide; Mandavya held one's own's optimism and powerful determination were the best guides; Janardhana (Sri Krishna) viewed the words of the *Vipra* or holy ones as the best [Baba was a *Vipra* in the best and every sense of the term]. Baba also taught Nana incidentally another lesson before he left Shirdi (saying), 'Look at this Haridas. He comes with you. He leaves you behind and runs away for his own (fancied) advantage. You must always have friends who will not desert you in the middle like this'.

Another incident also may be quoted here. Nana was staying with Baba at Shirdi and wanted to start one morning to go to Kopergaon, where he had an appointment to meet the Collector. When he went to take leave of Baba in proper time, Baba simply said, 'Go tomorrow'. That meant, leave was denied. Others with less faith than Nana would have simply brushed aside Baba's advice and started off. But Nana had full faith in Baba, and consequently the advantage of staying one more day with Baba. Having been stopped for that day, he took leave of Baba the next day. Baba then said, 'You now go and meet the Collector'

When Nana went to Kopergaon and enquired of the office staff there as to what happened the previous day, they said that the Collector had sent a telegram that he was not coming that day but only on the following day. Baba did not receive a copy of the telegram, but by his own Antarjnana knew of the postponement of the appointment and gave Nana the benefit of it with the resulting further benefit of an extra day's stay with his Guru. Thus even in the most important official matters, Nana's faith made him follow Baba's words with great advantage to himself, temporally and spiritually.

Nana's benefit in temporal matters from Baba was not merely for himself but also for persons connected with him. Baba who saved Nana from the pangs of hunger and thirst in hill and forest would certainly not leave his disciple when his life was in danger. See the Bhagavata verse below that "He is no Guru who does not save one's life".

Gurur na sasyat svajano na sasyat

Pita na sasyat janani na sasyat

svapatir na sasyat Na mochayet

yas samupeta mrityum

which means, "If a person does not save one's life, when it is threatened by Death, that person is not a Guru, a kinsman, a father, a mother, a god or a husband".

Such a juncture arrived one day when Nana and Lele Sastri were starting from Poona in a tonga. They had gone a few miles when suddenly the horse reared, and the carriage capsized. That was a perilous moment. Both the occupants of the carriage were corpulent elderly people who would in such an accident ordinarily suffer serious damage to life and limb. Sai Baba, however, who was watching over Nana wherever he went, at that very moment blew what is called 'Bum-Bum', (the Conch sound—for at death people blow on the conch), keeping his hands in front of his mouth as though the hands were a conch. This is a signal of danger and distress. We shall give the account as it appears in the Gospel of Baba (See B. C. & S. 535-A).

535-A. One day at Shirdi, Baba made the dolorous Sankha sound (indicative of coming death) and said "Hallo, Nana is about to die! But, will I let him die?" At that time, N.G. Chandorkar and Lele Sastri were near Poona. They were in a tonga the horse of which reared and overturned the tonga. N.G.C. and Sastri were in peril of their life. But they picked themselves up and found that they had suffered no injury. When they reached Shirdi, they found that Baba had made the above declaration and had saved their lives.

Thus Baba saved Nana's life, just as Baba's Guru saved Baba's life. There is a saying that the string of a flower garland borrows its scent. Similarly Lele Sastri, who was not himself a staunch bhakta of Baba, derived his safety from his company with Nana Chandorkar. Baba on this occasion proved the truth of his statement (see B. C. S. 35 & 301) "If a devotee is about to fall, I stretch out my hands, and thus with four outstretched hands at a time, support him. I will not let him fall*. This is *Karavalambha*.

(1) *Na me bhaktah pranascyati*, i.e. My devotee shall not perish (BG IX-31).

(2) *Tan Vddharishyeham achirat Apatbhyo nowriva arnavat* i.e. I quickly save them as a boat saves in the ocean. SB XI (17)

It is not merely the friend of a devotee that Baba saves. Baba's interest is in every one in whom a devotee is interested. Nana was deeply interested in the fate, health, and life of his daughter Minatai. About 1904 or so, Nana Chandorkar was Deputy Collector at Jamner (then unconnected by train with Jalgaon). He was at Jamner along with his pregnant daughter, whose pregnancy was in a very advanced state. Unexpectedly the delivery, being the first delivery, proved troublesome and risky. The pains were prolonged for many long hours, and the poor young lady suffered torture. What could poor Nana do? He knew that Baba was aware of everything, and that there was no necessity to send a telegram or letter to him. So, he must do what he could in his own place. Being a very orthodox and pious Brahmin, he started a *Kashtanivaarana Homa* with the help of his Sastri. Still no relief was obtained. All the while, Baba was fully aware of what was going on at Jamner. At evening time, he called Ramgir Bua, a Gosavi, whom he used to call 'Babugir'. That Babugir was about to start away from there

but Baba commissioned him to go to Jamner first, in order to deliver to Nana Chandorkar a packet of udhi and a set of papers containing Bhisma's Aratis for the puja of Baba, modelled on the Pandharpur Aratis. Some one present handed over Rs. 2/- to the Gosavi to enable him to perform this journey. That Gosavi complained that the rail portion of his journey, namely, Kopergaon to Jalgaon, itself would take up Rs. 1-14-0 leaving only a balance of 2 annas to cover the ordinary road journey of 30 miles. Baba simply told him, 'Babugir, go, everything will be provided'. (See B.C.&S.31&535 C). Accordingly the Gosavi started. He got down at Jalgaon and was in a quandary. Railway officials were troubling visitors coming by train from infected areas, with a view to enforce quarantine rules, and there was no method by which he could escape them and go to Jamner. Suddenly he found a liveried peon bawling out, "Who is Babugir from Shirdi?" Then this Bua said, "I am Ramgir Bua whom Baba used to call 'Babugir'. And I am from Shirdi". Then that peon said that he had been sent by his "master" with a tonga and a horse to fetch him to Jamner. He gave him a meal also. Babugir fancied that Baba had sent word or wired to Chandorkar, and thus provided conveyance and meal for him. The distance of 30 miles was soon covered up by the tonga, and when very near Nana's quarters the carriage stopped, the peon told Bua, "There is the master's house; you had better go". Babugir got down for a natural purpose and when he turned back and looked, there was no peon, no horse, no carriage, nothing at all. How they could disappear on a clearly visible road, he could not understand. But anyhow right in front of him was the Deputy Collector's house. So he went there and found the Deputy Collector and his wife waiting. They had heard the rattle of a horse and carriage and were anxiously waiting. Babugir handed over to Nana the udhi saying, 'This is Baba's udhi sent to you for your daughter's sake'. At once the udhi was applied to Minatai, and thereafter it was no longer Minatai that was crying but her new born child, for she had easy delivery. The arati paper also was handed over to Nana for his approval, so that it might be used at Baba's puja at Shirdi, When Bua thanked the Deputy Collector for his timely sending of the candle and food, Nana was taken aback. He said he was not aware of anybody coming from Shirdi and

so he did not send anything. Then it was that both Baba and the Deputy Collector understood what Baba meant when he said 'Go, Babugir, everything will be provided'. It was Baba's extraordinary powers that provided the carriage, the horse, the live peon and the meal, without Chandorkar knowing anything about them. This shows how deeply Baba was interested in the welfare of Nana's family, and how he took upon himself and used his mysterious powers to help him in such extremities at a difficult parturition in a far off place like Jamner at a time when no proper medical aid was available. Thus Baba saved not merely Chandorkar's life but also the life of those connected with or dependent on him, by the use of all his superhuman powers.

Baba helped Chandorkar in other matters also. As even many present day devotees know, Baba takes charge of all affairs (including the apparently trivial affairs) of those who surrender to him and depend on him. That watch, care and provision by Baba form not merely the cause of surrender but also a very essential factor in keeping up surrender and leading a one to Laya. But we shall not enter into these minor details.

We shall take up the larger question of how Baba helped Nana in his spiritual course. Merely saving the physical life of Nana and those dependent on him would not suffice. Baba's work was to save his soul and train it to enable it to reach its goal. We shall see how Baba used every little occasion to help him. Even in temporal matters Baba's interference and help had a very good spiritual effect. Nana who noted how Baba's powers were vast, how he was watching him and his people from enormous distances and provided the necessary help in mysterious and apparently superhuman ways, soon began to get deeper and deeper realisation of Baba's divine nature. Baba's powers were far above the human level or limit just as Baba's love and supervision of many were far above the human level. None of us can take interest in even a dozen at a time and look after their affairs. Baba, however, was looking after the interests of hundreds or thousands of devotees, disciples and bhaktas and keeping watch over them all at all times and in distant and different quarters that they occupied. (See B.C.S. 479, saving 4000 persons & 35). This sort of power to know and power to protect

can only be called divine. No other term would fit (for this omnipotence, omniscience and ubiquity). Thus, while Nana was getting temporal help, he was also at the same time getting spiritual help, as he derived a very strong impression that Baba was nothing but God, that God in the abstract (Brahman) dealt with in the Upanishads (*Kend*) is not really accessible or available to people, even if they worshipped Him in the form of images, and that unless and until God took the *rupam* or form of a Gurudeva like Sai Baba, God was a remote unrecognizable or practically unfelt object. Nana noted how his poorva punya had crystallised itself into the very powerful (B C S 90-99) and highly loving Sai Baba. So we shall proceed to consider further how and in what other ways this all loving and all watching Baba promoted the spiritual and temporal welfare of Nana.*

"The feeling that one is always under the watching eye and protection of a Divine power that looks after the trivial and the important concerns of one alike and makes him successful and happy in everything has come to many Sai Bhaktas and they are constantly reporting it to Sai Sudha and the author. Has this protection and guidance and grant of success anything to explain it? Is there any parallel to it in our

The most essential part of man's nature is the ego. But in his endeavour to derive the best out of his physical life, a man's ego ordinarily runs riot and manifests itself in anti-social and anti-moral ways. Lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy, are all the various manifestations of this ego, and each of these has to be put down, and the danger of allowing free scope to these must be rubbed into the soul of the disciple so that he may become a fit person to attain life's goal.

Regarding this, much instruction has been imparted openly and in hidden or mysterious ways by Sai Baba to devotees like Nana Chandorkar, and we shall do well to study the way in which the lessons were taught while benefiting by the lessons themselves. But before proceeding to deal with each of them, we must remember that we are dealing with human nature, and that the so-called

Shadriput, (i.e. Six Enemies)⁴ namely, *Kama* or Lust, *Krodha* or Anger, *Lobha* or Greed, *Moha* or Delusion, *Mada* or Pride, and *Matsarya* or Jealousy are evils mostly from the standpoint of the sadhaka aiming at crossing samsara and reaching a perpetual state of perfect bliss. But to ordinary men who have very little hope or chance of attaining the high goal, namely, perfect *Scanti* and *Mukti*, complete freedom from all these six enemies is an impracticable ideal. And perhaps for the continuance of society and the species, absolute freedom from the first two or even the first three is not desirable. *Kama* and *Lobha* are desires for external objects which are generally needed by an individual in the circumstances in which he is placed and, therefore, it is wrong to totally suppress attachment to external objects so long as a person wants to retain a body and live in the world. Attachment is called *Kama* when it is directed to the satisfaction of the sex urge, but the satisfaction of that urge is ordained by God as part of the work of created beings to continue the species, Hence Lord Krishna says in the Gita that the attachment to the opposite sex for purposes of sex gratification, if limited to those lines which Dharma draws, is divine; and God himself is that love, sex-love.

Dharma aviruddho bhuteshu kaamosmi bharatarshabha.

This means, 'O Bull amongst the Bharata clan, I am the sex urge when it does not conflict with Dharma'. The royal Raghu line is praised thus "*Prajayai Griha medhinam*" i.e, having sex relations to continue the lineage. Readers will note

⁴ Vedas and puranas? There is one word *Kamavasayita*, i. e. achieving all objects, in Yoga sutras and Bhagavata and one hint or instance of it in Bhagavata Purana (re Vamana Avatar). When the Asura Bali went on defeating the Devas and conquering all the three worlds, Indra complained and sought the aid of his guru Brihaspati who then said, *Jaanami Maghavan Scatror unnaler asya kaaranam Scishyaya Upabrutam tejo Bhrugubhih Brahma vaadibhih* i.e. I know the cause of this increased prosperity of this enemy (Bali). His Guru Sukra Acharya, master of Mantra sastras has given him the benefit of his mastery of mantras.

that a total exclusion of sex contact or sex urge for all is not proper and will do no good. On the other hand, an attempt to achieve what is in the circumstances impossible or impracticable will result in numerous evils.

Similarly about *Krodha*. *Krodha* is the manifestation of the excessive vigour of the ego when it tries to assert itself against obstacles to the gaining of desired objects, services, etc. As objects are desired and have to be acquired in worldly life, *Krodha* or a resolve to overcome obstacles must be there for the temporal welfare of beings. See Gospel i.e. B.C.S. 313.

313. Baba said:—'*Yama Niyama* : Restrain lust— wholly in respect of others' wives, and partly in respect of your own. Enjoyment of marital pleasure is permissible. But be not enslaved by it. Mukti is impossible to persons addicted to lust. Lust ruins mental balance and strength or firmness. It affects the learned also. Unruly buffaloes are controlled by tying a log to their neck as a clog to their movements. *Viveka* (i.e. prudence or discrimination) must be tied to one's mind when sex attracts. Desires must be controlled. You must master them and not be their slave (*Vijitatma, Jitendriyah*).

'Yet you can (and must) use them, the inner enemies, within limits :—e.g. Besides *Kama* for the wife, have *Krodha* (anger) against unrighteousness, *Lobha* (greed) for Harinama, uttering God's name, *Moha* (fondness) for Mukti (salvation), and *Matsarya* (hatred) for evil action. Have no *Mada* (pride)'.

So long however as the sex urge and the anger urge are pulling at a person, there is no Scanti or perfect poise, no buddhi or perfect satvic understanding of things as they are, including the Self, and they are therefore obstacles to his spiritual advance.

No self-realisation is possible when sex urge. Self-urge, and other urges are ruining the equilibrium of the Self. As for *Lobha* etc., they are obviously violations of social rules and common wisdom. It is good to desire well-being but bad to be greedy. Hence *Lobha* (greed) is bad. To desire under wrong ideas is *Moha* (Delusion). This is bad. *Mada* is pride, conceit, vanity, or other kindred states and obviously implies very wrong and improper valuation of oneself and consequent

wrong behaviour towards others. *Matsarya* (jealousy) is the worst of these six mental upsets, and the reasons are those which are set out in BCS 225.

LUST

With these prefatory remarks, we shall begin with lust, and see how Baba inculcated truths about lust, and made Nana Chandorkar absorb them. Nana was a very respectable, married gentleman, having children and having family traditions and a position to maintain. Further, his training had given him excellent qualities of self-restraint and propriety of behaviour. So, he was not ordinarily what one would call a lustful, lewd, or lecherous person. He was on the other hand a very properly behaved, and excellent head of a family. Yet, the saying goes 'Even an elephant may slip'. Baba, who was watching Nana wherever he was, and at every moment, noticed that he needed to be taught and trained in the matter of lust also. On one occasion when Nana was sitting next to Baba at the Dwarakamayee, two Muslim ladies were standing for a time at a distance, evidently waiting to see when this Hindu (Nana) would go away. They had to remove their veils at the time of taking darsan, which meant, putting their bare foreheads on Baba's feet; and being gosha ladies, they did not wish a Hindu to see their faces. When Nana tried to get up on this account and go away, Baba pulled him down and said, 'Let these people come if they care'. So, the ladies had to approach Baba and take darsan with Nana by his side. Nothing happened when the elderly lady removed her veil and took her darsan. But when the younger did the same, her face struck Nana as remarkably beautiful. The sheen of the eyes, the brilliance of the countenance, the perfect proportion of the features, and the indescribable charm of the whole person, were such that Nana was at once smitten with her beauty. When his mind was thus occupied, the lady finished her darsan and resumed her veil. Then the thought struck Nana, 'Shall I have another opportunity of seeing this angelic face?'¹ Baba at once slapped him on the thigh. Then the ladies departed. Baba asked him, 'Do you know why I slapped you?' Nana admitted that his thoughts were low and unfit for one in Baba's company. He asked, 'How is it that even when I am next to you, such low thoughts sway my mind?' (B.C.&S: 205). Baba replied, 'You are a man after all,

and the body being full of desires, these spring up as sense objects approach.' Then Baba asked, 'Are there not lovely temples with well coloured exterior? When we go there, do we admire the exterior beauty or the God within? When you are seeing God within, do you ever care for the outside beauty of the building? Similarly, remember God is not only in temples. He is found in *every creature*.⁵

"Therefore when you see a beautiful face, remember that it is a temple and the image of the God within is the Jiva, a preeminent part of the Universal Soul. So, think at once of God—or the Universal Soul in every object, whether beautiful or ugly. These forms reveal the God within. There is nothing wrong in admiring beauty, but the thought must follow at once, "If this object is so beautiful, how much more beautiful and powerful must be the God who made this object and inhabits it? Thinking thus, you will not get smitten by a beautiful face hereafter". This was the upadesa given to Nana. Baba had not to go further and stop him from any sinful acts due to lust, as he had to do in another's case. (See B. C. & S. 206)

H. V. Sathé, when once staying at Shirdi, was in danger of being dragged by lust into the mire of sin. Baba, when he saw him, asked him whether he had been to the "Sala." Sala means school, but it was the local name of the house in which a young lady with considerable beauty (and bad reputation) lived.—Later in the day, H. V. Sathé went to that lady's lodgings (Sala). He carried on conversation with her behind closed doors, and there was imminent danger of a terrible and ruinous fall. Just at the nick of the moment, the door was flung open. Baba stood on the threshold and made signs to Sathé signifying, 'What! You have come all

⁵ *Dehol Devalayah proktah Scivo Jivah Sanatanah, Tyajet Ajnana Nirmalyam Soham Bhavena Pujayet.*

So says the Upanishad. which means 'The body is said to be a temple. The god (in it) is the eternal individual soul Jiva. (So) Remove the Nescience-Ajnana which is Nirmalya (used up flowers). "Soham" "I am He". Remaining with the realisation must be the worship".

2. See also S B XI (II) 45,46.

this distance to your Guru, and are you now descending to hell? Oh! What an excellent course!' Sathe was shocked and quietly went away and never again visited her house. In the case of Nana, there was no chance of his going to such extremes. On the other hand, he was naturally self-controlled, and with Baba's guidance, he developed so much of reverence for the female form that even when alone in a sequestered chamber, within closed doors with a young, beautiful person, he still would retain reverence for the lady and not have thoughts of sex. This was demonstrated in the case of Bannu Mai.

Bannu Mai (a young Muslim girl of 20) lived in a village, Bodegaon, 50 miles away from Ahmednagar, and she had the local reputation of being a mad girl. She was possessed of great beauty. She behaved most erratically and wandered anywhere and everywhere without dress amidst bushes and thorns and did not show the least sign of observing the rules of propriety demanded of women. Her mother thought she was hopelessly mad. So also thought most of the villagers. But a few had noted that her conduct showed that she was highly inspired and that she was a saint. Nana wanted to take darsan of her and asked Baba for permission. Baba, though he first objected, finally granted the permission saying, 'Go, you will have darsan'. That darsan was no easy joke. Nana went with plenty of preparations, taking a tent, bathing materials, ornaments, food, Sari (dress) etc., and setting these up, was waiting for her. He could not find out where she was, and nobody could tell him anything about her. Some people even got angry at Nana, a young officer questioning about the whereabouts of a lady who mostly went naked. Then finally, worried in his mind, Nana thought of Baba and prayed to him. When he opened his eyes, Bannu Mai was right in front of him on the road. He made his prostration (namaskar) with a feeling of reverence and without the least touch of the sexual urge. He began to take out the thorns that were found on her feet, but in a second, the saint, who did not care for such good offices, got up and went away. Again Nana was in great difficulties. He wanted that she should come, have a bath, wear the cloth and the ornaments he had brought for her, and should taste the naivedya which he had placed inside the tent. He waited and waited, and at last prayed to Baba. Suddenly Bannu Mayi

appeared, entered the tent, had her bath, put on new clothes, the ornaments and the *tali* or token of *Saumangalya* (as Goddess Parvati must wear a tali) specially prepared for her, and ate some of the naivedya. Nana fell at her feet, treating her as Mother Goddess, and at once she disappeared. Nana spent the night in a temple within closed doors, and early morning, before starting to go away, he just thought that it would be a special blessing if Bannu Mai should give him one more darsan before he departed. In a second, Bannu Mai was somehow there within closed doors right in front of him. Nana fell at her feet. Obviously Bannu Mai was a highly advanced Siddha and perfectly pure, and Nana with perfect purity, thought only of falling at her feet, and had not the least touch of sex urge at the presence of a young and beautiful lady in solitude within closed doors. Thus, Bannu Mai's case is a fairly good proof that Nana had conquered his sex urge at least to the extent possible.

KRODHA

Krodha means anger. It would include hatred, disgust, and kindred feelings. In the usual sense, anger is that which tends to vent one's full force against the adverse creature or person. Therefore, it is extremely unsocial. All the same it is a necessity. Creatures are together in this world, and there is the struggle for the survival of the fittest, and creatures have to obtain objects coveted for by more than one and, therefore, the obtaining of an object requires the venting of one's full force against adversaries or adverse forces. Hence, anger is sometimes treated as a virtue, and, in any case, a necessity of the situation in the world as it goes (especially in war). Therefore, for a virtuous person like Rama, the epithet applied is '*Jitakrodhah*', Anger-controller, that is, not that he had no anger, but that he had conquered it. For Shirdi Rama (that is Sri Sai Baba) also, we can use the same epithet) namely, '*Jitakrodhah*'. 'When the anger was on, Rama is described by Valmiki as '*Kalagni Sadruscah Krodhah*'. That is, 'When in anger, he (Rama) resembled the terrific fire that devours the world at its end'- Rama put on this anger for purposes of battle when he went to meet Ravana. He checked it when he found that Ravana had been beaten to the ground. He told him then, 'You had better go home. Come tomorrow again for battle' showing that Rama

was a *Jitakrodha*, that is he could rouse anger up at one time and stop it at the proper time and place. Baba also had need for anger, a physico-psychical need that could be understood only by persons who thoroughly studied Baba's physico-psychical organism. Anyhow, it has been noticed that Baba himself was in towering rage at times, and this appeared to be an ungovernable rage to people. They would regard Baba at those times as mad with rage. G. G. Narke once saw Baba in such a condition, and thought for the moment that Baba was a mad man. Mahlsapathy also had similar impressions. Baba corrected G. G. Narke when he came to bow to him, and said, 'Narke, I am not a mad man', knowing his momentary thought. That is, even when he was in a towering rage, he could read Narke's mind. Now reading another's mind is the result of the clairvoyant power which requires a considerable degree of placidity, *satva guna*, clear buddhi, and *scaanti*. So, Baba had all these even when he was in a towering rage. Similarly on several other occasions, of which examples are given in B.C.&S. paras 212, 213 to 218, Baba, when apparently under a wave of anger, was really placid enough to note with calmness who had come, what for, and how they required to be accommodated immediately e.g. Uddhavesa Bua, Police Sub-Inspector Samant, and Pleader Joshi of Thana each separately; and each on a separate occasion noted that Baba suddenly stopped his rage, carried out their wishes, gave them calm and cool replies and udhi. This is "*Jitakrodhah*." Rouse up your anger, use it for a time, and when you do not want it, put it back into its scabbard; this is the proper use of anger. But people do not always understand it, and may plead Baba's anger as an excuse for their own. If they really wish to have anger like Baba, they must be able to shut it up at will; but that ability they have not.

Baba however put down anger as the staunch enemy of all equanimity so absolutely essential for one's upward march in realising the final state of life called *saanti* (*Om santih, santih, santih*). So he told a Ramdasi, who was overpowered by anger when he learnt that his Vishnu Sahasranama had been taken away without his permission or knowledge and given away to Shama.

When Jog got angry with Baba who asked him for dakshina, Baba told him not to give way to anger. Some devotees are generally short tempered, and to such devotees Baba gave the special advice that they should not yield to that weakness. R. B. Purandhare and Mrs. Pradhan were two such persons. Baba said to Purandhare (B.C. & S. para 210), 'If any body 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 leave the place. But do not battle with him and give tit for tat. I feel sick and disgusted when you quarrel with others'. He told Mrs. Pradhan, 'If any one talks ten words at us, let us answer with one word, if we reply at all. Do not battle with any one'. On another occasion, Baba said (B.C. & S. 208), 'If any one is angry with another, he wounds me to the quick. If any one abuses another, I feel pain. If any one bravely endures the abuse, I feel highly pleased.'

Baba's self-control and carrying out this same advice has been noticed at times. A half-crazy sadhu called Nana Wali, on one occasion came to Baba and, standing before him, said, 'Baba, get up, I want to sit in your seat'. Any other person would have kicked Nanawali out, but Baba quietly vacated his seat and the impertinent Nana Wali occupied it. After sitting on it a few moments, the crazy man thought he had done too much. So, he got up, requested Baba to resume his seat, and fell at his feet, and Baba was calm throughout. This shows to what extent Baba could control his anger. In paragraph 215, Baba has said, 'I get angry with none. Will a mother harm her little ones? I love devotion. I am the bonds slave of my devotees'. He also told Nana on one occasion, 'I am not angry with you'. Baba told Mrs. Pradhan, 'You see I did not get angry with any one today.' On one occasion, when he was uttering words in a towering rage, he uttered in the middle, 'Let blessings be to all', [BCS 218] c.f. "*sarve janah sukhino bhavantu*". This blessing cannot coexist with anger. It is characteristic of a peaceful and loving frame of mind. Baba, therefore, might be considered during his towering rage to be driving away spells of thought or other ethereal waves which might be coming to harm his devotees or the public and the anger might be necessary to quench and beat back those waves. Two such instances of useful anger may be pointed out here.

When B.V.Dev wanted Baba to overcome some wretched force of destiny which prevented him from completing his study or pothi or parayan of Jnaneswari whenever he started it, Baba first repeatedly took large dakshinas from him. Finally he fell foul of him, got suddenly angry, and used these words, 'Why are you stealing my rag? Is it your way to steal and that despite your grey hairs? I will kill you with a hatchet'. This might be a special shock treatment needed for Dev's mental state. Dev wondered what this thunder of anger meant. Then Baba cooled down and said, 'Does not matter. Give me Rs. 12 dakshina', Dev gave the dakshina. Then Baba said, 'Go on reading pothi'. Dev then started reading pothi, namely, Jnaneswari. Till that time, his pothi reading was ending in failure. After Baba's anger directed evidently against adverse forces, there was no more obstacle, A very similar incident took place when Gadgi Bua (who was building a big dharmasala at Nasik for which funds first came in lakhs and later no money was forthcoming), approached Baba in order to overcome the unseen unlucky (*duradrishta*) forces. As soon as he came near, Baba used angry and bad words and curses and abused him. The Bua laughed out, Baba also laughed out. Gadgi Bua went away. Baba had driven away the adverse forces, and Gadgi Bua again got plenty of funds, and the dharmasala was completed. Thus Baba's anger is not to be understood literally. It is evidently directed against unseen forces. Similarly when Baba came as a young fakir and stayed in some lonely place, he used to shout with anger, laugh, or do other things. He was evidently always dealing from the beginning with unseen forces and directing his anger, laughter, etc. at them. G.S. Khaparde notes several times in his diary that Baba used "hard words" meaning foul and angry abuse, the cause of which the persons present could not understand.

Before leaving the subject of anger, we may also refer to other instances of Baba's outbursts of anger which had special purpose, and which were not mystic processes like the above. Sometimes they were cases of "*double entendre*." One instance may be immediately given. Shama, that is Madhav Rao Deshpande, was bitten by a snake, and his life was in danger. People are accustomed to take such patients immediately to a particular temple. In Shama's

case, however, Baba was all the God he knew, and he wanted to go to the Masjid straight away and he accordingly went there. Baba, instead of treating him civilly, flew into a furious rage, and said, 'Do not climb up Bamnia. If you do, take care. Get down. Get down, *Hat Mage Hat Mage, Bamnia. Var Mar Jav, Hat Mage, Hal Mage*'. Shama thought that his refuge was gone, that Baba was not protecting, but driving him away. Just one minute later, Baba coolly and quietly said, 'Shama, come up' and gave him directions to be observed by cobra-bitten patients, and asked him to go home, and there observe the usual directions of keeping awake and moving about and not going to sleep for 24 hours. Shama was thus saved, and he survived the cobra venom. Then what did the words mean? '*Hat Mage, Ha! Mage*' did not mean that Shama was to go down but only the poison should go down from his system. "*Bamnia Var Mat Jav*" should not be construed as addressed to the Bamnia Brahmin, namely Shama, and as asking him not to come up. But they were addressed to the poison. The poison was not to go up, but it should go down the Brahmin Shama.

Another instance of a similar sort was where Baba's outburst of anger was merely a device to enable a diarrhoea patient to get groundnuts. Kaka Mahajani had diarrhoea, and he carried a (*chombu*) vessel of water with him, and was in front of the Dwarakamayee. Baba was inside, and there were plenty of persons outside. Suddenly Baba burst out into violent rage and people fled in all directions. See B. C. & S. 392. People took to their heels and cleared the premises, Kaka Mahajani also was slowly moving towards his "chombu" and wanted to go out. Baba suddenly came and stopped him and sat next to him. There was a packet of groundnuts left by some one who was eating them, and who in his hurry to escape safe, left the groundnuts behind. Baba took up the groundnuts and shared it with Kaka Mahajani saying, 'Let us eat groundnuts'. They both ate the groundnuts, and Baba asked Kaka Mahajani to drink water on top of it. This is not exactly the treatment for diarrhoea which any doctor would dare to give, for that would aggravate it. But Baba said 'Your anal sphincter is now tightly closed'. This cured Kaka Mahajani of his diarrhoea.

LOBHA

Now we shall take up the remaining "shadripus" and see how Baba coached his dear devotee Nana in respect of these matters also.'So far as Lobha is concerned, it is excessive greed and is looked down upon even in an ordinary person, and much more in a person who aims at spiritual uplift. But so far as Nana was concerned, Lobha does not appear to have been a defect in his character. In any case, Lobha is only an exaggeration of one's attachment to moneys and goods. Baba took very good care to see that Nana's attachment did not reach excessive heights. Baba adopted his usual methods for this purpose. It is 'Dana' that is the exact opposite of, and, therefore, the antitode for, the venom called attachment or greed. This truth comes from even the date of the Brihadaranyaka (V.2). Prajapati was approached by his three sets of children, the Devas, the Naras, and the Asuras. Each of these came and said, 'Please give us instruction as to what we should do'. Prajapati answered. '*Da, Da, Da,*' to each of these. In the case of the gods, the '*Da*' required for them was *Dama*, that is, self-control, moderation. In the case of the Asuras, the '*Da*' required was *Daya*, i.e.. Mercy. Their excessive cruel nature had to be met by the spirit of compassion, which was the antidote for their cruelty. In the case of men, the '*Da*' was '*Daana*' i.e., charity. Man's natural instinct is to grasp, to be greedy, and to get more and more, and the best way of checking this greed is by making man give up all that he has got. *Daana* forces a man to part with his money, etc. and by constant parting, he will get accustomed to feel quite nonchalant, quite unaffected while parting with moneys or when moneys are lost. Thus '*Da*' (*Daana*) is the recipe given to men as the rule of their life by Prajapati.

The importance of eradicating greed from one's nature may be seen from the simplest and one of the best of all the 108 Upanishads—viz., *Isavasya Upantshad*, so much praised by Mahatma Gandhi. In the very first verse of this Upanishad, the order is given, '*Ma Gridhah Kasyasvid Danam*'. That is, 'Covet not wealth whosesoever it may be.' Or it may be translated thus, 'Covet not; Whose is wealth?' This means, What is your wealth today is mine tomorrow and somebody else's on the third day. So there is nothing fixed about wealth, and one

need not concern oneself so much about this fleeting possession. Therefore, *Daana* has been specially insisted upon not only in the Vedas and Upanishads (*dakshina* is prescribed for all the rituals) but also by Baba in his daily practice. Baba the Soul of Vairagya never cared to ask for moneys in the beginning. But when visitors began to rush upon him in crowds, in hundreds, he began to ask for *dakshina*, which had various meanings and explanations. One way of keeping out undesirable people, the over-greedy people who think of nothing except money is to ask for *dakshina*. A lawyer, who went to see Baba when alive, noted that he, a lawyer, accustomed to get money from others, was being asked to pay money to Baba. So he felt repelled and never again visited Baba during his life time. That is evidently one of the ideas underlying Baba's demand in some cases. In many other cases also, the demand of *dakshina* serves the purpose of reducing attachment. In the case of Nana, Baba used to demand off and on various sums, and so Nana was accustomed to take with him large sums like Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 whenever he visited Shirdi. Whenever Baba asked for money, Nana would give him money. This constant giving of money to Baba would naturally reduce his attachment to wealth. Baba, however, used this demand on one occasion for another purpose, which deals with the next subject.

"MOHA" i. e. DELUSION

Nana was under the delusion that he was the great supplier of Baba, and that Baba had to depend upon him for moneys. Nana had to be disabused of that idea. So, Baba made use of Sri M. B. Rege on one occasion, and exhausted all the funds he had by taking them out as *dakshina*, and when M. B. Rege said that he had no more money, Baba said, 'Borrow'. 'From whom' asked Mr. Rege. Baba sent him first to Shama who had no money at all, and who was a very poor man. Shama's explanation of Baba's demand was that Baba wanted *him* and not his cash, and, therefore, he (Baba) wanted him to feel the want of cash was nothing. So saying, he sent his namaskars through Rege to Baba. Then Baba sent Mr. Rege to H. S. Dixit who also had not the money with him at that time. He explained Baba's demand to Mr. Rege thus: 'You must not feel begging at all to be a shame, much less begging for the sake of your master'. Then Baba sent him

to Nana Chandorkar. Nana Chandorkar then explained to M.B. Rege his policy. He used to leave one half of his money at Kopergaon and come with the balance to Shirdi, and when this was exhausted, he would send for the reserve at Kopergaon. When Mr. Rege reported this, Baba sent for Nana Chandorkar and took from him (by repeatedly asking for dakshina) all the money he had in his possession. Then he again asked him for dakshina, before the reserve from Kopergaon arrived. Nana felt humiliated. His *moha* received a blow. The subjects of *moha* and dakshina are closely connected with daana.

Daana - Alms Giving

Charity or alms-giving is stressed in every religion as also in the Hindu scriptures as stated already. Yet as very few understand and practise it correctly, Baba had to give Nana instructions on Daana to reduce *lobha*, *moha* and *mada* especially through increasing contact with God. Baba's instructions to Nana are found in the Gospel 306-309. The first advice was that alms giving, should be straightforward. No one when asked for alms should utter falsehood and say 'I have not got it' (the money or other things prayed for), when he has got it, but only decline to give it in polite terms and say that circumstances do not allow the giving. No crooked ways should be adopted. Yet after this advice was given, some time later, Nana, who had promised to pay Rs. 300 for charity to be done at the Kopergaon Datta temple, did not bring the money and therefore avoided a visit to the temple, which was on his way to Shirdi. He, with the approval of his friend, took a detour through a very thorny path, as a result of which he and his friend ran thorns in their bodies. When they reached Shirdi, Baba would not talk to them.

C:— Why don't you talk to me?

B:—Nana, when a man says he will remember the lessons I taught him but really does not, how can I talk to him?

C:—Baba I remember all your lessons.

B:—You gentleman, you evade seeing 'Sircar' (God Datta) and take a detour. Why? Because the sadhu will ask you for Rs. 300. Is this the way to remember my lesson? If you have not the money, if it was not easy to arrange to get it. you

have only to tell him the fact. Will that saint eat you? But what device is this to avoid the temple of God for fear of the saint demanding money? Well then, have not thorns pierced your feet and body and the posterior part of your sapient friend? How can I talk to such a person?

Again Baba advised Nana to give his alms without any arrogance or anger and that if any beggar was not pleased and wanted more, then the beggar should be answered suavely. Wrath and official authority should not be flung at him. Nana thought this quite easy. But on one occasion when his wife was being pestered at Kalyan by a Brahmin beggar woman, who was not content with one-eighth of a measure, one-fourth of a measure, one-half of a measure, or one measure, or even 2 measures, of *Bhajani (Poriarisi porikollit)* i.e. fried and seasoned rice, and who threatened not to leave the house (at all) till the whole stock of four measures in the possession of the lady was handed over to her, Nana's wife lost patience and sent for her husband. Nana came and gave it hot to the beggar woman. 'Either you take what is given or the peon will neck you out', he stiffly remarked. Then the beggar woman left. When later Nana went to Baba, Baba again refused to talk to him. "*Mitra Dandam Abhashanam*" is the wellknown saying. That means, The way to punish a friend is by refusing to talk to him.' When Nana asked for an explanation, Baba said, 'You forgot the lesson I gave. When that beggar woman was importuning you for more and more *bhajani*, why did you show your anger and official authority, and threaten to neck her out? What mattered it if you suavely refused to give more? The woman would have remained for some time longer and left of her own accord'. Nana recognised that this mysteriously overwatching guardian angel of his was watching him every moment and anticipating the temptations and evils that would befall him, and that he should be more careful in carrying out his (Baba's) instructions, Thus, *Lobha* by leading to arrogance, insolence etc. in Nana was put down by Baba, and Nana recognised more and more what true *daana* was. True *daana* is thus described in Bhagavad Gita.

Daatavyam ity vat daanam. diyale anupakarine.

Dese kalecha patrecha tad daanam saatvikam smritam,

The beggar is not to be treated as a nuisance or as a contemptible individual. According to Hindu religion, the beggar is God himself. You have to treat him as Narayana, coming to you to give you an opportunity to serve him. So. the gift to the beggar must be with due respect and not with contempt or insolence. The above stanza means: 'The gift must be at the proper place, at the proper time, and to the proper person. It must be given with the idea. It is my duty to give this. I claim no particular merit in giving it', The gift must not be for a consideration or with a view to reward or recompense. This is satvic *daana*".

One more instance of Baba's reducing "*moha*" of 'mineness' is this: We might mention also what Baba taught Nana as to Karma to weaken *moha* on the same occasion. The *moha* that sways practically everyone of us is the attachment we feel to our children and to other members of our family and the feeling that we cannot be happy unless they are always with us. Birth and death are serious things which condition our happiness. (See B. C. and S. 371). We have already referred to Baba's help in the case of Minatai's difficult labour. Unfortunately within a few months after its birth, her child died. A short time before delivery, the husband of Minatai also had died. Minatai was very young. The whole family was in gloom. They went to Shirdi and sat in sullen silence before Baba. Baba asked, 'Why are you so sullen?'. Then Nana said, 'Baba, you know everything. While we are under your care, these calamities have befallen us. We are bereft of child and son-in-law'. Baba answered, "If you care for child and son-in-law and come to me for that, you are mistaken. You should not come to me for these. These are not in my power. The birth of a child and the death of relatives are dependent on poorva karma. Even Parameswar, the Great God, who has created this world, cannot alter this. 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". Nana asked 'if that is so, Baba, how is it that you tell someone, "You will have a son" and he gets a son, and you tell another "You will get employment" and he gets it? Are these not *chamatkars* of yours?' Baba answered, 'No, Nana. I do not do any *chamatkars*. You have your village astrologers. They work at three or four days ahead and

give out their predictions, some of which come true. I look just further ahead. What I say happens. My art also is a sort of astrology.

But you do not understand this. To you, my words look like *chamatkars*, 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 reverence on to God and see that you are really benefited'. Baba thus weakened his *moha* or unconditional and excessive attachment to relations. Baba's further advice in this matter is given elsewhere.

MADA

Thus far we have dealt with *Lobha* and *Moha*. We shall next proceed to see how Baba dealt with the other two items, namely, *Mada* and *Maatsarya*. *Mada* is pride, conceit, vanity, or display of one's ill-conceived high opinion of oneself in a way displeasing and disgusting to others. That pride may be based upon either caste or wealth or learning or physical strength, etc. In the case of Nana, pride of learning and caste was in him, and it had to be duly toned down. That which is the hardest to conquer is pride of learning. This over-attachment to learning is called '*Vidya Vasana*'. When we have to shake off *vasana* (tendency) after *vasana* to get into pure Satva of Brahman, one serious obstacle is this Vidya vasana, the idea 'I am a learned man', 'I know all the Vedas', 'I must consider everything in my own style and cannot accept somebody else's dictum.' These are all vidya vasana traces, and all of them are fatal to one's chance of attaining Mukti. So, Baba had to put down this pride of learning in Nana. Nana was not very offensively parading his learning, but still had an idea that his knowledge of Sanskrit and the Gita with Sankara Bhashya placed him high above the ordinary run of men in knowledge. Baba wanted at one stroke to pull him by the heels and show him how dangerous his conceit was and at the same time teach him the duties of a (sishya) pupil and lay the foundation for Brahma-realisation (which cannot coexist with Ego and Egotism). One day when Nana was massaging Baba's feet, he was mumbling something to himself. Baba asked him what it was. Nana said that it was a Sanskrit verse.

Baba : What verse?

Nana : A Gita verse.

Baba : Recite it audibly.

Then Nana gave out Bhagavad Gita, Chapter IV, verse 34, dealing with Sishya and Guru relation. Baba knew exactly what he was mumbling and caught him exactly at the point wanted. It dealt with the Guru's teaching the sishyas, and that is what Baba wanted—to disabuse him of his conceit and pride based on an ego which barred God-realisation or *jiva brahma-aikya*. The stanza runs as follows :

Tadviddhi pranipaatenaa paripraschnena sevaya,

Upadekshyanti lejnaanatan jnaamnah tatvadarscinah,

Baba asked Nana whether he knew the meaning and, if so, to give it. When Nana gave the general purport, Baba ordered him to give a word for word translation with strict reference to number, gender, case, tense, mood, and other parts of grammar. Nana wondered how the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar could be understood by Baba who showed no trace of linguistic, literary or any other education. Anyhow he went on giving the word for word meaning. Then Baba began a cross-examination of the severest sort.

Baba : Well, what does 'Ta?' refer to?

Nana: Jnana.

Baba: Which Jnana?

Nana : Jnana referred to in the previous verse.

Baba : What does *pranipata* mean?

Nana : It means prostration or bowing down.

Baba : What does 'Pata' mean?

Nana: The same.

Then Baba asked :—If '*Pranipata*' and '*Pata*' meant the same thing, would the author (Vyasa) have used two extra needless syllables? Similarly about '*Pariprasna*', Nana said, '*Pariprasna*' means questioning, and '*Prasna*' also meant the same. When asked whether the author was again needlessly adding two syllables, Nana could not explain the difference. Similarly about *Seva*. Nana said that it was merely service like massaging, which he was doing.

Baba : Nothing else?

Nana : Nothing else so far as I can see.

In that way Baba puzzled him word after word and phrase after phrase and puzzled him also with the general question, why Krishna, a Jnani, should refer Arjuna to other Jnanis instead of himself giving him Jnana. Again he asked, 'Is not Arjuna a soul of the nature of Chaitanya, i.e., knowledge?' Then, when this was answered in the affirmative, he asked 'How can (or why should) knowledge be given to that which is already knowledge?'. Chandorkar was simply dumbstruck. After putting several other questions like this, Baba finally asked, 'By a difference in syllabification, can you read one extra syllable (without damaging the metre or verse)?' 'Yes' answered Nana 'We can say *Upadekshyanti Te {a} jnanam*. Then Nana added, 'What! this reading of the Guru giving *Ajnanam* is not in Sankara Bhashya.' Baba said. "That does not matter, if that makes a better meaning'. Nana could not understand how the Guru's giving *Ajnanam* could make a better meaning. Then Nana Chandorkar was thoroughly humbled. He felt that he was before a giant who knew Sanskrit, who knew the Upanishads, and who knew everything. He then asked Baba himself to explain, and Baba's answers to his own questions revealed a wealth of knowledge of Upanishadic material and a cleverness in twisting the words into a new meaning. So far as the word 'Jnanam' is concerned, Baba quoted Upanishads and said 'Is not Jnana that which is beyond Mind and Speech (quoting *Yatovacho Nivartante*) ? Is not Jnana, *Avang Manasa Gocharam*, i.e. beyond Vak and Manas?' Nana had to say 'yes'. Then Baba said, 'Therefore, what the Guru says through his mouth is not *Jnana*, and what is not *Jnana* is *Ajnana*! So thoroughly humiliated, Nana wondered what it all led to. Baba, however, explained, 'Just as one thorn removes another, the Guru's teaching which is verbal begins as *Ajnana* and removes the *Ajnana* of the sishya which is but a cover over the sishya's knowledge, and the result is *Jnana*. Therefore what the Guru teaches is primarily *Ajnana* which tends to result in *Jnana*. *Jnana* is not created, but is always there, and is not uttered. The uttered word, like an optician's instrument, simply removes the cataract from the eye of the pupil who, thereafter, sees and recognizes himself in a state of pure knowledge'. Thus Baba went on explaining

the whole stanza and insisted upon the sishya's duties. Baba said, 'Seva is not any ordinary massage. You must surrender *Tan Man Dhan*, body, mind and possessions. You must not feel that you are rendering service to the master. Your body already surrendered is the master's property, and you must feel "No merit is in me. I am merely making the body, which is yours, serve you". That is "Seva." *Pariprasna* and *pranipata* were similarly explained to show how thorough must be the spirit of surrender and the spirit of earnestness. '*Pranipata*' must be '*Sashtanga dandavat* like a stick falling down. You must feel that you are nothing. You are only a zero. The Guru is everything, and, therefore, thorough humility is involved in *pranipata*. *Pariprasna* means an earnest questioning and repeated questioning, i.e. questioning carried on up to the point of getting full and complete enlightenment impressed upon you. This is *pariprasna*. It is not merely putting questions with a view to trapping up the master, and catching him at some mistake or simply asking for the fun of it, (like Pilate who asked Jesus "What is Truth", and did not wait for an answer but went away.)

We shall narrate another instance where Nana's pride of learning received a good shock. Nana was observing the vedic injunction that at every meal he should prepare the Vaisvadeva food and, after offering it to God, wait for an *Atithi*, i.e. guest, before he should eat it. Nana was in so many camps and waiting, and yet he never found an *Atithi* or guest. So, one day he thought, "How could Vedas give such a nugatory or infructuous injunction?" With that thought uppermost in his mind, he went to Baba. Though he did not utter it, Baba himself started the subject. Baba said, 'Yes, The Devil, they will come. You think that *Atithis* will come wherever you go. But you do not look at the *Atithis* when they do come.' 'Yes, Baba. I want to know how that is', said Nana. Then Baba answered. 'The mistake is not in the Vedas. The mistake is in your interpretation of the Vedas. An '*Atithi*' is not necessarily a person who is a Brahmin by birth, and who would come to your quarters to sit at meal with you. After your puja is over, take some food out in your hand and leave it in some corner, and thousands of *Atithis* will be coming one after another, each in its own due course, and partake of it. They are the asses, the dogs, the flies, the ants, etc. To you they do not look like

*Atithis*⁶. But they are *Atithis*, for *God is in them all*'. If you do this, the Vedic injunction is satisfied and you will obtain the required *punya*". Nana felt duly humbled by seeing that Baba gave an interpretation which made the Vedas sensible, whereas his own interpretation made the Vedas absurd and infructuous. Baba also asked Nana to leave the food outside without crying out or calling for anyone or anything. This is set out in the Gospel (BCS 309). See also B Gita XV 14. Lord Krishna says '*Aham Vaisvaanaro Bhutva Praaninam deham ascritah Praana apaana-samayukto Pachamyannam chaturvidham*', i.e., 'as the *Vaisvanara* (fire) I enter the bodies of creatures, and in union with *Prana* and *Apana* digest and use up food of all the four sorts (solid, very solid, semisolid, and liquid).' Thus, Nana not only got a valuable addition to his knowledge of sastraic duty but also got more humble in finding that Baba could give an interpretation which made the Vedas sensible and not nugatory nor infructuous.

Nana was very far advanced amongst the disciples of Baba. But human nature is hard to subdue. Familiarity, if it does not breed contempt, at least breeds liberty-taking, and Nana was the only one or one of the very few who hobnobbed with Baba. All the hundreds of males and females that went to Baba at puja or Arti time would invariably stand up, and no one would sit. Upasani Maharaj had to stand and so had others to stand. The pujari Bapu Saheb Jog had to stand. Every person, male or female whatever his or her position may be, had to stand before Baba. Nana, however, used to sit next to Baba, even at Arti. Having studied Baba's nature, Nana began to get rather weak in his humility and reverence. For instance, the vessel of water held near Baba's lips at the close of the puja, would be distributed to all as *tirtha*, and they would all drink it. But Nana and Das Ganu would not take it. Therefore, familiarity had its adverse effect in

⁶ ***See Khaia** Upa v. 7 *Vuisvaiarah praviscati Atithir Bmtimano gruhan Tassyaitam scanttin Kurvanti. Hara Vaivasvata udakam*, i.e. The Brahmin guest enters into a house as the Vaisvanara Fire People (ie. the hosts) appease him. 0 **Death** bring water to offer him (as *Padya Arghya* and *Acliamaniya* sc.).

the case of Nana also. *Tirtha taking* is after all a minor matter. The more important matter is that Baba's presence, which was magnetic, lost a great deal of its magnetic spell in Nana's case by his repeated contact. The highest lessons one has to learn from a Moksha Guru are first to realise that in a particular person or object there is God, and next that He is in all. That means that one must first have realisation of one's own nature and of God's nature; and God should not be merely that which you worship with flowers. God should not be that which you feel to be only in one place and at one time. Gita says, 'A person who understands Iswara properly must feel awe and bliss from the presence of Iswara in everything,' Baba, being the Guru Deva, had to teach his beloved pupil this truth and make him realise God in all things and feel awe, love, etc. Baba is treated as God on account of his wonderful power and knowledge and is held in awe by others. But Nana seeing Baba constantly at the Mosque or in particular places naturally developed *sakhya* more than *daasya* and insisted on particularising and humanising or fraternising with Baba and not universalising him, as he ought to have done. Baba had to overcome this difficulty.

So, Baba wanted to make him feel (firstly) divinity more and more in Baba and (secondly) the fact that Baba's divinity is not confined to the Baba body but extends to all creatures as Baba is their Antaryami or soul or self. These two are closely connected. Baba said, 'I am not at Shirdi alone. I am in all creatures, in the ant, etc'. Intellectually this was understood, but at heart, Nana did not realise it. Baba wanted him to realise it more vividly, as that was very important for higher spiritual progress. So on one occasion, when Nana came up, Baba told him to prepare 8 pooran polis (cakes) for naivedya and then take his food. When Nana placed before Baba eight pooran polis, Baba did not touch them, but flies sat on them. Then Baba asked Nana to take away the prasada (i.e. remnant of food which Guru had first tasted). Nana insisted that Baba should eat some. Baba said that he had eaten. 'When?' asked Nana. Nana said, 'All the eight polis are there'. Baba said he had eaten it at some time. Then Nana got vexed and went away to the chavadi. When Baba sent for him, the same conversation was repeated. Finally Baba told Nana, 'I say you have been living with me for 18

years now. Is this all your appraisal of me? Does Baba mean to you only the 3½ cubits height of this body? Am I not in the fly and the ant that settled upon the polis?' Nana said that he knew that, but could not realise it. If Baba could make him realise it, Nana said, he would take and eat the polis as prasad. Then Baba lifted his hand and made a gesture. He thereby revealed a secret which Nana was hiding very deep in his heart; and Nana discovered that Baba knew the secret. How? The only explanation was that Baba was the *antaryami* or the inmost soul in his heart. If Baba was his *antaryami*, he must be the *antaryami* of the fly and the ant also. So he agreed to take the pooran poli as prasad, and was satisfied. Then Baba told him, 'As you see the gesture I make, you must remember that I am in all creatures'. Thus Baba gave him a very valuable lesson and took him up one very important rung of the ladder, that is, realising God in one form after another and not confining Him to the object worshipped at home or in a temple.⁷

Baba had to teach several other valuable lessons, most of which are embodied in the Gita. When Nana was cross-examined about the Gita sloka, he finally prayed that Baba should teach him the gist of the Gita. Baba told him to come up everyday, after going through part of the Gita, and to sit at his feet. Then when Nana did so, all that he had read in the Gita flashed as realisation in his heart. This is what is mentioned by the *Svetasvataropnishad*, last stanza, namely,—

yasya deve para bhaktih, yata deve talha gurow

tasyaite kathifa hyarthaah prakaascante mahaatmanah

This means, 'To him who has intense faith in God and equally intense faith in his Guru, (to that Great Soul), these truths of the Upanishads (about realisation of Brahman) will shine forth'. Nana had full faith in Baba, and, as he sat before

⁷ The very great importance of this realisation is seen from the frequent insistence on it, not merely in [the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, but also in the Rhagavata XI Sk.

Baba, the full gist of the Gita, chapter by chapter, flashed before his heart and helped him to realisation.

This method of direct illumination in the heart of the pupil without utterance of any speech by the Guru is called *Mouna Vyakhya* and the Dakshinamurthi method, which must be more fully described in a later chapter, as this one is already too long. For the same reason, other truths taught to Nana Saheb Chandorkar have to be described in chapters dealing with other devotees, who were taught the same truths.

Eknath Bhagavata XI was prescribed by Sai Baba for study (Parayana) by so many of his bhaktas including H.S. Dixit, Uddhavesa Bua, etc., It was also recommended (and made frequent use of) by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and other saints and gurus.

In closing this chapter, one naturally feels the importance of taking up the two great highlights of the Sai movement, its pioneers and, by a careful, humble, and observant comparison and contrast of the two, noting what can be derived as conclusions about their individual natures, the way in which they approached Baba and Baba approached and benefited them. Comparisons are said to be odious, but comparison and contrast is the very life breath of a proper study of human beings and the way in which they progress. If one avoids captious criticism, irresponsible remarks, superficial admiration, and prejudiced views, one may arrive at various valuable truths by comparing and contrasting bhaktas. Thereby one begins to understand much better the way in which Sai Baba was approached and He operated upon those contacting him. The study might prove interesting in any case for a student of religion and should prove particularly valuable to those bhaktas who are anxious to approach Sai Baba now to determine for themselves in what way they ought to approach him, what preparations, if any, they ought to make, and how Baba is likely to benefit them. These first views may not be exhaustive or perfectly accurate, but they may form the basis for one's earnest effort to get the best out of Sai's contact. They certainly will help any one to understand Sai better. When we note the innumerable ways in which Baba was approached by persons of various levels

and grades and how Baba responded in each case, we are struck with wonder and delight. It is like noting the rays of the Sun which shoot out in all directions and operate in innumerable different ways on different objects or matters at various levels. At the very outset, this author bows down with utter humility before these two great saintly personages, namely, Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar, whose height he can never hope to reach, and about whom he cannot have the least irreverence, jealousy, envy, cavilling tendency or any other improper attitude. Following Baba's directions to Annasaheb Dabolkar (Hemadpant), the study has been undertaken here also of great worthies who contacted Baba, partly with a view to understand and appreciate Baba's workings and partly to present Baba's lilas with as much fairness, fullness and clearness as possible. When there is this sincerity, humility, and desire for truth, Baba declared that jnana and vairagya would be the results of the study of bhaktas' experiences, that is, bhaktas' experiences contained in the biography. Therefore, this author has ventured to study among others these huge giants, who acted as pioneers in the Sai movement, to present as attractive and useful a picture as possible.

Both Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar were pioneers, but they strike one as being in the opposite poles in social, intellectual, and other matters. Mahlsapathy was a humble, poor goldsmith in an obscure village. Chandorkar, on the other hand, was a scion of a well known reputed Brahmin family, the heads of which held high positions in the State, owned considerable property, and led lives highly praised by their community and were well known to fame. Both Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar had from the beginning pious surroundings and early orthodox training. Both adhered to *sadachara* and worshipped God in accordance with family customs and adopted family traditions. But these traditions were different in the case of these two families. The humble goldsmith could only worship his tutelary deity Khandoba not known at all even to Hindus outside Maharashtra and get ideas of God to be found in Mahlsapathy purana, and progressed only on lines indicated therein and followed the footsteps of his father. In Chandorkar's case, he had the entire Sanskrit religious literature before

him and the worship of the far-famed Vedic deities of the Trinity - Siva and Vishnu alike - and he followed Sankara Acharya in matters of doctrine. To Mahlsapathy, education was practically a sealed book. To Chandorkar's eyes, literature spread a vast panorama, and he was prepared to advance as far as his powers would permit, alike in secular and religious education. Mahlsapathy could not get beyond his pial school. But Chandorkar as already noted rapidly advanced from his elementary to secondary and from secondary to high school and then to collegiate education, and, by the age of 20, obtained a degree from the University, and entered service, wherein also he rose by his ability in seven years to the position of a Deputy Collector.

Equally rapid and notable was his march in his studies. He read up not merely Western philosophy, but also Sankara's philosophy as contained in the Gita Bhashya and other sacred works. He read up books not merely in Sanskrit but also in English, and could widen his views in both spiritual and temporal matters to an extent which would be impossible for Mahlsapathy. Naturally the consequence of such progress and position would be to develop self-assurance and even egotism in Chandorkar, and he would be apt to assume, as so many educated orthodox persons assume, that Moksha is merely a matter of conquest over the self as described in Vivekachudamani and other works by bringing their teachings into practice as early as possible in one's life. In Mahlsapathy's case, there was no question of extra studies. The four corners of Mahlsapathy Purana formed the horizon of his view. He had to pick up his religious and other knowledge only from what is contained in a few elementary books and from family traditions and the contacts he had with sadhus and saints. Several people would fancy that, from this contrast, the position of Chandorkar was far superior to that of Mahlsapathy. But such people are ignoring the very important fact that both these went to Sai Baba, the All Knowing Samartha Sadguru, whose methods of imparting culture, wisdom, and excellence to his devotees were so unique, so different, nay wholly different, from those adopted in ordinary religious education from religious gurus.

In the case of Baba, it is not the study that one has of Vivekachudamani or Bhagavata that counts. On the other hand, one totally devoid of any book study, but possessed of perfect self-surrender, humility, trust, and love towards the Guru Baba, was and is the person who could derive the fullest benefits from Baba. Chandorkar's vast learning should all be unlearned before Baba could impart anything to him. The idea that one has understood all about Jiva and Paramatma and the methods by which Paramatma could be reached by a Jiva forms the greatest obstacle to one's progress. It is not the intellect, the keenness of intellect, that is wanted from a person approaching Baba. (*Naayam atma pravachanena labhyah namedhaya na bahuna scrutena*). It is humility, receptivity, and a readiness to receive all that Baba gives, that counts. Mahlsapathy, therefore, was really not at a disadvantage in the above respect. Perhaps he had more receptivity and humility than Chandorkar. For instance, Chandorkar thought that Baba could not understand Gita and could not possibly throw light on Chapter IV, verse 34, of the Bhagavad Gita being presumably ignorant of the Gita or its source, namely, the Upanishads. So long as these false ideas remained in his mind, his progress was doomed to failure. That is why Baba knocked off that conceit by a severe cross-examination on the Gita and by quotation of Upanishadic authorities which stunned Chandorkar and made him perceive that knowledge was not to be had by study of books alone but by openness of mind and approach to the source of all light. Chandorkar was by no means the exception amongst the educated people in this respect. Sri Upasani Maharaj had a similar obsession of his own learning and understanding of God and the methods by which alone he fancied he had to reach God, namely, mantras, japa, etc., which he had picked up at the feet of his grandfather. Baba had to disabuse Upasani Maharaj and others of their wrong notions before he could benefit them. As Baba pointed out to the Valambi Station Master, persons (evidently with much conceit of learning etc.) came to him like vessels the mouth of which was kept inverted and were therefore incapable of receiving any benefits from him. Before one learns what is valuable, one must unlearn what is harmful and even though we should not call Chandorkar and others conceited,

yet from the standpoint of Baba, there was enough conceit in them to prevent their deriving benefit until and unless sufficient humility and receptivity were implanted in them. Vasanas including Vidya Vasana form Ahamkar and shut out the Supreme Light, Therefore the contrast between Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar in respect of education is apt to be misleading. Even in Mahlsapathy's case a certain amount of conceit and sufficiency of Khandoba puja for one's spiritual and temporal welfare is sure to have been lodged in him by family traditions and otherwise. Even this had to be knocked off. Baba's miraculous power, wonderful knowledge, and mysterious supervision for the benefit of devotees would naturally knock off any improper assumptions or conceit on the part of devotees like Mahlsapathy and keep them at the proper level of receptivity. This remark applies also to Chandorkar.

The comparison and contrast between Mahlsapathy and Chandorkar in respect of social matters -was glaring and most marked. One was a wretchedly poor goldsmith begging his bread and starving for days after days. The other was a rich Deputy Collector with immovable properties, with a bank balance perhaps, feeding guests at his house, and looked up to as a Lord or a big man by innumerable people and not without reason. Yet the difference in this respect counts for nothing so far as fitness for receiving benefits from Sai Baba is concerned. The manner of contacting Baba by both may also be contrasted. Mahlsapathy, who first kept Baba out of his temple on account of his being a Muslim, was still able to perceive his spiritual greatness by his frequent contact and conversation with local saints like Devidas who could and did appreciate the worth of Baba. And being struck with Baba's greatness, Mahlsapathy fell at Baba's feet and determined to become his sishya. In the case of Chandorkar, he was too high a person to think of falling at the feet of a fakir, especially when his father was opposed to Muslims having anything to do with members of his family. Baba had to send for him before Chandorkar could think of going to Shirdi. Even after his first visit to Shirdi, Chandorkar could not make up his mind to be with Baba. Baba had to reveal his wonderful knowledge of what passed at Ahmednagar between him and the Collector and reveal his foreknowledge of a

new serum to be tried on Chandorkar's system, assuring him that no harm would befall him by undergoing the inoculation. This gradual perception of Baba's wondrous psychic powers, and his interest in Chandorkar inducing him to use all these powers for his benefit, conquered Chandorkar. His intellect surrendered and his love responded to Baba's call. Still as he came at a pretty late stage of his development, it was no joke for him to adapt himself to Baba's ways; and however much he might try, he could never get the fullest benefit of Baba's contact. In the case of Mahlsapathy, it was just the other way. There was a complete surrender by Mahlsapathy, who was very humble, and very poor, and had to depend entirely upon Baba for guidance, guardianship and all that he wanted. Mahlsapathy, therefore, quickly regarded Baba as being on the same level as Khandoba. Mahlsapathy could never think of philosophical or scientific explanations for Baba's lilas and would never trouble himself about them. But on the other hand some people who derived the fullest benefit by contact with Baba like Chandorkar (and the other educated set with him) were constantly trying to find out how Baba worked, what the meaning of Baba's lilas and words was, and whether Baba's siddhis fitted in with the previous religious ideas that they already had. Baba dissuaded the educated set at Shirdi from going into these disquisitions and told them that there would be no use in doing so. But nature is hard to conquer and evidently up to the last, they had their wobbling and never attained that complete surrender which Mahlsapathy got so easily.

Baba's dealings with Nana Chandorkar bring out one clear fact into prominence. Baba was not thought to be a teacher by many who contacted him and by others also who thought about him after his Mahasamadhi. It is now increasingly realised that Baba was a teacher. But even that is a misstatement. He was not a mere teacher. He was a trainer and still more, one who undertook to mould the personality of the approaching devotee. He was still more than that. He was Providence providing everything needed, temporal or spiritual, for the advancement of the persons surrendering to him; and still more than that, we find that Baba was not merely a teacher or trainer, but a school or a college in himself, nay a University in himself with postgraduate courses and research

courses leading *ad infinitum* to unknown horizons. Baba's methods are so very strange and infinite in variety. He suited and suits himself to each pupil and provides special courses peculiar to each pupil, and that is why he has been compared to a University with research courses. This is very well illustrated in Nana Chandorkar's case. Baba had achieved the highest pinnacle of spiritual greatness, and he developed incidentally powers of every sort that we read of in *Vibhuti Pada* i.e.. Part III 16-55 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (dealing with all siddhis ending with Moksha Siddhi) or Chapter XV of Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI, relating to yoga siddhis. He never seems to have practised yoga for itself, but his intense concentration on his Guru with white heat of love banishing everything else but the Guru from his mind was the highest yoga that could be thought of as described in the above mentioned Skanda XI. As stated in chapter 15, verse 32, what is there impossible for one who concentrates upon Iswara with great intensity? All the siddhis were at his control and he utilised these siddhis as and when occasion required for every purpose that came to his view. He had to draw thousands to himself by reason of rinaubandha or for other reasons. By drawing them and subsequently making them hold on to him and draw more and more benefit from him, Baba had to confer various benefits by the use of his extraordinary powers. The display of his weird knowledge and weird powers was the best means for drawing people and holding them on to him and lifting them step by step, up the ladder of spirituality. Amongst the thousands that he drew, it will be difficult to find how many classes there were. If in a University there are a hundred classes, in Baba's University there must have been more, and, as for students, if a University here can boast of a strength of a few thousands, Baba's University boasts of many thousands. The peculiar power of apparently one (Baba) playing the part of the teacher, the trainer, tutor, proctor, and feeder of so many thousands even in distant places, is something unseen and unheard of.

Baba had to draw Chandorkar first by reason of his previous rinaubandha and make him the most prominent and notable amongst his (earlier) apostles. He has done that, and this learned and high-placed apostle, working together with his orderly Constable (Das Ganu) has been responsible for building up a vast

mass of bhaktas that constituted the nucleus of the world of Sai bhaktas that we see today and the bigger world of Sai bhaktas that is yet to be. But this apostle was not necessarily the recipient of everything that Baba could give. He did not attain to anything like Baba's position. He was given a very good modicum of Baba's gifts and he made enormous strides in his temporal and spiritual position. But he did not go through all courses of Baba's University.

Bahunam janmanamante jnanavan maam prapadyate

Kalena atnani vindati

He did not reach perfect or all-round development and perhaps it is not reached usually in one life. B.C. VII. 19, IV. 38. In this same volume, we find devotees with merits and excellences perceived even by Chandorkar himself as those that he had not attained to. As we have seen from the first chapter Mahlsapathy the uneducated Bhikshuka, reached very great heights of self-sacrifice and constant service to Baba which far exceeded what Chandorkar could reach or render. The absolute Saint Francis-like self-abnegation and perpetual service of Mahlsapathy, was impossible in Nana Chandorkar's condition with his family, position, office and reputation to keep up.

Chandorkar had been deeply ingrained in traditions of orthodox Hindu piety. Therefore, as already stated, he was a great believer in one's own efforts and the absolute importance and sufficiency of Vedic learning, mastery of works like Sankara Bhashya of Gita and Viveka Chudamani, for one's spiritual success. Many a reader of this book would share his views and find it hard at first to understand the difficulty which we are mentioning now as standing in Nana's way. Ninety per cent of educated people believe that a mere following of the sastras and the traditional methods of puja, dhyana, and study with meditation would suffice for one's achievement of moksha and for a thorough grasp of both Atman and Brahman. Therefore most are for self development relying upon oneself to grow step by step. (This is termed the *Markata Sisuvarga*] believing that every step upwards is achieved by one's own activity. But in Baba's method, (which may be termed *Marjara Sisuvarga*) the exact opposite is the truth, (See Gospel 176). Baba achieved the highest Jiva-Brahma Aikya which he expressed

by the aphorism *Maim Allah hum (Aham Brahma Asmi)*. Numerous powers and benefits followed it. What was his sadhana that led to this? Was he working up text book after text book and resolving doubt after doubt by approaching masters, book in hand? Exactly the opposite. He told Radhabai Deshmukhin, 'I know one thing, the truth taught me by my Guru. It is not the various sadhanas and books that are necessary. A study of the sastras is not necessary. What is necessary is absolute surrender to, and love of, the guru', (cf also BCS. 191) This, Baba declared, he had adopted, and the result was that by the Guru's grace, he was raised to the highest pinnacle. He attained to laya in his Guru. That was bhakti. It was also jnana, what is called jnana in our text books i.e. a realisation that follows as a part of the experience of one who has merged himself by surrender and love in the Guru. So, to progress on the lines on which Baba progressed, one must completely surrender oneself.

As will be seen in a later chapter dealing with Upasani Baba, the efforts of the orthodox and the learned to master one truth after another or one mantra after another with the feeling 'I have mastered this', is the greatest obstacle to progress in Baba's line.

The 'Vidya Vasana ego' is an almost insuperable barrier standing in the way of the educated, the cultured, and the intellectual set that approached and still approach Baba. Nana was the first and foremost of these intellectuals. His Vidya vasana was very powerful. He believed that he could understand and by his understanding reach Moksha. This, being a very powerful obstacle, had to be overcome, and the first step or mark of overcoming is humility and preparedness to surrender the ego or egotism.

For instance in understanding Gita, which Nana thought was a great feat achieved by himself, he could not see that his egotism barred him from really understanding Brahman or "*Tat*" for, where Ego is, '*Tat*' or Brahman is not, Baba, in order to enable him to come nearer to "*Tat*", had to knock off his self-sufficiency, egotism, and conceit, and stretch him on the floor in the mood of 'I am nothing; let the ego go; let the Guru's grace come with its enlightenment to revive the self with as little ego as possible,' and the teaching on BG IV 34-35

was the first stroke, which though powerful was not sufficient. By reason of this handicap, Nana got a certain advance in his spirituality through his understanding assisted by a certain amount of humility. But old habits will not die. As Kirtankars says, *Prakriti* (nature) dies hard and the mouse, with its rodent nature, that was offered the chance of marrying the Sun, the Clouds, the Winds and the Mountain declined all of them and ended only by marrying a rat. This is no depreciation of the great achievements of Nana Chandorkar or of Baba's undoubted ability to train him. But Baba himself recognised that there were certain barriers and limits which could be overcome only to a certain extent at a time in the circumstances of each case. That shows the need for and advantage of studying Baba's dealing with as many Bhaktas as possible. Ultimately the full course may be achieved for each as for Nana, by Baba, but that was not to be in this birth. That is what one notes, viz, that Baba trained Nana more or less in accordance with his (Nana's) own ideas. Baba is no destructive revolutionist but usually builds on old foundations. So, as Nana's opinion was that he should proceed onwards from *vairagya* and *viveka* through *Samadhi shatka* and *mumukshutva* he was given a certain advance in each of these and had to stop there for this birth (with incomplete success as he must have done in the four previous lives in which he contacted Baba). The tendencies of the animal and the tendencies of the human self built up by one laboriously birth after birth give one a particular bent or bents and have all to be taken into consideration; and the advance that Nana made in view of all these has been described in this chapter.

Here, however, (for purpose of studying Baba's methods and enabling devotees or readers to study him with reference to their own condition) we may amplify the summary given above and note some portions which Nana did not go through in this life or practically failed to achieve and which other bhaktas of Baba not so highly placed nor so brilliantly equipped did achieve. Taking the case of Kaka Dixit (Hari Sitaram Dixit), his apparent disadvantages, compared with Nana Chandorkar, proved real advantages. As stated already, for the best results according to Baba's system for one who approached Baba in accordance with Baba's traditions, the first requisite was humility and receptivity and not

much learning. In Baba's system, it is the Guru that pours into the sishya virtue after virtue by training him step after step to secure the virtues and the knowledge that he (the Guru) wishes to equip the pupil with, just as the cat carries its kittens to safe and good places. In the case of Nana, his very high learning and great ability in official and other matters were naturally accompanied by a high degree to self-assertion and egotism, which make for success in literary study, official matters, and to a certain extent even in spiritual matters. But for the highest results, it is just the opposite, namely, want of egotism, utter reduction of egotism, the power to relax the Ego and keep it relaxed for long periods, that is essential. That is why the drinking of the water washing the feet of the Guru and taking his *Uchchishta tirtha* are insisted upon in the Guru Gita for a pupil's advance, for they create and develop thorough annihilation of Ahamkara or Ego through towering reverence to the Guru ending in Love. In the case of Kaka Dixit, these disabilities of Nana Chandorkar were not present. Though high up in public life even as M.L.C. and highly successful at the Bombay Bar, he had developed humility and an equal vision by his varied experiences in India and England. A travel by sea and a visit to Britain have the remarkable effect of subduing pride and prejudice. We find in Britain the biggest men hobnobbing with common men in trains and other places and that sense of equality is very high and there people seem to feel the truth of what Burns sang—

"Man's a man for a'that".

"The rank is but the guinea stamp.

The man's the good for a'that".

On board the steamer, the Muhammadan boys who give you tea and bread, Brahmin leader though you are, feel that they are your equals, and all caste pride and peculiarities of orthodox life including the revulsion from Moslem touch disappear even in the early days of your steamer life. Kaka Dixit therefore could view Hindus, Muslims, and Christians with equal vision (which Nana could not command) and could feel himself thoroughly humble and ready to receive any Upadesa coming from Baba as something high over his head, whereas Nana, with all his mastery of Gita and other scripture, could not so completely

forget that he was a Brahmin Hindu already having a high stand. Moreover the accident to Dixit's leg, leading to a loss of its free use and inducing an inferiority complex or sense of irreparable loss and disgust with life was just the upward push that was needed.

In this samatva with humility, *prapatti* towards Baba is easier; and in all this, Chandorkar must be considered inferior to H. S. Dixit. Dixit could forget the difference between Hindu and Muslim and feel no repulsion to Moslem contact. When Baba's *teertham* was offered, Dixit and others would gladly take it, but not Chandorkar nor Das Ganu. When Bade Baba, a Muslim fakir, wanted a residence at Shirdi, to be near Baba or his tomb, no villager there would tolerate a Muslim within his small house. Dixit alone had the courage to offer a portion of his wada to Bade Baba. But many fell foul of Dixit for that provision, and even Nana Chandorkar was in the opposition and represented to Dixit the impropriety of housing a Muhammadan in "Dixit wada" (used as a travellers' bungalow for devotees at Shirdi) as that would repel so many Hindu devotees who would otherwise go there and use it. These are given only as a sample to show that Nana had not the fullest benefit of Baba contact. One's previous course of life hampers one considerably in making advance even under the powerful influence of Baba. Baba no doubt achieved very great success in inducing Chandorkar, the son of a violently anti-Muslim gentleman, to accept him for a Guru and then enabling him dimly to perceive the greatness of Baba as far as circumstances would permit. For further progress, there were serious handicaps. Kaka Dixit could make very rapid advance under Baba, especially during his Vanaprastha probation, that is, a period of 10 or 12 months which he spent at Shirdi away from wife and children under Baba's care. Nana also took leave and spent some time with Baba at Shirdi, may be a year or so. But still there was the difference in their outlook. Naturally therefore a comparatively greater rate of progress and greater amount of profit were derived by Kaka Dixit by reason of his greater receptivity and humility. We see, however, all this and more of Kaka Dixit, from his diary that he kept and also from his experiences published by his friends in the Sai Lila Masik. By reason of Nana's not having kept a diary of his experiences, we do not

know so much of him and there is the danger of our underrating Nana's progress. But still, as practically everything noteworthy in his advance was communicated by him to Sri B.V. Dev, Kaka Dixit, Dabolkar, etc., and as all these have been published in the Sai Lila Masik, we have to take it that the published matter roughly represents Nana's progress. It is on that assumption the observations in this chapter are based. There is a chance of error, no doubt, but the chance is but small, and risks of error have to be incurred in any biography.

Taking other prominent devotees who approached Baba, such as Sri Upasani Maharaj, Kusa Bhav, and Balakram Manker, we notice how they were able to give up everything, family, property, dignity, etc., and simply dedicate themselves to Baba's service, and managed to stay on for years with Sri Sai Baba. The consequent advance such a person derives must naturally be greater than any that one can derive when one pays only occasional though frequent visits to Baba as Nana did. Sri Upasani Maharaj stayed away from all contact with family, and Baba intended definitely to cut him off from family connections, and he stayed at the Khandoba temple at Shirdi for 3 years waiting for Baba to work upon him. In the Chapter on Upasani Maharaj, we may notice the consequent notable advance in various directions. Such advance is not to be found in the case of Nana Chandorkar who was a grihasta to the end of his life with innumerable worldly thoughts dominating him. Even though Upasani Maharaj withdrew himself from Baba before the period prescribed for tutelage was over, still the progress he made at Shirdi was continued at Kharagpur, Nagpur, and Sakori. Powers, which may be called siddhis, were off and on shooting out of him, and even Nana Chandorkar, when calling upon Upasani Maharaj at the Khandoba temple, felt the higher position which the *Pravrajita* Upasani occupied as a pupil under Baba (and as his probable or possible successor in the view of several), and showed him great respect or reverence. Kusa Bhav, though not spiritually so high, was living without any family connection for years and years under Baba, and Baba blessed him with the power to produce Sai Udhi at will and give it to all as a cure for all ills which raised him in the eyes of his numerous sishyas or followers. Balakram Manker was similarly able to dissociate himself

from family, to give up highly lucrative position in business, and even lead a life in solitude on Machendragad Hill by Baba's order, and was deriving great benefit from Baba's contact and guidance. In fact, many hoped that he would be Baba's successor on Baba's gadi. But his premature death in 1913 destroyed that hope. These three are mentioned to show that a certain dissociation from family, official position, and even property, which was possible for Kusa Bhav, Upasani, B. Manker, etc., was not possible for Chandorkar and that consequently the benefits he derived were different from those that totally (or almost totally) dissociated people derived. [This, however, is not a slur upon Nana Chandorkar.] The lines of advance for these three, namely, Upasani, Kusa Bhav, and Balakram Manker, seem so different from the lines of advance of Nana Chandorkar.

Again there seems to be some constitutional difference between some bhaktas and others. Some seem to have a special facility for having visions, trances and similar states. A Brahmin doctor, who went to South Africa and returned, had this special peculiarity, and, by gazing at Baba, he could see in Baba the form of Sri Rama and by intense prayer he derived for over a fortnight, what he calls *Pararna Ananda* i.e. the highest bliss he knew. It is not the same as *Brahmananda* evidently, which Ananda is not given but must exist inherently and be perceived by one after getting over all obstacles to one's vision of the self as Brahman. Even G. S. Khaparde, owing perhaps to the peculiarity of his smoking and other habits, if not his constitution, derived spells of what may be termed *Parama Ananda*. Frequently in G.S. Khaparde's diary, we find mention made that Baba cast some yogic glances, as a result of which for hours G. S. Khaparde was drowned in bliss. Even Mrs. Manager (i.e. Mrs. Tarabai S. Tarkhad of Poona) could derive this sort of Ananda. But we do not find anything like these spells of being drowned in bliss described as part of Nana Chandorkar's experiences. Perhaps constitutionally some do not and cannot get this experience. Emotional susceptibility seems to be an important factor in perceiving this Ananda, and intellectual vigour like Nana's seems to keep it out. The absence of these spells of bliss may not be a serious loss to one proceeding

on Nana's lines of advance. Absence of Yoga siddhis is no loss but a gain to such.

Again some devotees have a childlike faith, so very childlike that others do not reach it, being afraid at heart that that extent of credulity is either unbecoming or dangerous. 'You cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless you become as little children', said Jesus. This seems to have a strange application to the closing scene of this earthly life of devotees. Mahlsapathy had childlike faith and his end was most charming. At the close of life, he knew, though in ordinary health, that the moment of death was coming and he welcomed it, and his friends sat by his side and carried on bhajan till his last moment. And assuring all that he was going to Heaven on that day, and finishing his meal and betelnut chewing, he calmly and cheerfully passed away with Rama nama on his lips. Dixit's faith in Baba as his *Sathi Akaraka* (the last moment's companion) was firm—as Baba (who was the soul of truth, that never gave out false promises) had declared "I will carry my Kaka (HSD) in a Vimana". Dixit had a very happy (totally painless) death in the train when thinking of his Guru-God Baba and gladly thanking him for securing the train for him though he came late. The Gita verse declares that what we think of in our last moment that we become (VIII-6).

Again, there was perhaps some constitutional help for many a devotee who under Baba's influence began to realise the great truth which our scriptures proclaim, namely, that God is in everything and that the advanced sadhaka sees God in everything and sees everything as God. These are the very words of the Gita, (e.g. V 29-31, VII 19, X 20-39). But hardly ten in ten thousand amongst those that read the Gita daily as Parayana would have any experience of seeing either God in the things they behold or seeing everything that they see as God. But under Baba, a poor woman of Shirdi began to feel that a snake was really Baba. Some others developed the feeling that the dog or the beggar that approached them was really Baba. If the dog and the beggar excite in them feelings of reverence (for which purpose Baba tried to make his devotees avoid cruelty and irreverence to dogs and beggars), this is a stepping stone to the achievement of the above mentioned goal of the scriptures. One step in this

advance is to see Baba or God first and oneself next in all creatures and all creatures in oneself.

1. *Sarvabhuteshu chatmanam sarvabhutanicha atmani
ikshate yoga yukatma sarvatra samadarsanah*

(VI 29)

2. *Yo maam pascyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pascyati
Tasyaaham na pranascyaami sa cha me na pranascyati*

(VI 30)

3 *Bhuteshu Bhuteshu Vichitya Dheerah
Pretya Asman Lokat Amrita bhavanti.*

These mean, respectively,—

1. The Yogi whose self has been tacked on (to Brahman), with his equal vision towards all sees the one Supreme Atman in all creatures and all creatures in the Self.
2. He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, to him I do not perish, and he never perisheth, but is always with Me.
3. The sages or wise ones find in every creature the Supreme Self and casting off their bodies become immortal.

This higher stage of advanced bhaktas is thus described in the sastras; and Baba's disciples and pupils having the perfect God-realiser Baba for their guidance should naturally be expected to reach it. Some must have reached it.

From the reminiscences of Chandorkar that are now left to us, we are unable to perceive that he reached it or was nearing it. Baba however trained several people including Nana Chandorkar in the steps necessary to enable one to consider every creature God. It is easy for us to read "*Bhuteshu Bhuteshu Vichitya Dheerah*" or "*Sarva Bhuteshucha Atmanam*" or '*Atmowpamyena sarvatra samam pascyati*' - B. G. IV.32. But in practice, it is indeed the hardest to look upon even one creature or one object as God. Why even to get the state of mind of dealing with perfect God when dealing with Baba, was and is impossible to most people. How can such persons treat a dog or a cat, a beggar or a snake, as God? In order to overcome the almost insuperable objections to treat

everything as God or as Baba, he coached up his devotees and showed them the basis for such an advance. In the case of Nana Chandorkar, he enabled him to take the first step in this direction by convincing him that the poli placed before him (Baba) and eaten by the fly was really eaten by Baba, because He was Nana's inmost soul or *antaryami* (as demonstrated by a *chamatkar* of his), and therefore, the fly's inmost soul. He could similarly show Hansraj that the cat that stole or ate away his curds was himself (Baba), because the blow given to the cat by Hansraj produced a weal on Baba in the very place of the stroke on the cat's shoulder. But how many steps can a man be pushed up a palmyra tree by one standing on the ground? One must climb up oneself. So, many persons made very slow advance in this matter. Nana's advance in this direction also appears not to have been marked by any remarkable strides of success. This power to see Baba or God in everything is said to be best achieved by putting the collyrium of love on one's eyes. A Gopi in her intense love to Sri Krishna began to see every thing dark as Krishna, such as Tamala trees or clouds just as a thief sees a police man in every bush. A lover sees his beloved's face in the moon and in everything that is beautiful. This is a peculiarity of the way in which the highly emotional mind works, and this psychological truth is pressed home in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI. If you wish to have thorough absorption in God or anything else, the course for it is that the *Dharan*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* should be perfect, that is, the most intense that the constitution is capable of. The *dhyana* may be due not necessarily to devotion or love, but may be due to lower psychological states such as hatred or fear. Hiranyakasipu hated the Lord and saw him everywhere and Ravana, in his fear of Rama, began to fear that every sound beginning with 'Ra' would denote Rama.

Yatra yatra mano dehi dhaarayet sakalam dhiya

Snehat dveshat bhayat vaapi yaati tattat sarupatam.

SB XI (9) 22

This means, 'Whenever one concentrates oneself completely, heart and soul, on any object, whether by reason of love or hatred or fear, one reaches *sarupya* of that, that is, becomes of the same form as that'. This is common experience, for,

if you are thinking only of your favourite object, all vague sounds take the name of your favoured object. A man sat in church hearing some French or Latin ritual and when asked what it was, said, 'All my eye and *Betty Martin*'. A Gopi, who went out selling curds, instead of saying 'Curds for sale', said, 'Krishna for sale' This, therefore, shows the advantage of those who are capable of such intense emotional heights. They get to *sarupya* losing themselves. No doubt these would be put down as mad people by the mass, and surely they would mostly be unfit for the ordinary work-a-day life. But they succeed in their aim, namely, reaching the Supreme goal.

Keeping these observations in mind, we should note if there is any such line of advance, at least to a noticeable extent in Nana's case. His faith in Baba was undoubtedly very great, but still his constitution, or the degree of progress made by him, prevented him from losing himself in Baba. His faith was great enough as shown in the following case. One day, when he was going along the road in company with his wife, some person came and said that his own wife had evil possession or some trouble for which Baba's udhi was wanted as a remedy. Nana, finding no udhi at hand, picked up some earth from the road, and, remembering Baba, applied it, not to the visitor's wife, but to his own wife's forehead, and told the visitor that the remedy had been applied. This shows remarkable faith of Nana in Baba. But still it does not seem to have gone up to the degree of self-annihilation by a process of emotional intensification, In BG. 9-22 Sri Krishna said—

Ananvah chintayanto maam ye janaah pari upasate

Teshaam nityaabhiyuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham.

(IX 22)

This means, Krishna says to Arjuna, 'if men think exclusively of Me (or identify themselves with Me) and serve Me completely, and perpetually contact Me, the acquisition and safeguarding of good for such people is burden borne by Me'. In the case of Baba, who is no other than Krishna, he was looking after the welfare and providing goods and safety (*Yoga Kshema*) to such Ananta devotees or children, even though they fell short of the perfect *ananya chinta, pari upasana*

and nitya abhtyukti ideal. He, however, helped people to increase the contact with him by decreasing their external contacts and activities so as to march on to the ideal. Nana marched on fairly successfully in his course —though he did not attain the required self-annihilation that some devotees of Baba achieved.

With these comparisons we should stop this chapter for several reasons: (1) Superficial readers may lay to their hearts these points on which Nana did not achieve complete success and fancy that his life was a failure. They may consequently lose their reverence for him and that would be a great mistake. The author bows down to Sri Nana Chandorkar for the marvellous progress he made and the very great good he has achieved for us all—in fact he was responsible for our Sai faith and is our God-father or God-grandfather, our spiritual atavus. (2) Comparisons with all devotees is neither possible nor desirable. (3) The comparison and contrast provided here will suffice to guide us in our attempt to get fuller ideas of the unthinkably (*Achintya*) perfect Sai Baba.

Critical and analytical studies or moral and spiritual states, and steps useful for achieving and causes of failure to achieve the same have been made or noted in this chapter at great length. It is best to set out as much of these as possible and as early as possible in the book and hence these have been applied to Nana Saheb Chandorkar. But what has been said about him applies to many other devotees whose progress is described later, though there is no express reference to that fact in later chapters. Careful readers who go through this book with a view to get a full grasp of the subject of religious progress, especially for the purpose of helping on their own development would note this application of the studies to other devotees—and, may be, to themselves. We are not the guardians or judges of other souls. Only our own is committed to our care.

CHAPTER III

Das Ganu Maharaj

After Nana Chandorkar, the logical, chronological, and the appropriate name to deal with is that of Ganpat Rao Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe, popularly known as Das Ganu Maharaj. His importance for the Sai movement consists in the fact that the rapid spread of Baba's name in Maharashtra was due very largely to his

efforts. Baba fully well foresaw or ordained it. In 1890 Das Ganu was a Constable and play actor of village plays of an obscene character. Baba drew him to himself for the double purpose of improving his (Ganus) own spiritual condition and thereafter rendering signal service to the public for the spread of Sai faith. When first he came to Shirdi, he came as the "orderly" of (i.e. constable attending on) Nana Saheb Chandorkar, and whenever Chandorkar visited Shirdi, Ganpat Rao followed him as his Constable, not at all out of faith in, or love for, Sai, but because the master compelled him to—very much like the Harijans (to whom Nandanar preached the value of Siva's nama japa) who said (Alas! perforce we have to say, SIVA, SIVA). For a very long time, Das Ganu could not appreciate Baba. Up to the end, he could not realise Baba as really Deva i.e. God or as his Guru-Deva, though he had high regard for him and his powers and wrote or sang of him with poetic skill describing Baba as *Ramaavara* i.e. God, doing lip service. That was why he went to one Islampurkar, a Brahmin Guru, to get his initiation long after he met and dealt with Baba (a step which Baba naturally did not object to when D. G. reported the fact to Baba). Anyhow Baba made a remarkable change in the personality of Das Ganu, and Das Ganu also realised how powerful Baba's influence on him was.

It has been mostly an unwilling submission on the part of Das Ganu to Sai Baba's yoke. At his earliest advent to Shirdi, Baba noted the nature of Ganpat Rao, and determined that his nature, calling and work should all be totally changed. His nature then was just that of a Police Constable who had hardly any education, but who was very clever in composing Lavani metre songs in Mahratti impromptu and in taking a female's part in lewd village dramas. He would put on female dress and dance about in the village and take great pleasure in that achievement. His great ambition was to rise in his profession. The Police Department by itself was not a particularly moral department, and for one who was ambitious to rise in it, one's regard for truth, righteousness, fair dealing, etc. would practically be nil, and scruples, conscience, and character were unwanted hindrances to efficiency. Knowing all their dangers and the real dormant capacity of the man, Baba, from the very beginning, told Das Ganu to give up both his

attachments, namely, (1) attachment to the village dance and drama and (2) attachment to the police profession. Chandorkar also pressed this upon Ganpat Rao. With great difficulty Ganpat Rao was weaned away from drama. But as for the profession, he would not give it up. The charm of holding the position of Sub Inspector (Foujdar) and lording it over people was too powerful for him to resist. When Baba said, 'Ganu, you had better give up your police service', Das Ganu replied, 'Baba, let me become a Sub Inspector (for which position I have passed the departmental examination) and hold the appointment for only one year, and thereafter, I will give it up'. Baba replied that he was not going to get the Sub Inspectorship, and that He would see to it that he did not get it. So, Baba's work was to bring in difficulty after difficulty, pressure after pressure to bear upon Ganpat Rao; and Ganpat Rao had innumerable difficulties even without Baba adding to them.

For instance, he was fond of touring to distant places of pilgrimage outside his official limits, and he would go without taking the permission of his superiors, which would not be easily granted. On one such occasion, he had gone to a shrine in the "Nizam's State" and was returning. His fellow constables were highly envious of him, and they wanted to pluck his feathers. So, when he was returning to his place, and when he was still on the Nizam's side of the river Godavari, the envious constables were on the other side watching to catch him. He noted this fact and felt that he would surely be dismissed. So, he took up the Godavari water in both of his palms and swore by that "Ganga" water, (as it is called) "Baba, let me escape this time I shall certainly give up my police service". Then he went back into the Nizam's State just a short distance, when lo! and behold, there was proof of Baba's Grace! A village Munsif came to him and told him that certain dacoits were dividing their booty secretly and all that the Village Munsif wanted was a police gentleman with authority to arrest them. So Ganpat Rao went, seized the dacoits and the booty, and proudly returned to his own station on the other side of the Godavari. When questioned how he went out without permission, his reply was that he had gone there for the seizure of dacoits and property—no doubt a falsehood. Thus he not only escaped

punishment, but he thought he had a very good chance of rising in his profession. With that thought uppermost in his mind, he was riding past Shirdi to go somewhere. Just as his horse came to Shirdi, and when he did not want to alight there but to pass on without seeing Baba, Baba was on the road and made him alight. Then Baba asked, 'Arre, who is it that swore with a palmful of water in his hand, man?' Then Das Ganu's unabashed reply was, 'What of that? Baba, I am going to resign after all, after I get the Fouzdarship'. Baba said that he would see to it that he resigned, and added 'Until a peg is driven into you, (i.e. pressure becomes painful), you will not obey'.

Das Ganu thought there was no further pressure. But pressure came. He along with three other Constables was told off to the duty of capturing a notorious dacoit, who was a terror to the whole countryside, and whose organisation was so vast and wonderful that even the Police Department was in his pay, that is, several of the Police Department were in his pay and he could checkmate their movements. Das Ganu went off to Lonivarni, a place which that famous dacoit, Khana Bhil by name, was visiting. But Khana Bhil was a man of extraordinary abilities. He had shot the other three persons nominated along with Ganpat Rao to catch him, and was determined to deal with Ganpat Rao in the same way. Ganpat Rao disguising himself as a Ramdasi was making use of the village children, learnt from them details about the visits of these robbers, and communicated their movements to the police head-quarters. Suddenly one day Khana Bhil turned up, seized Ganpat Rao by his neck, and said, 'You fellow, you are going to catch me! Do you know that it is Khana Bhil that has now caught you? Now I am going to shoot you, as I have already shot your three companions.' Ganpat Rao was in terror. He was close to Sri Rama's image. He suddenly fell at its feet and, thinking of Sai, said 'Save me. Save me. I will give up all my police efforts'. Khana Bhil was softened. Instead of shooting at both Ganpat Rao and the image, he said, 'I let you off this time. But if you again interfere in my affairs, you are a dead man. Remember.' But the ambition of Ganpat Rao was not to be quenched. **Again he got information about Khana Bhil's movements and communicated it to the authorities, with the result that a**

police force armed with carbines, etc., was sent to surround the hillock on which Khana Bhil and his men had pitched their camp. A fierce battle was fought between the dacoit gang and the police, and Khana Bhil effected his escape. Ganpat Rao knew that his life was doomed. So he went up to Nana Chandorkar, and with his good offices secured a medical certificate and got relieved of his detective duties. Thus for a second time his prayer to Baba to save his life was effectual. Again for a second time he refused to resign. Having so far successfully duped Baba, he thought he was safe. But he hardly knew how many strings Baba had to his bow.

The third occasion came and then Das Ganu was in a tight fix. When he was the second in command at the Station, the station Officer left him in charge. And Das Ganu in a lordly way wanted to enjoy his time, and went home leaving a constable in charge of the station. Just at that time, a village munsif had sent up a *thoti* with a fine collected from some person against whom a warrant had been sent for collection. That money, Rs. 32/-, was left by the thoti with the constable there in charge, without any person to witness. The constable told the thoti that the Station Officer was on leave, that no receipt would be granted then, that he might go away, and that the receipt would be sent to the village in due course. So, the poor thoti went away, and the constable swallowed up the money. Ganpat Rao knew nothing of it. However, the authorities finding that Rs. 32 had not been collected, sent up a second warrant for the collection of the fine. The party showed the receipt from the Village Munsif. The Village Munsif, when asked, said that he had sent the money to Ganpat Rao's Station, and so the enquiring officer came to the Station and asked the Station Officer who pointed out that at the particular time and date when the money came, he was on leave. Then who was in charge? Ganpat Rao was in charge. Ganpat Rao was the man who swallowed that (fine) amount of Rs. 32 was the conclusion arrived at by the enquiring officer. Ganpat Rao was asked for an explanation. He said he knew nothing. But there was no escaping the fact that money had been sent that day, and was paid at the station as the thoti testified. Then Ganpat Rao, finding that there was not only no chance of his getting the Sub Inspectorship but a good

chance of his getting into the jail, solemnly swore to Baba that this time he would positively quit service. He went further and mentioned his willingness to resign to the enquiry officer who, thereupon, made him pay up Rs. 32, and then discharged him, taking of course his resignation also. Thus Baba succeeded in making Ganpat Rao quit that service, a service, which would prevent Ganpat Rao from becoming the high spiritual personage that he was subsequently to develop into.

Baba used to call him 'Ganu'. When Ganpat Rao came and said, 'I have now left my service; I and my wife have to stand in the streets, as we have no property or income', Baba said, Ganu, I shall provide for you and your family'. (Compare Krishna's promise "*Yoga Kshemam Vahami aham*" BG IX 22). Baba then asked him to go on with his Brahminical duties, puranic studies, and kirtans at which he was excellent, From the day of his loss of service, i.e. 1903, up to this time, Ganpat Rao was never in want either for food or for clothing, and has even become the owner of some lands yielding him sufficient support. And in 1919 his wife died issue less, leaving him without any encumbrances. Baba told him to attend to his kirtans. Das Ganu was specially good at kirtans. He had a fine metallic voice, and he was a vary able performer of kirtans. He would hold an audience of 2,000 people spell-bound in rapt attention listening to him for six or eight hours, and as he never asked for even one pie and made no collections, his kirtans were popular, and in all his kirtans, he would place Baba's picture next to him and even though his katha was about Tukaram or Namdev or Jnanadev, yet he would always refer to Sai Baba as the living Sam or Satpurusha, i.e. as the present Great Saint, whom it would be a great blessing for people to have darsan of, as the very darsan would purify and benefit the visitor. As soon as his kirtans ended, people started in numbers to go to Shirdi and see Sai Baba. These numbers included high officials of good and great position, as also the poor. Thus he has been the means of sending some tens of thousands of people to Baba. He is still living (1955) and justly styled Hari Bhakta Parayana Kirtankar. Baba developed his nature and purified it by making him spend his time whenever he went to Shirdi in reading Vishnu Sahasranama at a temple there. Das Ganu

Maharaj thus got highly purified and was highly devoted to Baba. His purification and development are marked in various ways, and Baba's favour to him on the spiritual side is so vast and varied that it is impossible to sketch them out, especially as Das Ganu Maharaj is still living and we have no right to vivisect that Maharaj. We shall mention, however, a few facts showing how Sai Baba favoured him in addition to relieving him of the two great hampering curses upon him, namely, the dance mania and the Foujdar mania. Baba gave him a special capacity to understand things which others could not ordinarily understand. Baba gave him special hints on special occasions. We shall instance two of these below.

Das Ganu Maharaj wished to write a Mahratti commentary upon Amritanubhava, a famous Mahratti religious treatise, and that was considered to be impossible. A pandit told him that he could not possibly catch all the meaning of Jnana Dev, the author, and express it in his work. Das Ganu went to Baba, prayed for and immediately got his blessing. Then, he began to write his explanations of the riddles, seeming contradictions and apparently meaningless dicta of Amritanubhava. He found the heart of the author and brought it out by a number of illustrations. The illustrations he mostly drew from Baba's talk which he heard at Shirdi. So he succeeded in presenting Amritanubhava in such a way as to satisfy even keen critics; and the pandit who first considered it impossible was satisfied that Das Ganu's work was a success.

Next Das Ganu was anxious to render even a Sanskrit Upanishad, namely, Isavasya Upanishad, into Mahratti. This famous Upanishad consists of only 18 verses. It is full of great thoughts and has been considered by Mahatma Gandhi to be peculiarly important. Mahatma Gandhi said that if the whole of Hindu spiritual literature were gone leaving only this Isa Upanishad, the whole of Hindu dharma could be reconstructed with this alone. Though the Upanishad has received such high encomia, it is a very difficult and tough Upanishad even for separation of sentences and phrases in it, and much more for the interpretation of the same. Different writers have adopted widely different courses. Taking even the very first verse, the punctuation varies. Having so many difficulties in the way

of his ambition, Das Ganu Maharaj went to Baba. Baba said, 'What difficulty is there in this? You had better go, as usual, to Kaka Dixit's bungalow in Ville Parle. And there that (cooly girl) Malkarni, will give you the meaning'. People would laugh at a great pandit like Das Ganu getting interpretation of an Upanishad from a cooly girl. But all the same Das Ganu went to Kaka's bungalow. He slept there. When he woke up in the morning, he heard a girl (it must be the Malkarni mentioned by Baba, he thought) singing songs in great joy. She was praising some orange coloured silk sari, wondering at its fineness and the beauty of its borders, and the floral embroidery on it. Then he just peeped to see who the songster was. The songster had no sari. She wore a rag which was not silk, nor orange coloured, had no borders and no embroidery. He pitied the girl and got a friend to give her a sari—a small cheap sari. She wore it just one day, and went about enjoying it. But the very following day, she cast it aside, again wore her tatters and again began to sing joyously the song about the orange coloured sari and its beauty. Then Das Ganu understood the Upanishad. He found out that the girl's happiness lay not in the external sari which she had 'thrown away' (*tena tyaktena*, which means, that being thrown away) but in herself. And Isavasya Upanishad says the same thing. 'All this world', says the first verse, 'is covered by the Maya of Iswara. So *enjoy bliss*, not by having the externals, but by rejecting the externals (*Tenatyaktena*)'. '*Tena Tyaktena*' might mean being content with what God gives you. The girl was happy as she was contented. Thus Baba taught Isa Upanishad to Ganu through a cooly girl. Baba's ways of teaching were and are peculiar and different in the case of different individuals.

Das Ganu has been helped in numerous other ways, but it is sufficient here to note that Baba gave him the assurance that he would provide for his temporal welfare (*Yogakshema*) so that he might bravely and calmly start his spiritual career. And Baba kept his word, Baba always keeps his word. Baba thus provided completely for the temporal welfare of a man without any employment and any property. When he thought there was nothing for him to depend upon, Baba provided everything, and Das Ganu had always been very well off temporally. Even now he has got properties though he has transferred them to

his adopted son. As for the spiritual uplift, it is impossible to conceive of any greater benefit than wrenching one away from the two great ropes that were dragging Ganpat Rao downwards, namely, the lewd village dramas which Ganpat Rao was playing in and the soul-destroying police work, the wickedness of which would be heightened by the ambition to rise to Sub Inspectorship in double quick time. The way in which Baba responded to prayers and saved him, time and again, from dismissal or punishment would quite suffice to impress the mind of Ganpat Rao with the fact that Baba is omnipotent, is everywhere, watching and attending to his prayers, and is ever looking after him. Baba watched him at every place to which he went and took the appropriate measure that was urgently needed for his welfare. What else can be God except that which watches us everywhere and further takes adequate steps to see that harm does not befall us but real benefit is conferred on us? What is God except that which hears and grants prayer?

Baba naturally did his very best for this Das Ganu but, unfortunately, (as we see in the cases of most devotees contacting Baba) there are obstacles due perhaps to poorva karma which prevent one responding in the correct way to such high influence as Baba's. Even after so much of proof of Baba's omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and miraculous help for Ganu's benefit, Ganu did not fully derive the idea that Baba was God. So many others for whom Baba did even less were full of the faith that Baba was God. No doubt Ganu sang of Baba that he was God in fine terms set to music. But Ganu's conviction was superficial and not deep. Das Ganu's faith being very poor and very weak in Baba's divinity, Baba desired to impress on Ganu, His (Baba's) Godhead and to make him and his other disciples realise him (Baba) properly. For that purpose, he exhibited *chamatkars*, one of which is as follows.

On a certain occasion, Das Ganu wanted to go for a bath to the Godavari river which in ordinary parlance is termed 'Ganga' (the Ganges, the most sacred river). That river is four or five miles away from Shirdi, and when Ganu asked for permission to go to "Ganga", Baba answered, "Why go there? Is not Ganga

here?' Ganu fell very much dissatisfied. Ganu was the author of the Arti song which runs as follows and which was even being sung at Baba's puja.

Shirdi Maje Pandharipura Sai Baba Ramaavara

This means 'My Pandharpur or place of pilgrimage is Shirdi, and the God that sanctifies that place (Vittal) is Sai Baba'; that is, Sai is Mahavishnu from whose feet Ganges is perennially flowing. This song is sung by many and at least a few really think in their hearts that Sai Baba is really Maha Vishnu. For, what is Mahavishnu? Maha Vishnu is the protecting form of God. God has three functions, namely, creation, protection, and final withdrawal, which also is a form of protection. The protecting aspect of God is called Maha Vishnu. So Sai Baba, the person who has protected Das Ganu and innumerable others, and who is doing it even today on a vast scale from one end of the country to the other, is certainly exercising the functions of Maha Vishnu⁸. All Divinity is one. Call it or Him by any name and carry on your worship according to any religion and adopt any set of doctrines or metaphysical or philosophical basis for your ideas and actions, the end reached is the same, the one pure and perfect Bliss. When the goal is reached by the most advanced souls of any country or sect, the experience is the same. But before the end is reached, the modes adopted and the explanations given by sets differ so greatly sometimes as to cause religious differences of a bitter sort — and quarrels, battles or wars are waged on account of religious or sectarian zeal. The common run of men look to externals alone and the inner kernel of all religion is beyond their grasp. Sri Das Ganu on account of his poorva karma of former births and even the karma of his present earlier life could not rise to this view. Baba had to refine his nature and wash away the effects of birth, breeding and past habits. There are many methods that are adopted for this purpose. Pilgrimages, and visits to saints at those places (for many holy persons visit such places) have their use.

⁸ Reader, if you very earnestly wish to have this experience now, you can have it.

REDEMPTION NEVER IMPOSSIBLE

Amongst the important lessons to be derived from Baba's dealing with and teaching Das Ganu is the following matter of the utmost importance in the daily life of thousands of our readers. The state in which Das Ganu was in 1890 or 1892 when he approached Baba was very grave, and in the view of ordinary persons absolutely hopeless. No one would think that a man with a hoard of past karma and vicious tendencies which had struck deep root could possibly be saved from them in one life, more especially when his tastes had attracted him to a profession and to activities which gave ample scope for such tendencies. Any other person would have abandoned the task as hopeless, but Sai, like Chaitanya, i.e. Lord Gauranga, did not despair of redeeming such a soul. There are several votaries unfortunately singing the song—

Na madida karma baiavanta vaagidare

Neemaaduvadu Eno Hariye.

This means, 'O God, if the sins I have committed are so powerful, what can you do?' This despair is properly met in the Bhagavata:

NAMASMARANA

Naamno asti yaavati scaktih paapa nirharane hareh

Taavat kartum nascaknoti paatakam paataki janah

This means, "No sinner can commit so many or so heinous sins as to make it impossible for God's name to redeem him." It is folly and ignorance of a highly self-destructive sort on the part of a sinner to limit the power of God to redeem him. Hence neither Sai nor Chaitanya despaired of redeeming desperate characters. Just as Chaitanya drew Madho and Jagai from the depths of an almost bottomless pit to the heights of saintliness, so Baba has done in the case of Das Ganu.

The words used in the first stanza above quoted show the power of God's name. It is just as well to point out that practically God's name and God are not different. The name has a power because it is God's name. If it is the name of the devil or any other person, it would not have such power. But the name is so closely intertwined with the object that even philosophers confound the two.

There is a school of nominalist philosophers who say that everything is only name and that there is nothing beyond. Commonsense rebels against this view and most people join the conceptualist or realist school saying that objects exist apart from names and we have a conception of an object to which name is applied as a handle. No doubt the cleverness of songsters and poets makes them attach undue importance to the bare fact of the name as in the following stanza:—

Ninyaako ranga ninhang yako

Nee naama bala ondu iddare sako

This means, 'O, Ranga (or God), what is the use of your prowess or anything else except your name? The power of your name is sufficient'. The songster begins to instance the cases of Draupadi, Gajendra, Ajamila, etc., to prove that the name was sufficient in all these cases to save them and that God himself was not wanted for the purpose of saving. This is obviously absurd in the case of Draupadi and Gajendra where God himself took action or appeared and saved the devotees. Only in the case of Ajamila, there is some degree of justification for the poetic flair, and perhaps some basis for it in the Bhagavata stanza which runs as follows:—

Etavata alam agha nirharanaya pumsam

sankritanam bhagavato gunakarma namnam

Aakruscya putram aghavan yat Ajamilo apt

Naarayana iti Mriyamanaiyaya muktim.

This means. To wipe off sins of men, it is enough if they go on with *sankirtanam*, that is, good singing or recital of God's *gunas*, (qualities), *karma* (deeds), and *nama* (names). (For example) Ajamila, though a great sinner, by barely calling out the name of his child Narayana at the moment of death obtained mukti. This seems a basis for saying that the bare utterance of God's name, even though the utterance was only of the name of the child bearing God's name, at the moment of death, would have the effect of saving a man. The proposition thus stated seems too wide and too wild. In the case of Ajamila, however, the man had been formerly a great bhakta leading a very pure life and

would have constantly used the term Narayana with very holy associations. Some of those associations might have dawned upon his mind when he uttered that name with reference to his child Narayana and therefore made Lord Narayana send his angels to save Ajamila who was just about to be dragged away by the myrmidons of Yama to Hell for punishment for his numerous sins. No doubt Vyasa adds a general statement—

Sanketyam parihasyam va sthobham helanam eva va

Vaikunta naama grahanam ascasha agha haram viduh.

This means, '(Even) where God's name happens to be used merely as a token or symbol agreed upon by people to represent something worldly or is uttered in jest or by way of ridicule, still the utterance of God's name removes every sin.' Using God's name in jest or ridicule is known to many. People swear by God for purposes of emphasis without thinking of holiness. All the same, if they have been listening to bhajans, kirtans, sacred reading, etc., in which these names of God have been associated with things holy, the effect of ridicule or jest may not completely wipe off the holy associations of those names. As for *Sanketyam*, an instance may be given. Amongst a South Indian community, the name Govinda or "*Midasannam Govindappa*" (i.e. the narrow necked Govinda) is used to denote the drink bottle. Even for that purpose, if the name is constantly used, the utterance of Govinda's name will have some merit and may help in salvation. Anyhow, apart from all the above and apart from the school of nominalism, the value of God's name consists in the fact that people have very little knowledge of what the substance of God is, and they have to handle God only through the name. Therefore, as stated in Sainatha Manana, 62 '*Abhinnatvar Naama Naaminoh* i.e. there is no difference between name and the possessor of the name (in effect.) This may remind us of modern philosophies which doubt whether in every object there is any "substance" behind attributes, or appearances and whether the attributes or appearances are anything more than mere names or ideas.

Coming back to the question of the use of God's name for eradicating sins from one's nature, we find that Valmiki and other authors of great works on

ethics, ancient and modern, stress the importance of the constant recall to the mind of God and his qualities, especially through japa, japa being so holy as to make the mind get drowned in God so as to justify the remark of Lord Krishna—*Yajnaanaam Japa Yajno Asmi*, that is, "Of all yajnas, I am the yajna consisting of Japa". Japa is the *sankirtanam* above referred to. When the name is uttered, the guna and karma above referred to follow immediately into the mind of the japa karta by the law of association of ideas. That is why people are content to begin with a repetition of the holy names even when not attended with perfect realisation of the holiness of the name as in the case of the hunter who repeated "*Mara, Mara*" and became the Rishi Valmiki. Many a man goes on repeating like a parrot the names he finds either in a book or uttered by some other persons. But gradually as the repetition goes on, the sacred influence pours in especially if he has the good fortune of having the company of the other person or persons who are inspired by that holy influence and if the surroundings as in a temple or bhajan hall are specially favourable. That is why Baba asked Das Ganu to take up Vishnu Sahasranama and retreat from the crowds of the Dwarakamayee and go to a sequestered temple like the Vittal temple in the village and go on there with his frequent recitals or repetitions of Sahasranama. Baba's advice in this matter was not confined to Das Ganu. He gave similar advice to Shama and in fact took away a Ramadasis's Sahasranama and handed it over to him so that he may have the advantage of the Sahasranama japa, though poor Shama did not know how to read Sanskrit, the conjunct consonants of which defy the poor skill of villagers like Shama to read or make them out. The Vishnu Sahasranama is so vast and the import of the thousands of Names, is so great that any one who goes through them carefully with the help of Sankara or other Bhashya thereon must be struck by the fact that powerful material imbedded in Vishnu Sahasranamam must suffice for the purification of any soul. The experience of thousands justifies them in the belief that what is claimed in the Vishnu Sahasranama stotra itself is right. That stotra says at the end that a person making a parayana thereof will obtain issue if he is issueless, wealth if he has no wealth, power, fame, glory and success if he is without these and, it adds that

sins of ages would be washed off. In order to give the benefit of the Sahasranama to those who have unfortunately not the time nor the opportunity to repeat, the bare repetition of one name contained therein, namely, the name 'Ram' would be equivalent to the merit of repeating all the thousand names.

Sri Raama Raama Raameti

Rame Raame Manorame

Sahasranaama tattulyam

Raamanaama Varaanane.

That is, 'One who repeats only the name of Rama will obtain the merit of repeating the Sahasranama itself.' We must note also that Sankaracharya gives the advice.

Gey am Geeta Naama Sahasram

Dhyeyam Srtpati Rupam Ajasram.

This means, 'What you have to recite is (1) the Gita and (2) the Vishnu Sahasranama, and what you have to think of in your mind all the time is the form of the Lord'. That is, the repetition of Sahasranama or Rama *nama* is best, if it is accompanied by a mental figure of the Lord, as no doubt the mental figure of the Lord helps in removing all sin and raising one to the heights of spirituality or Godhead. That may explain why Baba advised so many of his bhaktas to repeat Sahasranama or Rama *nama*. For example he gave the advice to Mrs. G. S. Khaparde, who was massaging him and whom he massaged in turn, "Say, 'Rajaram, Rajaram,' constantly; that would remove all troubles and take you to the Lord." Baba also told N.R. Sahasrabuddhe that he was to repeat Ram Nam into which he had already been initiated. Also he told M. W. Pradhan. that he must repeat the 13 lettered mantra into which he had already been initiated, namely, 'Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya Jaya Rama'.

Baba was not content with merely giving advice. He preached only what he himself practised, and he told H.S. Dixit (Gospel 195) that he had been going on with Hari Nama Japa constantly as a result of which Hari (God) appeared before him, and that thereafter his giving of medicines was needless, for his bare giving of udhi with remembrance of Hari would suffice to cure all ills. He also said

(Gospel 198) that he had heart disease (literal or metaphorical) and that he kept Vishnu Sahasranama close to the heart and that Hari descended from the Sahasranama and cured the trouble.

But whatever Baba did, Das Ganu stuck mostly to his old set of ideas which formed the foundation for his spiritual progress. He could not get rid of the idea that the great thing for him to do was to get to Pandharpur, the Bhooloka Vaikuntam as it is called, in Asvin and Kartik months and see the holy image of Vittal there and worship it. That Vittal was God. It alone was God. And if he was to get vision of God it must be by that form appearing before him in a vision.

Das Ganu was told by Baba to go through Bhagavata reading in 7 days (this is called *Saptaha*) and he then told Baba that he would go on with *Saptaha* and Baba must see to it that he (Das Ganu) got sakshatkar as the result. 'If there is intense (*Bhav*) concentration, then Sakshatkar can be had' was what Baba gave as answer. Ganu went through Saptaha. But there was no sakshatkara for the obvious reason that Ganu's mind could not attain the needed intensity of concentration.

When he was in this mentality, NGC, his former master (for this was in 1912 or so when Ganu had retired from service) was asking him to stay on for Asvin at Shirdi and do his *kathas* there. At once Das Ganu thought that Baba was compelling him through N G C to keep off from Vittal at Pandharpur. His thought then was "How is he (Baba) God, who keeps me away from God (Vittal) at Pandharpur?" Baba noting his thought told Nana Chandorkar to send him away to Pandharpur, and so he went and returned later on to Shirdi. Then he came to Baba and said, 'When will you give me Sakshatkar?' (Paragraph 129 of B.C. & S.). Baba said, 'You see Me. This is Sakshatkar. I am God'. Then Das Ganu said, 'I expected you would say so. But I am not satisfied with it'. Das Ganu considered that Vittal of Pandharpur alone was God, and not the Sai form that he saw at Shirdi. He concluded that it was not in his destiny to have Sakshatkara of Vittal. But to understand Baba's answer, we might refer to a parallel passage in St. John's Gospel, Chapter XIV, verses 8 to 14. There, Phillip, the follower of Jesus said, 'Lord, show us the Father. And it suffices us'. Jesus says to him, "Have I

been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? The Father that dwelleth in Me. He doeth the works (i.e. miracles or *chamatkars*). Believe me that I am in the Father and He is in Me, or else believe me for the very works' sake. If Ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. I am in my Father and you in Me and I in *you*.⁹

This peculiar lack of faith of Das Ganu was not noticed by himself till after Baba left the body. In 1919, that is, a year after Baba shed his mortal coil, Das Ganu was at his usual place, Handed, where there was a saint, with wonderful spirituality, on a rock. When others went to see that saint, he received them. But whenever Das Ganu tried to see him, he evaded him. But on one occasion in 1919, when his wife died, he sent some food to that saint and saw him later. Das Ganu wanted to know why the saint was evading him. Then the saint answered, 'You call yourself a Kirtankar. Why then have you "Ahamkar" (Egotism)?' Das Ganu pleaded that every one had Ahamkar, and that it was impossible to avoid it. Then that saint said, 'Shall I tell you what sort of Ahamkar you have? Is not Sai Baba your Guru? And shall I say what you have done with him?' Das Ganu said, 'Yes'. The saint asked, 'Did not Baba produce water from his feet, and what did you do with it? You sprinkled it on your head, but would not put it into your mouth, because you are a Brahmin and the Ganga was coming from the feet of the mosque dwelling Baba. Is it not Ahamkara of yours?' Das Ganu felt the force of the saint's observations. Das Ganu's inability to think of Baba as pure Vittal or God is an instance where a person gets very great benefits from Baba but something or other hinders his deriving the fullest benefit as prejudices die hard and old habits cannot be easily erased.

We shall give a few examples of how Baba helped Das Ganu temporally and spiritually. Once when Das Ganu and Bere, an agricultural inspector, were to leave Shirdi for Kopergaon to catch a train for which there was plenty of time, they went to take Baba's leave. Baba in giving the leave, said "Start at once, don't stop but go straight to Kopergaon." They acted on his advice. Other

⁹ This means for ordinary men, **God** is to be seen only by regarding as God a highly gifted Saint evidently filled with Divinity and .showing his divinity by performance of **superhuman** acts called miracles.

tongawallahas told them to wait and go with them on that dangerous road to have the benefit of their company. They however followed Baba's advice and drove straight on and arrived safe at the Kopergaon station. The other tongawallahs who came up later were in time to catch the train but they were waylaid by highway robbers. Baba's advice had saved Bere and Ganu from that mishap.

Baba similarly tried to save Das Ganu from being attacked by the inner enemies (*Kama, Krodha*) also. Baba set before him the ideal of being totally free from those six enemies. That, however, was no joke. Like so many other devotees, this apostle also had his slips. But Baba very kindly pulled him up and corrected him off and on. For instance, on one occasion there was a feast at Shirdi where sira was prepared and distributed. Baba asked Ganu, "Did you get sira at that person's house?" "No, Baba" said Ganu, "that man is my enemy and did not invite me." Baba, at once rebuked him and said, "What is this sira and who eats it? Do not say of anyone that he is your enemy". Baba wanted to point out to him that he is the soul which neither eats nor has any other physical function and that all souls are in essence one and the same, viz., Paramatma. To one who has realised himself as Paramatma, there can be no enemy at all.

Compare Shri Sankara's saying in Charpata Panjarika stotra.

Sarvasmin api pascya aafmaanam

Sarvatra utsrija bheda ajnaanam

Tvayi mayi cha anyatra eko Vishnuh

Vyartham kupyasi sarva sahisnuh

which means, "The one Vishnu (God) is in you, in me and others; all he endures. Your anger is senseless. See the (same) Atman in every one. Differentiation (or discrimination) is ignorance. Avoid it everywhere." Sai Baba has stressed the same truth of identity of all souls not merely on Das Ganu but also on R. B. Purandhare, Narayan Ashram, etc. It goes without saying that Das Ganu could not possibly rise to the desired height of realizations of unity of all souls, or the perception of God in all or any creatures.

The truths taught by Baba are so peculiar to each and applicable and intelligible only in special circumstances. Hence, we must content ourselves with only one more illustration and stop. Das Ganu Maharaj was a very severe critic and occasionally uttered words that wounded the hearts of others and produced other evil effects. On one occasion, he had used hard words and defamatory language against a devotee living at Shirdi, who had done splendid work to make Sai Samsthan highly attractive and who drew numerous influential and other people to Baba's feet. When Das Ganu vented one of his frequent abuses against that devotee, Baba sent for him and pointed out that the work of attracting devotees to Baba's feet was rightly prized and practised by Das Ganu himself on a vast scale and yet he was defaming a person who carried on the same work and he thereby hindered that work. Baba thus made him acknowledge his error and insisted on his prostrating himself before that devotee and begging pardon. So Das Ganu adopted that advice and prostrated himself before that devotee and prayed for pardon. He thus gained more self-control and more humility, and also noted with appreciation the value of the lesson taught in Bhagavata 11th Skanda.

Na stuvita na nindeta kurvatah saadhu asaadhu vaa

Vadato guna doshaabbyam varjitah samadrik munih"

which means, 'the sage must have equal vision and should neither eulogise the doers or utterers of good nor decry the doers or utterers of evil.'

Before closing this chapter, it is our duty to draw prominent attention to the chief merits and excellences of Das Ganu Maharaj. He is well known not merely as a performer of Kirtanas (Harikathas) with great ability for about fifty years, but also as a composer and writer of saintly lives. Even before 1903, his literary skill made him produce fine verses on Sivaji, the national hero, for use at the Ganapati utsava in Maharashtra. As verses on Sivaji rouse up patriotism and the National spirit, which the foreign rulers then in power dreaded, he was called on by his Inspector to explain how he, a Government servant, took this prominent part in helping on a national movement. His answer was that he was an "Asukavr, that verses in Lavani metre flowed out of him at the barest request of

anybody and that the request of some one made him sing impromptu the song or verses on Sivaji. As a proof he offered to compose impromptu verses on the officer himself at once. The officer wished to test the truth of the statement and asked him for verses on himself (the officer). Ganu's *Asukavitva* or poetic genius was equal to the occasion. At once, he sang up the high qualities (real or fancied) of the officer, in lavani metre and in a few minutes there were numerous verses on the excellences of the officer who was greatly pleased and dropped the charge against Ganu then known merely by his police No (e.g. 808). Ganu could say with Alexander Pope that he "lisped in numbers for the numbers came." We need not draw the inference that his works were without depth of thought or other poetic attractions. By steady practice, he acquired considerable mastery of Mahrathi, his mother tongue. Some of his works were prescribed as text books once by the Bombay University. All his works are on noble topics. Mostly it is biography of the saints that he wrote. His command of Ovi, Dindi and other metres was excellent. An abundant use of alliteration and other figures of speech adorned his sonorous writings. Kirtankars who wished and wish to deliver kathas on famous saints could and can easily pick up one of his innumerable stories and please their audiences with parrot-like repetition of it. Even now, any one anxious to spend his time over saintly biography cannot do better than going through the following works (which have earned for him the title, the modern Mahipati, as Mahipati was the famous composer of the works dealing with ancient or medieval saints, in his works Santalilamrita etc.)

(1) Santakathamrita

(2) Arvachina Bhaktalilamrita

(3) Bhakta Saramrita

He began these works almost from 1903 when he quit service. And in these he incorporated the seven chapters (or kathas) which embodied Sai Baba's lilas or life and teachings. He is responsible for the discovery and publication of Sai Baba's early life and tutelage at Selu under Venkusa, which he found to be another name for Gopal Rao Deshmukh, ruler of Selu in Jintur Parganna. Baba had said that he had been delivered by his fakir foster mother to the Selu ruler,

who became his master, Guru and all-in-all. Freed from service shackles, Ganu started his research, ran upto Selu and discovered from Srinivas Rao, the Subedar of Selu in 1903, the ballads and family papers referring to his grandfather's grandfather, viz Gopal Rao Desmukh, the wonders his Bhakti performed, the conquests his military prowess achieved and the Moslem woman's child that became his devoted attendant and disciple to whom he, Gopal Rao (Venkatesa), gave initiation and the fact that at his (Gopal Rao's) grand passing away or Ascension (similar to Parikshit's passing away), the remains had to be interred and that they were interred in the *garba gruha* of Venkatesa temple that was erected thereon (as Gopal Rao was identified with Venkatesa or "Venkusa") and that it still stands and attracts the devotees of the surrounding places.

As this early history is very highly prized by Sai devotees and is essential for a proper understanding of Baba, their obligation to Das Ganu Maharaj is very deep. The earliest books on Sai Baba were the three chapters that Ganu produced and published in 1906 with the aid of funds contributed by H. V. Sathe.

Even during Baba's life in the flesh, Ganu was the person to deliver the annual harikathas (from 1914) at Shirdi at Baba's urus, the Ramanavami Utsava; and he has been keeping up the tradition of conducting that utsava for the last forty years.

Das Ganu Maharaja's frequent kirtans throughout Maharashtra have raised him in the estimation of all whether they are devoted to Sai Baba or not. His eminence may be seen from the fact that he was the President of the All India Sai Devotees' Conference held at Coimbatore in 1948.

He is the one surviving link with the nineteenth century amongst Baba's followers. He is ranked first among Baba's apostles, if we go by the number of devotees drawn to Baba. So many thousands learnt of Baba from him and have subsequently visited Baba or Shirdi and made Baba their own life long possession. Such a towering personality he is, despite his shortcomings. He had no English education, no contact with western culture and has no idea of the present day advance of modern civilization.

This eminent person however had his faults and foibles. Which human being is there free from these? Some have been noted in this sketch. Some others exposed him to attack from others. Even the Sansthan authorities had occasion to find fault with him. But after all is said and done. Das Ganu is a great soul, the living monument of Baba's might and kindness.

The chief lesson devotees learn from a .study of his life is that Baba, the wondrous God-realiser can, turn the most hopeless material into saintly grandeur. What was Ganu's condition as a Rs 11 constable in 1890 or 1892 and what is his state now? This spiritual alchemist that turns baser nature into the gold of saintliness, that could turn a petty minded lewd constable into the moulder of spiritual destinies of tens of thousands, this Sai Baba,— what can he not accomplish for each of us? "*Kshipram Bhavati Dharmatma, Scascvat Scantim nigachchati*" i.e. "Quickly he becomes virtuous and attains permanent peace" is what Sri Krishna promised in the Gita for even sinners that approached Him. That he, as Sri Sai Baba, has performed and proved true in many a case, including the case of Das Ganu Maharaj.

Apart from the thousands of pages that Das Ganu's big works cover, there are several minor pieces by which he will ever be remembered. The Shirdi Arti includes several of these bits, which have sunk deep into the hearts of devotees and which will continue as long as the Shirdi Shrine and Artis last. For instance:

*Shirdi Maajhe Pandharipura Sai Baba Ramaa Vara,
Suddha Bhakti Chandra Bhaaga Bhaava Pundalika jaga,
Yaho yaho avaghe Jana Kara Babasi Vandana,
Ganu Mhane Baba Sayee Dhamva Pava Majhe Ayi*

which means "Shirdi is my Pandharpur (the most holy shrine for Vaisnavites) and God worshipped there is Sai Baba (i.e. Sai is Vittal or Narayana). The holy river called Chandrabhaga found at Pandharpur is represented at Shirdi by pure devotion, and in that river the holiest spot, viz. Pundalika Temple is represented at Shirdi, by intense concentration. All you people, come up, come up and do reverence to Sai Baba. Ganu says. Oh Sai Baba Mother mine, run up and

catching me in your arms, caress me." This intense appeal has caught the fancy of lakhs of people and this song is sung at Pooja and Bhajan all over India.

Two brilliant prayers of Garni in Hindi are also embodied in the Shirdi Arti and are very popular.

Pada (41)

Sai rahama najara karanaa, bachchomka paalana karana

(Burden)

Jaanaa thumane jagat pasaara sabahi jhuta jamaana

(Sai) /

My andhaa hoom bandaa aapaka, mujhako prabhu dikhalaana (Sai)

2

Daasa garni kahe aba kyaa bolum, thaka gayee

merirasana (Sai)

3

which means

O Sai show your mercy, protect this little baby (Burden)

1. *The expansive Universe, you know is a mass of deception*

(Burden)

2. *I your slave am blind. Reveal the Lord to me (Burden)*

3. *Says Ganu, How can I say aught more? Exhausted is my tongue. (Burden)*

Pada (12)

Rahama najara karo aba more Sai, thuma bina

Nahi mujhe maabaapabhayi (Burden)

My andhaahoom bandhaa thumaara

Mynaajanoo Alla-ilahi

1

Khalii jamaanaa myne gamaaya

Sathi aakharakaa, kiya na koyi (Burden) 2

Apane masidakaa jhaadoo ganoo hai

malils hamaare, thuma Baaba Saayi (Burden) 3

which means,

Show unto me, Now thy mercy

For excepting thee I have nobody.

No father, mother, brother (Burden)

1. *Your slave am I, Sightless is my eye
I do not now descry, Aught of the Deity (Burden)*
2. *Down have I fallen to the earth.
For my last moment, no friend I made (Burden)*
3. *Ganu is (but) the broomstick of your mosque.
You are our Lord and Master O Sai Baba (Burden)*

The above named pieces which have already attracted Sai devotees have been included in the Nandaneep Picture *Shirdiche Sri Sai Baba*, the new Sai film exhibited at the Majestic Theatre at Bombay. These will serve to attract thousands of others to Sai Bhakti and Das Ganu will be endeared to the heart of new devotees as he is to the old; both will pray:—May Hari Bhakta Parayana Das Ganu Maharaj be spared to us for a long time to carry on his Sai service and service to Mankind.

P. S :—The original verses giving the phalasaruti of Vishnu sahasranama have not been quoted above because they are too long and also because editions differ in the wording and numbering of the verses. But in this note we might as well give some of them as they might strike some readers as worthy of their attention. They are numbered 130, 142, and 152 in one of the editions.

*130 Vasudevascrayo Martyo Vasudevaparayanah
Sarvapapa Viscuddhatma Yaati Brahma sanaatanam*

i.e. One who makes Vasudeva (i. e. Maha Vishnu) his goal and refuge is purified of all sins and reaches the Eternal Brahman.

*142 Namnaam sahasram yo adhite Dwadasvam Mama sannidhow
Sa nirdahati paapaani Kalpakoti scatani cha*

i.e. He who repeats this sahasranama in my presence, on a Dwadasi day will have his sins (i.e. sinful Karma) burnt out— even sins numbering trillions. (The mention of the special excellence of the Dwadasi day does not affect the merit of the repetition on other days).

And

152 Aarta Vishanna scithilascha bheetah

*ghoresha cha Vyadhisu vartamanah
Sankeertya Naarayana scabda maatram;
Vimukta dhukha sukhino bhavantu*

which means: —

Those in trouble, dejected, shattered, the terror stricken, and those suffering from loathsome diseases, let them repeatedly utter the name Narayana, be freed from grief and become happy.

CHAPTER IV

H.S. Dixit

The next person of whom an account should be given in Sai history is H.S. Dixit (Hari Sitaram Dixit), a well known solicitor of Bombay. The reasons for giving him prominent mention so early in Baba's history is that he was very largely responsible for the establishment and progress of Shirdi Sai Sansthan, the affairs of which were managed by him as Hony. Secretary very ably and enthusiastically up to the time of his death, i.e., 5-7-1926. He was also responsible for drawing large numbers to Shirdi and filling them with admiration and enthusiasm for Sai Baba. The 'Sai Lila Masik', the Mahratti monthly organ of the Sai Sansthan, which had the same result, was mainly his work, up to July 1926, most of his experiences and those of his friends (numbering 151 and more) swelling the first four volumes of that journal, and still giving excellent guidance to devotees.

H. S. Dixit was born in 1864 of high caste Nagari Brahmin parents enjoying a high position and affluence at Khandwa. His scholastic career was bright as he secured a first class in Matric and good marks in F.A., B.A, and LL.B. He very soon settled himself as a leading solicitor at Bombay, and his name frequently appeared in the Law Reports and in the press as distinguishing himself as an able advocate in sensational cases, e.g. Bhavnagar Exposures, Sedition trials against Poona Vaibhava, Lok B.C. Tilak and Globe and Times of India, etc. He attained great fame and wide popularity and commanded high esteem both with the people and the Government. He had numerous public activities, political,

social, municipal, etc., by means of which he was rendering good and valuable service to the public. In politics, he was in the Indian National Congress, and he was the redoubtable follower of Sir Pherozesha Mehta. He was an elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council from 1901 till he gave it up to devote himself to spiritual progress under Sai Baba. He was also an elected fellow of the Bombay University, a Notary public, and Justice of the Peace. He achieved great fame by his bold speeches (e.g. by being the sole protestor against Valedictory address to H. E. Lord Sandhurst who prosecuted Tilak) and action in the Councils. He helped bodies by serving on Committees with his keen intellect and strenuous observation and study. He was Secretary of the Indian National Congress of 1904 at Bombay wherein D. Nowrojee stated its goal to be attainment of Swarajya. He rapidly rose by his influence and ability to greater and greater positions of honour and, had he continued in that line, he would surely have achieved a Knighthood, membership of the Executive Council and appointment as Commissioner of some Province with ample emoluments and gunfire salutes. But his destiny and rinanubandha drew him to other lines, and the turning point was what looked like a mischance. He was in the Bombay Corporation also as a Councillor; and he frequently served on other public bodies. He was a patriotic and self-sacrificing man, and for the sake of principle and public good, he readily resigned his position in the Corporation, and worked hard for national welfare. About 1906 he went to England. There he had some accident in which his leg was injured. In spite of repeated efforts, the injury could not be cured. The limping impeded free movement, as there was pain if he walked a few furlongs. Not only did it make him look awkward, but also it made him less fit for his numerous activities, personal, domestic, political, legal and public, and thus had the double effect of giving him an inferiority complex and a disgust for these aspects of life, thus preparing him for the nobler and holier life. About 1909, Nana Saheb Chandorkar advised him to go and see Sai Baba, the wonderful personality at Shirdi, who might cure his lameness, the same year he went to Ahamadnagar in connection with some Council election business to the house of Sardar Kaka Saheb Mirikar, who was a Sai bhakta, and who had with

him a huge picture of Sai Baba. Dixit saw the picture and his reverence was heightened.

Learning of Dixit's desire to go to Baba, he (Sardar) sent for Madhava Rao Deshpande otherwise known as Shama, Baba's constant attendant, who had gone to Ahamadnagar, and asked him to take Dixit to Baba. Accordingly, Shama took him to Baba in 1909. This very first experience which Dixit had in connection with Baba strengthened his attachment to and admiration for Baba, especially because he had from infancy a great desire to be with sadhus and saints. He repeated his visits to Shirdi frequently, and in 1910 resolved to have a building of his own there. So the foundation stone was laid for a wada there in December 1910, popularly known afterwards as Kakawada or Dixit wada. The work was pushed through and completed in five months (i.e.) in April 1911. From the very beginning Kaka wanted only a small room for himself upstairs for Ekanta Dhyana (solitude and meditation). The rest of the building was used by pilgrims i.e., the public.

Baba's kindness towards him was manifested from the very beginning, and Baba expressed this to others also. He told Anna Saheb Dabolkar 'Kaka Saheb is a good man. Be guided by what he says'. He told R.B. Purandhare to be with Kaka Saheb and assist him. The greatest interest in a saint for any serious minded person is, and ought to be, spiritual interest. So, though originally Dixit's idea was to go to Baba for the cure of his lameness, he soon gave up that idea and said 'Lameness of the body does not matter much', and wanted Sai to cure the lameness of his soul. Sai made distinct promises to Dixit, whom he always called 'Kaka', meaning uncle. As many persons called him 'Kaka', Sai Baba also called him 'Kaka'. One of the early notable statements of Baba was "I will take my 'Kaka' in a vimana" (B.C.S.,100) meaning thereby that he would give Kaka a happy end— *Anaayaasa Marana* and *Sadgati*. Baba did give him both as will appear from what follows.

Dixit in 1909 was a leading solicitor with a highly lucrative practice and had made his name in notable trials. He had abundance of social contact and great influence in social and political matters. In 1909 he was only 45 years old, and he

had a very good prospect of amassing much wealth and achieving many honours in social and political matters also. Perhaps due to early contact with saints, such as Datta Maharaja, his mind, however, was drawn away from worldly attractions, and the meeting with such a wonderful personality as Baba gave a powerful impetus. On account of rinanubandha Baba drew him (see B.C.S. 502). Almost from the beginning of his contact with Baba he resolved to have Satsanga with Baba, and to embark on a spiritual career under Sai's guidance, whatever may be its consequence on his worldly affairs. Though his income was ample, his generosity and liberality left very little fluid resources remaining with him and, barring his three bungalows at Bombay, Ville Parle, and Lonavla, which did not yield any income, he had no other property. Yet Sai's attraction being strong, his visits to Shirdi were more and more frequent and his attention to practice was greatly diminished. One consequence of this diminution was that his partners in the solicitor business, viz., Rao Bahadur S. Narayandas and Dhanji Shah, broke up their partnership with him, and he had to form a new firm with a newly enrolled advocate Purushotham Rai Markhad for his partner. That gentleman also, on account of Dixit's frequent absence and lack of interest, withdrew from his partnership. Other partners also, Maneklal, etc., very soon left him alone or rather he left them very soon, and his income from law became very little. From 1911 onwards, his practice may be said to have been nil, though Baba asked him to go to Bombay to practise. He obeyed Baba and went to Bombay, but returned soon as his heart was at Shirdi and not at Bombay. All his friends, acquaintances, and admirers were astonished when he closed his lucrative practice in 1912, and several people were saying that 'A Fakir called Sai Baba had cast a fascination on him that pushed him to Shirdi and made him crazy'.

Sai Baba distinctly undertook the full care of Dixit and his family to enable him to carry out his spiritual work. Baba's express words to Kaka were '*Kakatula Kalji Kazli Mala sara Kalji Ahe*'. That is, 'Kaka, why should you have any anxiety or care? All care and responsibilities are mine'. (B C.S. 29). On the first occasion when he said this, Baba gave him indisputable proof that the undertaking, though vast and unlimited by time and circumstances, was real. No ordinary man with

human powers will or can give such an undertaking. But it was Baba, possessed of divine powers, that gave it. When at Shirdi Baba gave this undertaking, Kaka's daughter, aged about eight, was in his bungalow at Ville Parle, and was playing close to a huge almirah with a large number of big dolls in it. She climbed up the almirah, and the same (with all the dolls) fell upon her, but strangely enough, no dolls fell upon her; and no damage was done to her by the fall except the breaking of her bangles and the consequent scratch. Kaka learnt of this incident only later, and understood what divine power and kindness were in Sai (his Gurudeva) when he gave the undertaking, which he fulfilled thus at once at Ville Parle.

Dixit could never forget that Sai's powers and nature were divine, and that all responsibility for him and his family rested on Baba's divine shoulders, and that there was no need to apprehend any harm. His heart was free from anxiety, fear or worry though lucrative practice, with high social and political position and prospects, was lost by his clinging to Sai at Shirdi ignoring his worldly affairs. Ordinarily the change from affluence to lack of funds would be painful. But in the case of Kaka Saheb, his habits were very simple. He reduced his needs to the minimum, and avoided every sort of luxury or unnecessary expenditure. The loss of income or wealth would be considered a great evil by others; but he, as the "Ankita" or earmarked child of Baba (who undertook all responsibilities), and as a student of the spiritual life and a special student of Bhagavata, remembered what Lord Krishna says in Skanda 10, Adhyaya 27. *Tarn Bhramscayaami sampatbhyo yasya cha ichchaami anugraham i.e.* 'I deprive him of all wealth, whom I wish to bless'. His keeping away from courts, society, and public work might make life dull and insipid to him but he realised that he was being trained by the Sadguru for something higher, i.e., Sadgati, by shedding the popular confusion of wealth with welfare and of enjoyments with happiness.

For a person steeped in worldliness and spending 95 per cent of his time in worldly company, all chances of spiritual progress depend upon sequestration and solitude and entire absorption in holy company amidst holy surroundings. Therefore it is that our sacred books prescribe that after Grihasthasrama has

been enjoyed to a certain extent, we should retire and live in the forest, i.e.. in Vanaprastha Asrama (SB XI(18) 1-11). Kaka Saheb had already 25 years of practice and worldly Grihasthasrama and was ripe therefore for Vanaprasthasrama. In his case, however, he had no necessity to go to a reserved forest. His life at Shirdi from 1912 onwards (i.e. from his fortyeighth year) may be considered to be his Vanaprasthasrama. To make that effective, i.e., to give him Vanaprastha Asrama. Baba told him. 'Kaka, remain in your wada upstairs. Do not go here or there. Do not come here (even to the Dwarakamayi)' which was crowded and distracting. Kaka obeyed this injunction strictly. Then he found his absence at the darsan of Baba for 2 O' Clock Arti very painful. Through Shama he prayed and obtained permission to attend it and the Arti at Chavadi. Thus Baba kept him for nine months in solitude. This is strict Vanaprastha or Vanavasa. Alarmed by the change, his wife at Ville Parle tried to give him her company and came to Shirdi. At Kaka wada, ladies should not go upstairs; that was the rule. When Shama broached the question to Baba whether during his wife's stay downstairs, Kaka should go down for sleep or sleep upstairs only, Baba emphatically said that Kaka must sleep upstairs. Thus Kaka's Brahmacharya and rigorous tapas were maintained, and his wife returned quickly to Ville Parle. One the occasion of her departure, Sai Baba repeated his assurance that he was entirely responsible for Kaka Dixit. He told her 'Have no fears at all about Kaka, / *will took after him myself.*

The regular study by Kaka (prescribed by Baba) when he was upstairs was an excellent purificatory preparation for self-realisation and God-realisation through bhakti and jnana. Kaka had gone through Harivarada, i.e., a Maharatti commentary on the 10th Skanda of Bhagavata. Then Kaka went to Baba and asked him, 'This is finished. Should I read this again or read any other pothi?' Baba said, 'Go on with the parayana of Eknath Brindavan pothi'. Amongst the numerous works of Eknath, none is named 'Brindavan Pothi'. So Kaka Saheb took Eknath's Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, and asked Baba whether that was Brindavan Pothi. Baba said 'Yes'. Kaka did not understand, and others also did not understand why Baba called Eknath Bhagavata 'Brindavan Pothi'. But when

Kaka came to the end of the book, he found the last stanza of the last, i.e., 31st, Chapter in which the author Eknath says.

Haa Ekaadasca navhe Jann

Eka tisaam Khanache Brindavama

Etha nitya base Sri Krishna

Swananda puma nijasatla

which means—'know this (book) is not Eleventh. It is the 31st storeyed Brindavan. Here Sri Krishna always resides, in his own essence, full of his own bliss'. Kaka and all wondered how thoroughly familiar Sai Baba was with Eknath Bhagavata by seeing that he referred to what was stated in its last stanza (in the 31st Chapter). When Dixit's daughter Vatsali died, that day a copy of Bhavartha Ramayan came to Dixit by post. He gave it into Baba's hands. Baba holding it up side down dipped his hand in it and took up the passage where Rama condoles Tara after Vali was slain and asked Dixit to read it. What is there that Baba did not know? When Bhagavata was over, Kaka Saheb asked Baba, if he should study Bhagavad Gita with commentaries. Baba ordered him to go on with concentrated study of only two works, Bhagavata and Bhavartha Ramayana. He had not merely to study but also do *Mananam* (meditation) and observe *Acharanam* (to have his conduct based on the scriptures). After the nine months were over, Baba stopped his severe practice of seclusion, and Dixit was permitted to go and visit Bombay also.

VAIRAGYA

Dixit's vairagya developed steadily along with his love of the Guru. His Guru both by example and precept showed him the absurdity of the worldly man's desire for much wealth and how little was necessary even to an ordinary sadhaka. Especially after Baba had assumed all his responsibilities, he noted how needless it was for him to spend attention and time or energy as before to acquire or preserve wealth. Two instances may be cited as typical of this teaching of Baba. In the early years of Kaka Saheb's contact with Baba, he earned large fees. On one occasion when he came to Shirdi, he came along with a trunkful of rupees (may be Rs. 1000), which he earned in a Native State. He

came to Baba, placed the trunk before him, showed him the rupees, and said, 'Baba, all this is yours'. Baba at once said, 'Is that so?' and plunged both his hands in the box full of rupees and gave away heaps of rupees to the people that crowded round him like bees for honey. In a few moments, the trunk became empty. This incident is narrated by Garde, a Sub Judge friend of H. S. Dixit, who was watching all the time the face of Dixit to study the reaction on his face to the rapid scattering of his hard earned money by Baba. Though any other person in his position would have felt the loss of money very bitter. Kaka Saheb was unmoved. That showed how he had hardened in his vairagya at the feet of Baba. He learnt again that the silver so highly valued by the world was but mud to the Sadguru, who was a "*Sama loshta asma Kaanchanah*" i.e. one to whom a clod, a stone and gold were equally indifferent. B.C. (6) 8, (14) 24

On another occasion, when Dixit got a cow, Baba said, 'This cow was formerly a Jalna man's, before that an Aurangabad man's, before that, Mahlsapathy's; God knows whose property it is'. Baba's statement was an exposition of the Isavasya Upanishad, which says,

havasyam Ida(g)m sarvam Yatkincha Jagalyaam jagat

Tena tyaktena bhunjithah Ma gridah, Kasya Sviri dhanam

which means, 'Whatever thing is in the world is covered by God. Renounce that and be happy, Covet not. Whose is property? or covet not any one's wealth, yours or others. Property is always changing hands and changing shapes. It is not perpetual. So it must be kept away (from the soul) to attain happiness.' Thus we have to regard all property as coming and going "*Agamaapayinah*" B G(2) 14 and should avoid getting attached to it. Baba's undertaking responsibilities for Dixit and family was so wide that Dixit felt himself always under Baba's care and had no need to fear. Baba's words to Khaparde, Dixit, and others were, 'Why fear when I am here?' Baba gave ample proof to Dixit of his thorough knowledge of all events, past, present and future, taking place here, there, and everywhere, and his power to see to the exact fulfillment of his promise or prediction.

By constantly staying with Baba, Dixit noticed that Baba had this Antarjnan" or *Chittasamvit* or *Ritambhara Prajna*, and that he had also vast

control over men, creatures, and inanimate things of Nature. For instance in 1917, Kaka Mahajani, who was at Bombay, was requested by the son of his master Thakersey Sail to go to Shirdi and take Baba's advice as to what would be the best course for his master's health. Mahajani said that as Dixit was at Shirdi, it would be sufficient to write to him. But the master's son said that Mahajani should actually go to Shirdi as nothing else would satisfy his father. When this conversation was going on at Bombay, Baba told Dixit at Shirdi, "What deliberations and consultations are going on there!" The next day when Mahajani turned up at Shirdi and mentioned about his master's health, Baba told Dixit. This is the matter we were talking about yesterday. Is it not?' Dixit compared notes with Mahajani and found that while Mahajani and his master's son were talking at Bombay, Sai at Shirdi was fully aware of that fact. On one occasion, immediately after Arati. Sai Baba told his devotees. (B.C.S. 406,) 'Be wherever you may, say whatever you may, and do whatever you may, be sure, I am aware of what you say or do'. This is *Ritambharaprajna*, which only perfectly realised souls like Sai have. Some others may through yogic practices, mantras, or by the use of spirits, acquire mind-reading, clairvoyance, and, within limits, may even be able to say what some persons at some places do or say. But ordinarily such yogis cannot always and without effort, be all-knowing at all places like Baba. Thus Dixit was convinced that Baba had these divine qualities (far superior to magical feats) and also the divine power to know or control the future and protect him.

A well-known story says that even the great Vyasa who codified the Vedas could not get definite knowledge of the future. When Dasa asked his Guru Vyasa when the former's death would take place, Vyasa did not know it, and therefore went with his pupil to Yama, who also did not know it. Vyasa then went with the other two to Mrutyu (Death). He also did not know, and all the four went to Kala's (TIME'S) place, and there at the place of Kala, the pupil died, and Kala's register showed the stanza.

*Yada Vyasaschcha Dasaha Yamena Mrityuna saha
Kaalasya griham Aayanti Tadaa daso marishyati*

which means:— "Dasa will die, when Dasa goes to Kala's place with Vyasa, Yama, and Mrutyu".

Let us now contrast this with Baba's knowledge of the future. On one occasion, Kaka at Shirdi got fever, and then when he went to Baba, Baba told him, 'You better get away to your bungalow at Ville Parle. This fever will last only "four" i.e. a few days. But have no fears. It will pass away, and you will get all right. Do not allow yourself to be bedridden. You can go on eating sira (semolina pudding), as usual'. Kaka Saheb accordingly went away to Ville Parle. There his fever was increasing. Dr. Demonte was called and he diagnosed the fever as Navajvara and he directed the patient to remain in bed and take the prescribed medicine. Baba had told him, '*Padighevum Nakos*' that is, 'Avoid lying in bed'. So, Kaka sat up on a swing (Palang) and he went on eating sira, a dish full of ghee and semolina, which fever patients are medically advised to avoid. The fever steadily increased, and the doctor was aghast at Kaka's throwing his instructions to the winds. He called on a fellow doctor to diagnose, and both of them said that things would take a very serious turn, if Kaka Saheb kept on violating medical advice. But Kaka told his doctor Demonte that he had sent for him to have friendly and cheerful company and that he was sure, as Baba said 'This fever would pass away in a few days' and that the doctor would not be blamed as he (Kaka) was sure to recover. Dr. Demonte thought that Kaka was being fooled by some fakir. But to his surprise and that of others, Kaka's health, though it went on from bad to worse, suddenly regained normality on the ninth day.

Thus Kaka Saheb was confirmed in his absolute belief in the divine protection of Sai Baba, and the absolute truth of every word that Baba uttered. This faith is called '*Nishta*', one of the two coins which Baba insisted on being given by the disciple as Dakshina to the Guru (namely, '*Nishta* and *Saburi*'. *Saburi* means patience, courageous, cheerful and persevering).

These qualities were steadily developing in Dixit, and these two coins (Nishta and Saburi) he gave to Sai Baba, his Gurudeva. There were frequent occasions to revive and strengthen these qualities in Kaka. For instance, on one occasion,

Kaka went to Baba thinking he should present him a garland and Rs. 25. But he first presented only the garland. Then Baba said 'This garland calls for Rs. 25'. Kaka gladly noted Baba's Antaryamitva i.e. knowledge of all minds. On another occasion, he had gone on with his puja to Sai Baba in his quarters but he forgot to offer the usual betel and nut after naivedya. When later he went to Baba, Baba asked for the betel and nut. This convinced Dixit that Baba was watching him every moment of his life and his every act. Again Dixit was a perfect gentleman with excellent manners and a very good heart. Dixit would not scandalise any one. But on one occasion, it so happened that he joined in scandalising Lord Christ. A little while after, he went to Baba for massaging him. Baba was angry and said, 'Do not massage'. At once Dixit remembered that he had scandalised Lord Christ, and that Baba was therefore angry. He repented his mistake and resolved never to commit such mistakes again. Kaka had the immense advantage of what Roman Catholics call "practising the presence of God." They deal with an unseen God and take immense pains to realise his presence before them at every moment and few of them succeed in this herculean effort. In Kaka's case, the presence of the divine watching him and directing him every instant of his life was evident, too patent for him to ignore and the consequent elevation and freedom from fear and care, quite easy and natural for him. Whether he was talking ill of Christ or resolving to fast or whether he failed to offer betelnut to Baba at his private puja to Baba's photo, Baba was on the watch, and when Kaka went to Baba later, there was the appropriate rebuke or demand.

Once Kaka resolved to observe fasting for the night. But as Baba did not encourage unnecessary observances, he repeatedly told Dixit to take his night meal. So Dixit gave up his idea of fasting. This reminds us of St Mark II 18-21 wherein Jesus informed people that his disciples were not fasting as other devout people did, as the children of the bride chamber would not fast so long as the bridegroom was with them. As long as Jesus watched over his disciples and kept them pure, fasts and vigils were unnecessary. When Baba was there to keep Kaka free from lascivious thoughts and tamasic disposition, there was no need to

fast. Even after 1918 Kaka was feeling Baba to be the God within. He struggled against evil thoughts and tendency to idle gossip or acceptance of low levels of thought and action. He prayed within himself to Baba to correct him and guide him. Even if his thoughts strayed, he would pray Baba to forgive him and strengthen him in his avoidance of the same or similar falls.

Baba was watching not only over Kaka, but over all his relatives also. One day Kaka received a letter that his younger brother at Nagpur was ill. Then he said to Baba, 'I have received this letter and I am of no service to him.' Baba said, 'I am of service'. Kaka could not make out why Baba said so. But at that very moment, at Nagpur, a sadhu came to attend upon his brother, and cured him of his illness, and used the very words of Baba, namely, 'I am of service'. Kaka thus found that across 1,000 miles, Baba could see what went on and could carry out what was necessary for his sishya's relatives.

Dixit had such perfect reliance on Baba that before taking any step in any important matter, he would go to Baba and get his orders and follow the same to the very letter, even though the course was running counter to his own judgment and feelings or those of his friends and relations. Baba once tested and proved his implicit obedience while enjoying the fun of the test. B.C.S. 619 gives the account which shows that Bade Baba, Shama, and Ayi all shrank from assisting Baba or carrying out his order that a goat thoroughly weak and about to die should be slaughtered with a knife at the mosque—while Kaka Dixit alone stood the test and was bringing down a knife over the neck of the creature in implicit obedience to an apparently horrid command. B.C.S. 619 gives the account thus—

619. Once a goat entered the mosque, old, famished and just about to die.

Baba (to Bade Baba):—Cut that goat with one stroke. Bade Baba—(Looking at it with pity) How are we to kill this?

Ayi So saying, he went away from the mosque.

Baba:—Shama, you cut it. Fetch a knife, from Radhakrishna
(Ayi sent a knife; but learning the purpose, recalled it.)

Shama:—I will go home to fetch a knife.

Shama went home and stayed away there.

Then Baba to H.S.D.— 'You fetch a knife and kill it.'

H.S.D. went and fetched a knife.

H.S.D.—Baba, shall I kill it ?

Baba— Yes.

H.S.D. lifted up the knife and held it up in hesitation. Baba—What are you thinking of? Strike.

Dixit obeyed and was bringing the knife down.

Baba—Stop. Let the creature remain. I will kill it myself but not at the mosque.

Then Baba carried the creature a few yards, after which it fell dead.

Some might suppose that such intimate relation and dependence of the disciple might snap if the Guru left the body. But that was not so. After Baba left the body, Dixit, like several other staunch devotees, intently concentrated on Sai Baba, and after prayer cast chits before Baba, and asked some child to pick up a chit at random, and the directions of the chit were Baba's orders and were safe to follow always. One instance may be cited of Dixit's trust in consulting Baba through chits and its proving a reliable method and Baba's proving a reliable helper of himself and his relations. After Baba's samadhi Dixit tried to revive his practice especially for the sake of others. His brother Sadashiv Dixit, BA., LLB., tried to practise at Nagpur, etc., and failed to secure any practice or appointment. Dixit then consulted Baba through chits and acting on the chit-accrued order brought Sadashiv over to Bombay. But even at Bombay, Sadashiv failed to secure any success. Kaka wondered how Baba's order of advice should prove so useless. He was thinking of sending his brother away from Bombay, but as Deepawali festival came in, the brother was detained for that festival. Just at that time, leading persons from the Cutch Samsthan came to consult Kaka Dixit as to which person should be selected as a sufficiently reliable officer on a high pay of Rs. 1000. When Kaka suggested Sadasiva's name, that was readily accepted, and he became Dewan of that State. Baba springs his surprise at the last moment when he gives his blessing and justifies the fullest confidence reposed in him by Dixit, etc. Damodar Rasane employed a similar practice, and says in his

experiences (Vide Devotees' Experiences, Volume II) that Baba's answer on chits to him were always found to be correct (N. B.—Powerful faith alone can elicit a reply).

About Sai Baba's nature, H.S. Dixit entertained no doubt. He was "simply God; especially after he shed his body. He was God—whether in the flesh or out of it, i.e. in Samadhi" B.C.S. 49, 51, 52 62-89 58, & 149. (Baba heard and hears the prayers and troubles of all at all times and places and answered and answers their prayers. What is more, he deeply loved and loves his devotees as his own children and babies (BCS 42). Once pointing to a baby, Baba said, 'When this child sleeps, we have to be awake and guarding (B.C. & S. 34). Baba was and is always doing this for his devotees. Kaka Dixit ever felt that Baba was always behind him and supporting him B.C,S. 24-30, 32—42. His mind was thus freed from fear, anxiety or care, and could happily allow itself to concentrate on and lose itself in the lilas of Sri Krishna and Rama in Bhagavat and Ramayana or of Sai. He was fond of puja as also of parayana. His parayana consisted of Bhavartha Ramayana and Eknath Bhagavata. He was fond of Bhajan, especially Sai Bhajan, and was singing to himself 8 or 9 songs of Baba, especially at evening time, when he would be pacing up and down his terrace. He had a good knowledge of music, and could even compose songs. When he composed a song, Kaka Mahajani asked him to compose more songs. But Dixit's reply was that there were many classic songs and it would be absurd on his part, when these with their holy associations were available, to add his own songs of inferior merit. But the more important objection was according to Dixit that such composition would strengthen egotism in him, and make him feel 'I am a composer: I have done such and such a thing'. Such abhimana, he was killing out of himself, and his humility and simplicity were marked features in his character.

When he found that Baba was perfectly reliable in providing him with everything that was necessary for his temporal and spiritual welfare, he might ask what made Baba attract him (Kaka) to his feet in 1909, and thus undertake all responsibility for him. The obvious answer is, 'Rinanubandha'. We find in G.S.

Khaparde's diary written at Shirdi that (B.C & S. 502) Baba said to Khaparde, 'You, I, Kaka (H.S. Dixit), Shama, Bapu Saheb Jog, and Dada Kelkar, were living together with our Guru in a blind alley in our former birth, and I have, therefore, drawn all of you together in this birth'. Baba avowed in vary general terms (B.C.S. 56) that all the devotees who came to him were drawn by him to himself; and they were not voluntary visitors. When a boy ties one end of a string to a bird's foot and pulls it, the bird must come to him. So, these devotees must come to him. though they were not aware of either the fact of his pulling or the reasons for his pull. The reasons for approaching Sai Baba as for approaching God. so far as they were known to the devotees, were always worldly. Damia once objected (B.C. & S. 56) to devotees coming to Baba with worldly objects, and said they should be driven away. But Baba answered him that he should not say so. He said that he himself drew the devotees to him for one object or another, and after the devotees were satisfied, they stayed on with him. It is the *aarlha* (sufferer) who goes to God and not the man without troubles.

B Gita VII 16 ;—

Chaturvidhaa bhajante innaam Janas sukrutino Arjuna

Aarho jijnaasurarthaartha Jnaani Cha bharatarshabha

Krishna says:- 'Four classes of men come to Me, O Arjuna — those in distress, those who desire to know, those seeking wealth and the Jnanis or fully realised men'.

Persons who approach God or Gurudeva are mostly persons who have worldly troubles seeking worldly relief. It was the lameness of H.S.Dixit that made him think, at the suggestion of Chandorkar, of approaching Baba, He did not come with a view to get a Guru when first approaching Baba; but on account of Baba's wonderful powers and nature, and on account of Dixit's contact with a sadhu named Datta Maharaj in his earlier life, he noted at once that Baba was preeminently fitted to be a Samartha Sadguru for himself. Baba's wonderful powers over men. and things, and also wonderful love, operating to benefit thousands if not myriads of persons in all sorts of places and conditions greatly impressed Dixit. Baba was obviously, like Sivaji's Guru Ramdasv preeminently a

Samartha Sadguru, i.e., one to whom any one desirous of achieving both temporal and spiritual welfare should resort and stick, life after life. To most people however Baba did not appear to be a Guru at all and he seldom declared himself to be a Guru. But on one occasion he quaintly or silently admitted or avowed his Gurudom and its wonderful nature. It was once the lot of H. S. Dixit to elicit this avowal from Baba. It came in connection with a commonplace request for leave from Baba for Dixit and others to go to Bombay. When Baba said, 'You may go' (B.C. & S. 176), some one asked Baba, 'where to go?' Baba gave that a spiritual turn and said 'Up', meaning evidently "to Heaven or God". The question was asked 'What is the way?' Baba answered, "Many ways there are from many places." Baba added, "From this place (meaning Shirdi or Baba's Masjid) also there is a way. But the way is full of obstacles. There are tigers and bears on the way. If one is careless, there is a deep pit into which one may fall". Then Dixit asked Baba, 'if there is a guide?' Baba answered, 'In that case, there is no danger or difficulty. The bears and tigers will move aside'. This was a clear statement that persons wishing to reach the goal, viz., God, could do so even from Shirdi. Kabir's song "*Guruvina Kona balhave Vat*". If there is no Guru, who will show the way? If they have the help of a Guru (guide), they will have no difficulty, and they can safely reach their goal. Of course, the sishya must have *ntshta* (faith) and *saburi* (courage and perseverance). Unless he gets out of worldly attachment, lust, anger, etc., he can never be attached to his Guru or God; and, therefore, the complete, unconditional and perfect surrender of "*Tan, Man, Dhan*", i.e., mind, body, and possessions by the sishya, at the feet of the Guru is very necessary. Confidence in the Guru is a necessary prerequisite for getting the help of the Guru. Dixit offered his *Tan, Man, and Dhan*, at his Guru's feet with perfect confidence. He gave up practice. He gave up society, politics, social esteem, etc., which were dear to him in former days, and stuck to Shirdi to render service to Baba and the bhaktas, both before and after 1918 upto the very end of his life. One may ask, as many of Kaka's relatives asked, "What is to happen to the relatives and dependants of Kaka, if Kaka gets vairagya and stops earning?" A similar question was asked about Balakram Manker, who was the

chief earning member of his family, and who was suddenly attracted to Baba, and gave up his earning activity by staying with Baba or alone on Machendragad Hills under his directions. When the relatives asked Baba 'What is to become of Manker's sons if he ceases to earn?' Baba's answer was, 'I will provide for Manker's sons' (B.C.S. 31). Baba has really provided for them, for they are all occupying high and enviable financial positions now.

About Kaka Dixit. at the very outset, Baba had answered this question by saying, '*Kaka Tula Kaiji Kasli; Mala Sara Kaiji Ahe*', i.e.. 'Dixit. why should you have any care? All care is mine'. Baba, having said this, would be the last person to break his promise of bearing the entire responsibility for Kaka and his relatives. Several incidents would be mentioned to show that before the Mahasamadhi of Baba in 1918 and after, Baba did bear all that responsibility.

First we shall take Dixit's sons and narrate an incident or two. In 1913 Kaka Dixit's boy was reading at Bombay at Ville Parle, and Kaka was with Baba at Shirdi. Just a month or two before the examination, the boy had continuous fever. So Kaka's brother wrote to him to come up and look after the boy, but when the letter was shown to Baba, he told Kaka not to go, but, on the other hand to send for his son to Shirdi, where there was neither doctor nor medicine available. So, the boy's uncle sent him up to Shirdi unwillingly, and strange to say, without hospital, doctor, and medicine, the boy improved in health and got alright at Shirdi. Then the uncle wrote that the examination was on 2-11-1913, and the boy must be sent up for studies. But Baba did not allow it, not even for attending the examination on 2-11-1913, though the boy's uncle wrote that the boy should be sent up. Kaka asked for leave. But Baba did not allow him to start. It looked as though Baba was seriously injuring the boy's prospects. But what happened at Bombay? The examination to be held on 2-11-1913 had to be postponed to 6-11-1913 as a plague rat was found in the examination hall. Again for the 6th, the boy was requisitioned. Again Baba forbade the boy's departure. The boy did not go up. The explanation appeared soon. Again there was a plague rat in the examination hall, and the examination had to be postponed to the 13th. Baba

ordered the boy to be sent up for that date, and he attended the examination and passed. (B.C. &S. 375)

We have already seen how Baba looked after Kaka's daughter Vatsali when an almirah tumbled down upon her. How did the fall of the almirah, with the heavy articles inside, not hurt the girl? In B.C. & S. 35, Baba says, 'I will not allow my devotees to come to harm. I have to take thought for my devotees. I stretch out my hands, four, four hands, at a time to support them. There were some cases, however, in which Baba finds himself prevented from doing anything, and that is what happened finally in the case of Vatsali. When she was in Shirdi, she got fever and Dixit was simply trusting to Baba. But this time instead of saving her, when the fever had far advanced, Baba appeared to her in her dream, and said. 'Why should you be down here? Come and be lying under the margosa tree'. This was ominous, and the very next morning, Baba asked Shama, 'Is Kaka's girl dead?' Shama replied, 'O, Deva, why are you speaking so inauspiciously?' Then Baba replied, 'She will die in the afternoon'. She died accordingly at that time. To enable Dixit to bear the blow Baba gave him a prescription. Kaka took in his hands Bhavartha Ramayana and handed it over to Baba. Baba then dipped his hands into the book, and opening it, at the page in Kishkinda Kanda, where Rama kills Vali and consoles his widow, asked Kaka to read and digest the same. When death is inevitable, Baba wants his devotees to be strong-minded enough to recognise the fact of its inevitability^{10*} and bear the separation. Death is not always an evil. Baba conveyed this truth to Kaka at least on one other occasion. An old woman with her only son was at Shirdi, and a cobra bit that boy. The old woman ran to Baba, and asked for udhi to save the life of her son. Baba did not give any udhi. Then the woman went out. But soon she returned beating her breast wailing aloud that her son was dead. She implored Baba to revive her son. Baba gave neither udhi, nor other help, and

¹⁰ *Avascvtun Bhavi Bhatvanam Pratikaro Shaved yadi*

Tatha Dukkhir- na lipyeran Nala Rama Yudhishtirah

i.e. If the fated events could be escaped by efforts, then Nala, Rama and Yudhistira would not have been so much afflicted by sorrows.

said nothing. But Dixit was there. His sympathy was very much excited, and he requested Baba to help her, The woman's plight is heartrending. Please revive her dead son for my sake'. Baba replied, 'Bhav, do not get entangled in this. What has happened is for good. He has entered a new body. In that body, he will do specially good work which cannot be accomplished in this body, which is seen here. If I draw him back into this body, then the new body he has taken will die, and this body will live. I will do this for your sake. Have you considered the consequences? Have you any idea of the responsibility, and are you prepared to take it up?' H.S. Dixit desisted from pressing his request. The current idea of the worldly man that death is always evil is incorrect and the wise man is he who cares for life only as long as it lasts and meets death without fear when it comes (B.C.S. 314).

In the case mentioned in B.C.&S.362 (of which probably Dixit was aware), Baba mentioned to S. B. Mohile, who took his daughter to Baba for the cure of her split upper lip in 1913, 'I can cure her. But it will be of no use. The girl is of divine sort, and her life, consequently, will be very short, and she will die in March 1914'. That was just what happened. Similarly, Vatsali was also of divine sort. She was one whose *prarabdha* karma ended with her infancy, and, therefore, she would have a good end. The death from her point of view would be an advantage.

As for Dixit's own financial position, there was, for a long time, a period of depression, but there was no positive distress. Contentment was ingrained in Dixit, and he was always saying to himself.

Tevile Anante, Tase Rahave,

which is the same as

Alia Rakhega Vysa Rahena Mania Rakhega Vysa Rahena

This means, 'We must be content with the lot assigned to us by God'. So, he was generally contented and retained his mental peace in the midst of lack of funds and income. However, special occasions arose and his faith in Baba was tested and confirmed. Some time after Baba passed away, Kaka had to meet a heavy obligation of Rs. 30,000 to be paid to a Marwadi. The day for payment was

drawing near, and Kaka could not see how to get funds for meeting this large demand. One night, as he was sleeping, he had a dream, and in his dream, his creditor was pressing him for payment. In the dream, he assured the creditor, 'Oh, don't you fear. I have my friend Sir Chunnilal, Sir Chimanlal etc. all of them knights, and they will provide the money'. Suddenly, he woke up and remembering the dream, he bitterly repented his stupid folly in relying upon 'Sir' this and 'Sir' that who are just the persons who will fail to help at the crucial moment. He felt that the only person on whom he could rely for getting help was Baba, and cursed his folly in relying upon such useless human help. He resolved not to think of these 'Sirs' at all, and to rely confidently and boldly upon Sai Baba alone to furnish him with the funds and that too in time. His views are thus expressed in stanza 343 in Sai Natha Mananam:

*Nathe nah pitrushotlame trijagahtcim ekadhipe chetasaam
Sevye xwaxya paadasya darari vihow sayeexware tishtate
Yam kamchil purushaadhanmm laghubalam sarakhyam alpartadam
Sahyaarthum inrigayamahe naram aho mudha varakaa vayam.*

which means— "While there is our supporter Purushottama, i.e., the supreme person, that Lord of the three worlds, worthy of the soul's worship, the omnipotent Sayeeswara, we (i.e. I) turn to some weak and low person with the title "Sir" who gives little, for help! Alas what folly is this!"

He sat up in his office room on a chair and was waiting and waiting till the actual date of payment came. Till the last date and last moment, no money was forthcoming. But at the last moment, a young man, the son of a rich friend of his, came asking for his advice. He said that after his father's death, he was managing his property, and had to find an investment for his money. He said, just then he had brought with him Rs.30,000/- and wanted to know from Dixit what would be the best investment. Kaka, after explaining the pros and cons of other investments, finally told him that he himself was in urgent need of Rs. 30,000/- and he would be glad to have it on any reasonable terms, but that it was his duty to explain to the lender that his practice had gone down, that his income was very low, though his properties in the shape of bungalows were there, and that it

was his duty to point out the danger and disadvantage of lending to such a person. The young man, however, made up his mind to lend the money to him on account of his need and on account of his being his father's friend, and thus the creditor of Dixit was paid in time. But who could know that the sum of Rs. 30,000 was with a person with a mind to be influenced to lend it to Dixit? Baba alone could know. Baba alone could influence the possessor of the funds. It is just like this that at the crucial moment Baba acts often! For instance Baba operated on the minds of Brahmins to come to do *Pitru Sraddha* for Jog just at the nick of time (B C. S. 377-8). He influenced the appellate Magistrate's mind to deal summary justice to his convicted servant Raghu. He influenced the minds of Government members to refrain from granting sanction against Khaparde for prosecution (BCS 402-5). He influenced the minds of all and sundry to turn Upasani Maharaj back to Shirdi in June 1911 (BCS 635). It is this Baba who knows all facts and grips all minds who brought Kaka's friend's son in time with Rs. 30,000 to clear off Kaka's debt, and Kaka had many instances like this confirming him in his attitude of utter childlike reliance on his Guru even in financial matters.

But financial matters are not the most important. It is the ripening of the soul, the getting rid of past vasanas, the building up of strength and the perfecting of peace on the basis of perfect *nishta* and *saburi* that do matter; these are higher, far higher than mere finance. Baba undertook the responsibility for Dixit in these matters also. He expressly stated that he would take his Kaka in Vimana. What did that mean? Taking in a vimana is what occurs in puranas. When holy persons like Tukaram die, their souls go to Heaven in Vimana. So, Baba's words were understood to mean that Kaka would have excellent Sadgati. Kaka was assured of his future and also that his death would be happy and peaceful. Many pray for it thus-

Anaayaasena maranam vinaa dainyena jeevanam

Dehi me kripaya sayin raksha raksha maheswara

The prayer constantly on the lips of Dixit in the nine padas he repeated was for unshaken faith (*Achanchala bhakti*).

"My last prayer is: May my prema (loving devotion) at your feet increase! God, may my prema increase at your feet. Baba, may my prema at your feet increase!" According to the main mass of the followers of Bhakti marga, the goal or the highest point reached by the bhakta is perpetually staying at the feet of God with firm unwavering *achanchala bhakti*, and, if one is not able to reach permanent stay at the feet of God in this very life, he prays for perpetual contact (birth after birth) with his Guru Deva who would secure that goal for him. In the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 8, Verse 6, it is said

Yam yam vapi smaran bkaavam tyajati ante kalebaram

Tain tarn eva eti koimteya sada tad bhaava bhavitah

It is pointed out, 'Whatever a person thinks of at the time of his death, so becomes he in his next life.' So the advice given by Lord Krishna is —

Tasmaat sarveshu kaaleshu maam anusmara yudhya cha

Mayyarpita manobuddhih maam eva eshyast asamscayam

This means, 'Think of me always with mind and intellect surrendered to me. You will surely come to me'. So, many people try to think of God at the last moment of death. But it is by no means easy to persons, who have spent most of their time in worldly attachments, to think of God when life is parting. We shall describe fully later on how Dixit was able to think of Baba always and therefore at the time of death, the manner of which must be fully set out at the close of this chapter.

It may be noted that the chapter on H.S. Dixit might be of greater help to most readers than chapters on devotees like Upasani Maharaj, Kusa Bhav, etc. Dixit was a worldly solicitor or businessman and was not marked out for any extraordinary spiritual career like that of a Sadguru. What is important in Dixit's life is that from his ordinary level of a businessman, he made the very best use of his life after 45 years of it were over, and by the kindness of Baba, he was able to surrender himself more and more to his Sadguru and to attain, as a result thereof, perfect reliance on Baba's assurance that every responsibility of his would be borne by Baba, and the consequent fullness of peace and calmness. He could and did carry on his affairs, spiritual and temporal, with poorna *nishta* and *saburi* in his Master, being assured of getting the best out of his life, i.e., the

position for reaching the goal of life. This is all that most of our readers can aim at. They can see that Kaka had first a brilliant worldly life and an equally brilliant or even more brilliant success in the spiritual line, and that he died a happy death, 'being taken in a Vimana' by the Guru. Every one of us, though we are not face to face with Sai Baba as Dixit was between 1902 and 1918, can still have even now the same faith, the same surrender and the same assurance from Sadguru Sai that he will look after all our concerns and the consequent fearlessness and calm with the certainty of happy death like Kaka's. Sai Baba is not dead. He is God, and cannot die. When his body was lying in the Dwarakamayee, he appeared to and told Lakshman, 'Jog thinks I am dead; no, I am alive. Therefore do pooja and arati'. He has repeatedly said that his tomb, (i.e., He as *Apantaratma* or *ishtamurthi* or *Perfect Avalia*) will speak and move with those who make him their sole refuge. Baba said, 'I shall be active and vigorous from the tomb also. Even after my Mahasamadhi, I shall be with you, the moment you think of me at any place. As soon as a devotee calls unto me with love, I will appear. I require no train to travel' (BCS.47-52).

Some readers may think that H. S, Dixit had the advantage of constantly meeting and hearing Sai Baba and getting strengthened thereby which they, the readers, do not have. But, if one is earnest in his desire to concentrate on Sai, one can hear and move with Sai now, not through any extraordinary *chamatkars* (though these do take place even now - for typical instances see September 1953 and June 1955 'Sai Sudha'), but through very ordinary means available to all, such as getting the vast literature on Sai Baba in various languages, and having *sravana*, *manana*, *nidhidhasana*, etc. of the same. One can get the same pooja, bhajan, harikatha, meditation or concentration on Sai as H. S. Dixit had. No doubt, Kaka Dixit had the opportunity and power to serve Sai Baba and his Sansthan for 14 years at great self-sacrifice, but similar service is open now to many of us, each according to his own opportunities and abilities. Sai Seva and Sai dhyana, the two main factors that built him up under Sai are still available to all of us. Dixit had the sadhana prescribed by Baba of nine months of solitude and seclusion (Vanaprastha Asrama) to concentrate effectively and exclusively

on Baba, Who prevents any of us from trying to get similar seclusion and concentration? Some may think that Sai Baba when he was in the flesh, undertaking all responsibilities, could afford Dixit better protection in all affairs than Sai could afford to give us now; but this view is wrong. Dixit from 1918 to 1926, when Baba was not in the flesh, was enjoying Baba's protection, see, for example, the provision of Rs. 30,000/- to meet his debts. It is only the fainthearted and ill-informed people that will doubt whether Baba will afford them protection now, and that from hour to hour. But if the readers were to take pains and read and zealously absorb the experiences of devotees after 1918, they will feel assured that Baba's protection is as sure today as it was before 1918. To doubt it will only mean lack of faith in Baba and in his utterances, (see B.C.& S. 51} where Baba says 'Even after Mahasamadhi, the moment you think of me, I will be with you at any place', and also lack of belief in such great personalities, like D.D.

Rasane, S.B.Dhumal, M.B.Rege, and so many others. There are many amongst us now who experience the benefits of the kind and constant attention of this guardian angel Sai in daily affairs, assuring us that we are His men (*Saduchya Ankita*), and that he bears our burdens as promised, of *Yoga kshemam Vahaamyaham*. It is only a question of faith. If faith is strong, the response is quick, and the feeling of enjoying His superhuman protection gets established and makes the mind peaceful and happy. Hence even the careful study of this one chapter on Dixit's life or any other chapter might enable several readers to lead their own life exactly on the lines of Dixit's life, developing their faith and their patience more and more every day. Their patience may be based on the principle of contentment emphasised by Dixit's Slogan: *Tevile Anante Taisech Rahave*.

This means that we should be content with the lot assigned to us by God. Faith is best and perfect when it recognises that Sai is God, and that Sai's

utterances are never wrong or false^{11*}. Such a faith can conquer mountains and that is what we should have. We should be strong minded enough to brush aside contemptuous remarks of people (ignorant though well meaning people who refer to our faith as blind faith). For instance, when Kaka Saheb lost his practice and when under the very nose of Baba his daughter died people could not appreciate his Sai bhakti. Even Anna Saheb Dabolkar thought first 'If Sai Baba could not save Dixit's daughter at Shirdi, what is the good of a Guru?' One might as well say, 'When my dear ones die, what is the good of God?' Faith is not a guarantee that there will be no death evil in the world, nor pains in life. But as in the above case, intense faith makes the devotee brace himself up against all inevitable calamities, and learn more and more of God's scheme for our life, that life is not intended to be a bed of roses and a treasure house of wealth or total avoidance of poverty. Faith enables the devotee to see what life is and what God's plan is, and improve one's own attitude to life. We are God's slaves and surrendered instruments. God (Guru-God) is doing the best for us in the circumstances, and we should never murmur, but maintain peace of mind. The numerous ways in

¹¹ or the innumerable instances of Dixit's finding that Baba's knowledge of distant events and foreknowledge of the future were perfect and unerring, we shall cite one more. H.S. Dixit was the sole living witness to a will he drew up and when that will came up for probate in the Bombay High Court, he had necessarily to be summoned. The summons was served at Shirdi and Dixit was legally hound to appear in Court at Bombay as witness and the party's agent came to Shirdi to take him. But Baba did not give him permission to start. This looked awkward—nay risky. But at Bombay the case was adjourned that day to another date. Even for the subsequent postings. Dixit was not allowed to start- Baba knew that the hearing would not take place. The citing party got vexed and was considering if the only remaining course was the issue of warrant to secure Dixit's presence should he adopted He wired to Dixit This time. Baba sent up Dixit and he was examined in Court. Baba knew exactly at what point he should stop detention. The risk which seemed imminent to others Baba knew and acted suitably.

which the soul and its faculties expand are outlined in Dixit's life and other devotees' lives. We should recommend our readers to start by perfect surrender and perfect faith in Baba's assurances to the surrendered. Dixit always felt that Baba, as assured by Him, was supporting him, was behind him always and was looking after all his concerns, and hence he avoided fear and anxiety. We recommend the same attitude to our readers. Who will surrender and believe? Who will surrender his *Tan, Man, Dhan*, i.e., body, soul and possessions, and believe in Baba's assurances of complete protection and also in Baba's perpetual presence, and his watching and guiding us and being ever ready to appear before us, if necessary? These assurances of Baba, our Gurudeva, are the same as the assurances given in Dwapara Yuga through the mouth of Lord Krishna—

Ananyaas chintayanto maam ye janaah paryupaasate

Teshaam nityaabhi yuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham

That is, 'if you completely surrender yourself and concentrate on Me and Me alone, if you are ever intent on Me, then I shall guard what you have and give what you require' (See B. C. & S. 20). Baba says, 'If one devotes his entire mind to Me and rests in Me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one sees Me and Me alone and listens to talk about Me and is devoted to Me alone, he will reach God (Chaitanya)'.

Reader, have you noticed that a classic work like Shakespeare's Hamlet or Kalidasa's Sakuntala, when read over and over again, reveals new meanings, and new beauties, say, "ven after the thirtieth reading? If you have developed faith, your reading of Baba's Gospel, Baba's life, Baba's acts and words would reveal to you new meanings, new applications, and new opportunities for you to serve Him and mould yourself. That perpetual freshness of Sai's love and His sayings is the test of the strength of your faith. Age does not wither Sai, nor custom stale His infinite variety. May Baba give you all full faith, and with it ample support for faith!

Once Baba told Kaka Saheb, 'If you talk ill or find fault with any one, that moment (immediately), I feel that pain'. Thereafter Dixit, who used to be short

tempered, conquered his temper, and became completely suave, humble, self-controlled, and agreeable. This illustrates how Baba builds us up and saves us. When Baba's life left his body in October 1918, that was a great blow to all his bhaktas. But there was further danger of confusion and conflict about the disposal of Sai's body. The proper disposal of the Sai body was essential for the carrying out of his mission, because Baba had said, 'Even from the tomb, I will be active'. Where was this tomb to be? Who was to build it? In whose charge was it to be? The almost universal belief of people (Hindus and Muslims alike), when Baba passed away was that Sai Baba, living in the Mosque, was a Muslim, and so the Muslims including Bade Baba gathered the body, and they wished to be in charge of his tomb. Baba was a famous Aвалия. His tomb would be visited by innumerable people, and miracles would be performed there. The offerings by the visiting pilgrims would be abundant. The tomb would be a very important place. Hence the Muslims thought and said that they should be in charge of the tomb. Unfortunately, they were few in numbers, and they had not the influence or the means to erect a suitable tomb for the Aвалия. The Hindus stressed the fact of custom (*mamul*) that the vast mass of people that worshipped Baba were Hindus, and, therefore, they were the proper persons to arrange for the tomb to be worshipped. The Kopergaon Mamlatdar arrived on the scene and asked each party to put forward its representation with largely signed mahazars. The Hindus were in larger number, and their mahazars also were numerous, the Muslim signatories to the Muslim Mahazar were very few. As for Baba's own wishes in the matter that was not well known. He never talked about it. But during his last illness he said 'Carry me to the Wada', (i.e. Buty wada). Buty was quite willing that his building should become the tomb of Baba. The Mamlatdar pointed out his difficulties. He said that if all parties agreed, he could give directions for the disposal of the body in accordance with the terms of the agreement. If they did not, he said, they should go to Ahamadnagar, and get the District Magistrate's decree, and he (Mamlatdar) would have to act upon that decree. Then Dixit was ready to go to Ahamadnagar. As he was a solicitor of high repute, the Muslims thought that if he went to Ahamadnagar, he would get the District Magistrate's

order in his own favour, and they would be nowhere. So, they came to an agreement with the Hindus that Baba's body should be in Buty wada, and, as usually the management of the tomb, etc., should also be with the Hindus, but Muslims should be allowed free access even though it was in a Hindu gentleman's house, and that Mamul should continue. So, the Mamlatdar himself passed an order, and Baba's body was buried without any difficulty at Buty wada, where it still remains. That was only a temporary settlement. The more important matter was as to the guidance of the future. That should be a scheme sanctioned by the District Court of Ahamadnagar. H.S. Dixit with his remarkable legal ability, his worldly wisdom, and great bhakti, drew up a Scheme and presented it with the signatures of number of influential devotees. That was sanctioned by the District Court in 1922 and that governs the Shirdi Sai Sansthan and Baba's tomb and other affairs. The property of the Sansthan vested in a body of trustees with managing committee of fifteen. Dixit contented himself with being the Honorary Secretary, and his able management pleased all parties. H.S. Dixit thus laid firm foundation for the success of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, and he must be given the credit for its present position. This may be ranked as one of his great services to Sai and to the public or to humanity.

Baba was looking after the spiritual welfare of Kaka Dixit in a way which is fairly understandable, whereas Baba's dealing with Upasani Maharaj was highly unintelligible and mysterious even to Maharaj. In the case of Dixit, there does not seem to be anything mysterious, though the inside mysterious working so characteristic of Baba must have benefited Dixit also. But Baba did not direct him to sit quiet and do nothing *uge tnuge* as Upasani was asked to. On the other hand, the method adopted in his case was just the usual methods adopted by all Gurus, viz., scriptural study, bhajan, puja and a general enforcement of faith in the Guru. No doubt the development of faith in Kaka by Baba was peculiarly good and strong by reason of (1) Baba's definite assurance that he undertook all responsibility for him, temporal and spiritual, and (2) by Baba's showing unmitigatedly that he was all-knowing and all-controlling even in respect of future events. Dixit's summons in the will case and nine days' fever were two excellent

illustrations to show how definitely Baba saw or controlled the future, and how firm and fully justified Dixit's faith was in Baba. There were hundreds more of such experiences of Dixit.

As for upadesa, Baba gave no upadesa mantra but every word, act, and omission of Baba was full of instruction and inspiration. For 10 years, i.e., 1909-1918, Dixit studied every word, every act, and every deed of Baba. This study itself was Satsang, apart from the personal contact which Dixit had with Baba.

*Santapasci sadaa jave tyanche javali baisave
upades te na deti tari aikavya tya goshti
techi upadesa hoti tyachi kashta nashta hoti
Vasudeva hmane santa sange kariti pasanta*

This means, 'Let us go to saints and stay by their side. If they do not give any upadesa, let us listen to whatever falls from their lips. Every such word is upadesa. By their force all our troubles vanish. Vasudeva (the author) says, 'Bliss comes from Satsang'. This was the experience of Kaka Dixit and of every devout person that went to Shirdi to see Baba.

Kaka Saheb treasured these utterances, deeds, etc., of Baba, and his notes of them have been compressed into articles in the Sai Lila Masik which Kaka Saheb started about 1923, and they are found under the headings '*Maharaj's Anubhav*', '*Bodha paddhati*' and '*Bol*'. Almost every serious devotee going to Shirdi contacted Kaka Saheb, and communicated his experiences to him. Kaka's services through starting Sai Lila Masik. and recording the experiences are undoubtedly great and valuable service to Sai and the Sai movement.

We may give a few points in the general improvement made by Kaka and the successive points in his life, that is, spiritual life and the goal of life. The most important item for any progress is the suppression and practical annihilation of all worldly desires (*sarva sankalpa sanyasa*). That is the first step. Love of the world (wife, wealth, etc.) prevents love of God. The more we forget and depress worldly love, the better our chances of increasing our love of God. That is just what took place in Kaka Saheb's case. His increasing attachment to Baba resulted in

increasing visits to Shirdi and in greater contact with Baba. That is one side of the shield. The other side of it was the decreasing contact with family, friends, political and social contacts, clients and cases. This resulted in the lowering of his income and loss of practice and prestige. If this produces sorrow or pain, the spiritual progress will be slow. But under Baba's care, decrease of income and decrease of contact with former friends led to an increase of *vairagya* and indifference. Dixit's *vairagya* was greatly strengthened by nine months' solitude (solitary confinement in his room) at Shirdi. Baba was proving an all round guardian angel, and Dixit's progress in moral and spiritual fields developed steadily. We shall note just a few points indicative of that progress.

When Babu Saheb Jog, who acted as honorary pujari of Baba, asked Sai Baba, 'I have served you with sincerity and earnestness: in what form will I have the benefit thereof and when?' the answer was, 'Your perfection will be when you give up all worldly attachments, wear kupni (as sanyasi) like me, and beg your food (having nothing else to care for).' Such perfection did not come to Jog during Baba's life time. A few years thereafter, Jog became the pujari of Upasani Baba, took sanyas and died. His tomb is there at Sakori. As Kaka's services to Baba were quite as good as Jog's, nay far superior, Kaka hoped that he could become a sanyasi too. Even before that, seeing that there was a special set of people dining with Baba in the same *pankti* (row), Kaka hoped to be in the *pankti* to sit along with Baba like Fakir Baba (called also Bade Baba). Baba first gave only prasad to Kaka Saheb, but soon Kaka began to dine at Baba's Masjid, and finally Baba allowed him to sit along with him in the same *pankti* for meals. Baba also gave him a kupni to wear. Kupni is for fakirs and sanyasis. When G.G. Narke wished to have one, Baba declined to give the gift—as Narke was not to be a Sanyasi.

Kaka Saheb wore the kupni at Shirdi. but was not wearing it in his journeys or at Bombay. The dining along with the Guru is not merely an honour. It gives a special spiritual bent, and removes even the faintest traces of the feeling of (Brahmin) caste superiority or habitual aversion that feven Nana Chandorkar, etc. could not obliterate.

One is possibly reminded of other bhaktas who had also great bhakti and did great service to Baba, but who would never bring their minds to Kaka's level so as to forget the difference of caste and position, and remember only that Sai was God and accept his prasad and *Pankti Bhojan* as specially holy. One other bhakta seeing Ganga flowing from Baba's feet could not make up his mind to drink the holy Ganga water from Baba's feet but merely sprinkled the water on his head.

With Kaka Saheb (who had the benefit of being in England for some time) differences of Hindu and Muslim did not count. One instance of this may be cited here. After Baba's passing away, Bade Baba, or Fakir Baba, wished to live at Shirdi, but the houses being mostly Hindu houses, there was no one to rent a room to him. Strong was the prejudice to allow a Muslim into a Hindu house. Then Kaka determined that he should give and did give Fakir Baba accommodation in his wada in spite of the protests of the Hindu pilgrims. Even N. G. Chandorkar protested against the accommodation being given to Fakir Baba. Kaka brushed aside even that objection, and he gave Fakir Baba accommodation at his wada.

Dixit's samatva was of a very high order and was based upon the high principles, which he imbibed from Baba, that he should see God in all creatures and things. Readers would note how Chandorkar and Upasani Maharaj were taught this by Baba.

To Dixit's mind nothing was low or bad, and if there was any trouble in any creature or person, his sympathy was excited. He was known from very early days as a very liberal host inviting all people to his table and even at Shirdi at his wada, a mess was run and many people including Upasani Maharaj were fed free at Kaka's expense. At Ville Parle as at Lonavla, he would daily invite all persons, not merely friends but also fresh acquaintances to dine with him. His bungalow was described aptly as Annadana or Darmadana Hindu hotel; and this prevented many from starting a hotel business at Lonavla during Dixit's lifetime. But apart from human feeding, Kaka had his *atithis* (guests) in cats, dogs, ants, flies, etc. Readers may remember Baba's instruction to Chandorkar in regard to

Atithis, that *atithi* feeding is best done by taking some food and throwing it out where cattle, ants, dogs, etc., will come at their own time and eat the food. These are the real *atithis*.

Kaka Saheb at Ville Parle had a number of cats and dogs feeding with him, and his bungalow was always full of these cats and dogs. Even at Shirdi when he sat for his meal, cats would come, and he would offer them rice with ghee with the fullest feeling that God was inside them (*Iswaro Jivakalaya Pravishto Bhagavan Iti*). Readers would remember (1) how Nana was instructed by Baba that inside each body Nana should see and revere the soul within, which is but a part of the Universal soul, and (2) how Namdev ran to offer ghee to a dog that had picked up a slice of *roti*, i.e. dry flat bread, from his plate (thereby polluting the plate) and was running away. Kaka Saheb's sympathies were powerfully attracted to all creatures. This is a highly important step for expanding one's sympathies to all (*Sarva bhuta hite rafah*){E.G.5 (25), 12 (4)} thus overcoming *mamata* and *ahankar* (and without the conquest of these two, Siddhi or achievement of the goal, i.e. identification of self with Paramatma is an impossibility). Once indeed, he yielded to the common frailty of thinking that serpents were the cause of many human deaths and, therefore, at the sight of serpents, one must kill them (an advice found in books and pamphlets issued by Government). He asked Baba whether people should not kill serpents to save themselves from snake bite (and death) (See B. C. and S. 298). Baba's answer was, 'No, you should not kill it. The serpent will not kill us unless it is ordered by God; and if God so orders, we cannot escape it.' But this doubt was at Kaka's earliest stage. As days went on, his outlook changed completely. He would not kill snakes or scorpions, both of which infest Shirdi, even now.

On one occasion when Kaka and a number of others were together, a big black scorpion was approaching and some people brought a shoe to kill it. Kaka stopped them, and brought a long stick and placed it in front of the scorpion. The scorpion got on to the stick, and Kaka carried the scorpion and the stick outside, and left the scorpion at a safe place. He would not kill ants, bugs, and flies. As for bugs, there was an exuberant supply of bugs at Shirdi, especially at Kaka's

wada. Kaka himself was a very sound sleeper, and his sleep was never disturbed by bugs. Others were not equally hardy, or insensitive, and when Keating's Insecticide powder was brought by others to kill the bugs on Kaka's bed also, he stopped those friends, and said, 'Don't spread the powder. Human blood is the natural food provided for bugs. My sleep is not disturbed by them. At best they drink only half an ounce of blood, and my body can easily make up that loss. Is not God in bugs also?' he asked. His friends were stunned by his remarks. So, this habit of seeing God in all creatures was an excellent course for Kaka and thus he was able to think of God always. That is the advice given in the Gita and by Sai Baba also.

Sarvabutasthitam yo maam

Bhuteshu Bhuteshu vichitya dheerah

Tastnat Sarveshu Kaleshu Maam Anusmara.

But it is not merely the ordinary thinking of God that Kaka enjoyed. He kept up a special and very powerful contact with God by his bhajan and pujas. At bhajans his eyes would overflow with love, and he had not to depend upon others for bhajan. He could sing very nice bhajan songs, and he had a set of them always ready and sang them in his verandah next to his room at his wada. His modification of Das Ganu's original bhajan songs brought into full relief his powerful faith. Das Ganu's song runs thus —

(1) Kali jamaana mine gamaaya-

Sathiakharaka kiya na Koyi

(2) Sai Raham najara karana, etc

Mai andha hum bandha tumara

Mai naa janu Allah Ilahi

But Kaka sang these thus —

(1) Kali Jamana mine gamaaya

Sathi Akharaka Turn Our na Koyi

(2) Sai Raham najara Karana

Mai andha hum bandhatumara

Mujase Charan dikhalana,

The meaning of Das Ganu's original song is, 'I have gone down to the level of earth, and for the companion to lift me at death, I have none'. But that was not Dixit's mentality. From the outset, Baba had said, 'I will take my Kaka in vimana', i.e. at the moment of death, Baba will be with Kaka and see that he is taken to Him. So Baba promised to be his *Akarka Sathi*. No companion is better than Baba, the Guru-God. Dixit believed in Baba's undertaking, and the events proved Baba's forecast or promise to be true. Therefore, Kaka's words were, 'I have gone down to the level of the earth. For my last moments' companion or protector, there is none except you'. It is this positive and firm assurance that is helpful and necessary. The negative approach of Das Ganu's song is very chilling, unhealthy and undesirable. Kaka, like so many other bhaktas elsewhere, made this amendment as in other cases also. In the next stanza, Das Ganu says "I am blind and your slave. / *do not know God*," But Dixit substituted for the last five words there, "Show me (your) feet". How cheering, healthy and helpful these amendments are! They show Dixit's confidence in his Guru God Baba—as a God that helps.

The entire set of Kaka's experiences have not been published. It is appropriate in closing this account to note how Kaka's assurance of "*Sati Akaraka*", Helper at Death, was well founded. We shall see now his death happened.

KAKA'S DEATH AND SADGATI

In securing a good end to one's present life, Baba pays naturally due regard to the previous ideas of the bhakta, especially when they are based upon traditions or words of the scriptures. It is commonly believed that death on an Ekadasi Day carries a man to Heaven. Kaka Dixit had that belief, and he mentions it in his preface to *Sai Sat Charitra*, which preface was published in *Sai Lila Masik* over Dixit's signature in 1923. See page 4 of *Sri Sai Lila Masik* containing the earliest part of *Sai Sat Charitra*, Volume I No. I, where he says, 'It is fitting that the death of Hari bhaktas should be on Hari's own day, that is, Ekadasi'

(because Ekadasi should be devoted to Hari bhajan). Dixit notes that Baba gave this Ekadasi death to Kasiram, Appah Bhil and other bhaktas. We may also note here that Mahlsapathy died on an Ekadasi day as also Chandorkar. Taty Patei, etc. Therefore, it is most fitting that Dixit should die on an Ekadasi day according to the current belief of the virtues of death on that day. About Ekadasi, it should be remembered by all readers that it is considered a very special day for the purpose of intense concentration on God, and fasting is prescribed for that day in the verse,

Ekaadascyam ahorathram kartavyam bho jana dwayam

Raatrow jaaganam kuryat divaacha hart kinanam

with the study of and meditation upon holy works with bhajan. In the case of Kaka Dixit, all these were available; especially, the bhajan and the study were peculiarly suitable. He had excellent company in Anna Saheb Dabolkar, the author of Sai Sat Charitra, and Tendulkar, the composer (along with his wife) of innumerable songs on Sai Baba (found in the Sai Bhajanamala) both of whom were very deeply attached to Sai Baba and prized Dixit's company on that account. The portions which in his daily pothi Dixit had to study on 4-7-1926 were Gajendra Moksha, that is, the giving of Moksha to an Elephant by God, which is contained in Sundarakanda, 21st Adhyaya of Eknath Bhavartha Ramayana. This book was studied by Dixit every night, and on the night preceding his death (i.e. 4-7-26) he had a dream. In that dream he had a vision of Sai Baba and noticed that Baba came up and got into the upper cover of Anna Saheb, and Anna Saheb was holding Baba in a fast embrace with great love. This dream he communicated early morning after waking to Anna Saheb, Deshpande, Legate, and others. His parayana of Eknath Bhagavata also on that very day of his departure was of the portion which dealt with the Ashta Maha siddhis in Chapter XV of Ekadasa Skanda, especially verse 23, which says— *Parakaayam Vis can siddhah Aatmanam Tatra Bhaavayet, Pindam hitva Viscef pranaah Vaayu bhutah shadanghrivat*. This means, 'When a siddha wishes to enter into the body of another creature, he has only to mentally carry himself into the body of that other creature, giving up mentally his own body, carrying himself in an aerial body, just

as a bee leaves one flower and flies into another'. The commentary of Eknath's stanza is extremely brilliant and Kaka Saheb read that with overflowing heart and as described in that stanza, he himself like a bee flew from his body to some other body arranged for him by Baba's Grace at the time of death in accordance with Baba's promise.

On 5-7-1926. i.e. on Ekadasi, he was starting from Ville Parle to go to Dr. Deshmukh's Dispensary at Bombay to see his ailing son Ramakrishna. Anna Saheb Dabolkar had spent with him some time in excellent bhajan and pothi and was starting to go to his own station. When these (with Tendulkar) came up after the scheduled time to the platform, they found the train also was late and came just in time for them to catch it. Both of them and Anna Saheb Dabolkar got in, and the words which came from Kaka Saheb were, 'Anna Saheb, Just see! How merciful Baba is! He has given us this train this minute. He has not made us wait even a minute.' He then looked into his pocket time table and said, "Baba has made the train come late and enabled us to catch it. Or else we would have to be stranded at Colaba and be frustrated. So, this is Sai's grace". Thus, sitting facing Anna Saheb, Kaka Saheb remembered Baba's loving grace and appeared to fall asleep. Dabolkar first thought he was sleeping. When he went near him to hold his head and asked him, 'Are you sleeping?' there was no reply. Then Dabolkar feared that Kaka Saheb had fainted. Making Kaka lie down, Dabolkar noted the apparently hopeless condition of Kaka Saheb. The train was speeding from station to station. Anna Saheb told his friend Tendulkar in the carriage that he should tell the Guard so that they may carry down Kaka's body from the carriage. But as there was a big crowd and heavy rain, he could not do this at Bandra, and so only at Mahim he got down and told the Guard. The Guard arranged to phone to Parel for a stretcher and doctor, and at Parel, the body was taken out. The doctor examined the body and said that life was extinct. On account of the suddenness of death, there would have been difficulties of Inquest. But luckily they got the doctor's certificate, and the body was committed to the care of Anna Saheb. The main point for us to see is how Baba carried out his undertaking to carry Kaka in a vimana. Tukaram was carried to Heaven in a

Vimana, and that was a fine, blissful, and excellent end. But that was a miracle- Without any miracle, Baba had given Kaka a very high end.

There was no pain or fear before life departed from his body. His was a happy death even from the worldly standpoint. But from the spiritual viewpoint it was a highly blissful end. The death in such circumstances meant Sadgati (i.e. blessed future) to the Soul. According to the Gita, what a man thinks of at the time of his death, he becomes, in his next birth. Here Kaka was thinking of his Guru at the close of life as "That wonderful God that delayed the train for him." So, the mood of gratitude and love towards Sai was the mood in which he passed away. According to Bhagavad Gita (VIII), 14, 5, 7, "He who always thinks of Me, being deeply fixed on Me, finds Me at the time of death" and "thinking of Me only at death, reaches My state at death" i.e.. "comes to Me". So Dixit would go to his Gurudeva, and live along with him after his death. Be it noted that Baba's function was to provide Sadgati. Baba stated in B. C. & S. 91, "God has agents everywhere. They have vast powers. I have vast powers'. He has mentioned how he is exercising those powers. In B.C. & S. 90, he says 'Sit quiet, *Uge Muge*. I will do the needful. I will take you to the end.' In B.C. & S. 57, Baba refers to himself thus, 'This is a Brahmin, a white Brahmin, a pure Brahmin; this Brahmin will lead lakhs of people to the *scubra marga* and take them to the goal right up to the end'. In para 95 he says, 'I draw my devotee to me at the time of his death, even though he may die a thousand miles away from Shirdi.' In 96, he says. 'I will not allow my devotee to be lost. I will account to God for all those that have been given to me'. In 94, referring to Upasani's wife, who died in January 1912, Baba said, 'She (the deceased spirit) has come to me'. In 98 he says, 'I put the Rohilla Pishya and Rao Saheb Gal wanker each in his mother's womb'. He said of M.B. Rege's child that died, that it had come to his breast and would remain there eternally.

From the above we can infer that Baba carried his Kaka in a vimana as promised.

KAKA'S SERVICES TO SAI AND SANSTHAN

There were services rendered by Kaka Saheb with his peculiar position to Sai Sansthan and Sai better than any other devotee. There were many such services but two of them will suffice here.

Baba was getting an enormous income from voluntary dakshinas everyday.¹² There were people casting greedy eyes on Baba's income, such as the Madras Ramadasi group and also the police constables and others who had to keep watch over the miscellaneous crowds gathering round Baba amongst whom there were 32 K.D's at one time.

Generally Baba spent all his time and attention on his devotees. Baba says, 'My eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love me'. (B. C. & S. 59, 205-206. 306, 307, 473, etc.) So, Baba was not sleeping at all at night, but was lying down on a plank or on the floor and kept his eyes open, doing Namasmarana and trying to see which devotee required help. (B. C. & S. 293 gives a clear account of his plank vigil).

Having kept awake all night and dealing with all the comers throughout the day, he required some time to himself, and that was after his meal, namely, between 1 and 2 p.m. When at that time the curtain used to be dropped down at Dwarakamayee, no one would be allowed to go and disturb Baba in his rest. A rustic cooly, who did not know about this, went in after 1 p.m., bawled aloud, and.

¹² *Every evening, he disposed of the entire collection retaining nothing and saving nothing. Of these some were given fixed amounts i.e., regular daily payments e.g. to Bade Baba of Rs 30/-, to Talya Patel Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 to Lakshmi. the supplier of daily bread, Rs 4, etc. So the average income was calculated by some authorities. and was estimated to be above a Governor's income. This made Justice Chandavarker write an article in the Times of India', when Baba left his body, that Baba had wasted his Governor's income whereas he could have built ships and thus enriched the country. The Government tried to levy income tax on Baba, but Baba had no property to attach, and so, income tax was levied only on Bade Baba, Talya Patel, etc.

disturbed Baba's rest. He had been sent to fetch Syamakarna, a horse, gifted to Sai and having brought it to Shirdi, he went for his hire to Radhakrishna Ayi and Shama, who said that they had no money, and that he should ask Baba for it. So he went up to Dwarakamayee and shouted, 'Baba, Baba, give me my cooly hire.' Baba, his rest having been disturbed, was in a furious mood, and he flung a brickbat at him, which caught him on the head and drew blood. He went out crying and complained that Baba had caused him grievous injury, and what with the police and other people hovering about, there seemed to be imminent peril of a police complaint being launched against Baba. Usually if the person charged be a rich person, large sums are extracted from him. That seemed to be the likely result in this case. Luckily H. S. Dixit was there at the time, and, scenting the danger he sent for the injured rustic, and showed him how improper it was for him to disturb Baba at his rest for the sake of cooly wages for bringing the horse. H. S. Dixit, who was always just, generous and worldlywise, told the man that instead of wages, Baba would provide him with a profession, that is, he would immediately be paid Rs. 200, with which he could purchase a cart and bulls which he could use for transporting bhaktas to and fro between Shirdi and the Railway Station and thus serve not merely the bhakta public and Sai, but also his own interest; for he would be daily getting his bread and more than that, he would have an assured income thereby, instead of working merely as a cooly, which yielded a precarious income. That man accepted the Rs.200, and there was no case. He got his cart and bulls and was plying his trade of cart driving between Shirdi and Kopergaon railway station thenceforward. This is one instance wherein Dixit's Guru bhakti combined with worldly wisdom enabled him to render remarkable service to Sai, to the injured man, and to all. The second service has been mentioned already i.e., what Kaka did to attract people, prevent disputes and settle a scheme for the Sai Samsthan to look after Sai Samadhi, etc.

With reference to the religious goal, i.e. reaching God, mentioned already perhaps it is better to close this chapter with a few more observations to clear

doubts that may arise in the minds of readers sharply aware of philosophical and conventional differences amongst Hindus of Dvaitism, etc., as to technique.

Dixit was directed by Baba to concentrate his energies on the Path of Devotion, the bhakti marga and, therefore, on the Personal God especially as portrayed in the Bhagavata and Ramayana. In the Bhagavad Gita, however, the Impersonal is more prominent and frequently overshadows the Personal, and in some bhashyas, drowns it. Perhaps in the Bhagavata, Skanda XI, also there is a fair addition of the Impersonal to the Personal. The stress, however, in the Bhagavata and Ramayana is on the Personal. There is a difference in the constitution and stage at which a devotee of Baba has arrived. That decides for him whether the Impersonal or the Personal or both should be the subject of his attention, and Baba, as the Antaryami, the inner witness of the hearts of all, knows the exact state and stage of each. He, therefore, knew that Kaka was fitted only for the worship of the Personal God and asked him specifically to confine himself to two works, namely, (1) Eknath Bhagavata and (2) Eknath Bhavarta Ramayana. Even though Dixit took a copy of the Gita with commentaries thereon to Baba and asked him whether he was to study it, Baba's reply was 'No' and that he must continue his concentration on the above two works only. It does not imply that Baba condemns the worship or attainment of the Impersonal or a study of the Gita with commentaries or Bhashya such as N.G.C. had. Baba allows that worship at the proper time and to the proper person at the proper stage. The main thing for us is to concentrate our efforts on religion so as to produce the best possible results. For a lawyer accustomed to hair-breadth distinctions, it will be rather a dangerous waste of energy to start religion with an analysis of the psychology of human self and the philosophy of God, Personal and Impersonal. Though these subjects can never be excluded from entering into one's religious field, they have at first to be kept in the background with a dim perception that a solution of these is arriving in good time by the grace of the Guru who guides one in the Bhakti marga. The Guru will see to it that one's procedure and the result thereof are satisfactory without one's having to solve at the outset these hard conundrums about Personality and Impersonality of the

individual self and the Supreme Self, their identity or difference, and the exact end of all Metaphysics.

We may note incidentally that the difference between dvaitins and advaitins as to the end of life is more apparent than real. Dvaitins deal with a Personal God right up to the end and, therefore, they picture the ultimate goal of the individual soul as resting at the feet of the Personal God for ever and ever. But from ancient times the Personal and the Impersonal are recognised by the seers (Rishis) to be merely two aspects of one and the same Supreme. The dvaitins also find this doctrine as put forward in the Kena and other upanishads and in Bhagavad Gita. Chapter XII. Sri Krishna there points out in the Gita that He has an *Avyakta* aspect—Unmanifest—and that is beyond the reach of the speech and mind and hardly distinguishable from the Impersonal. But as power is conceived to be inherent in the Supreme, that same Supreme might be *Avyakta* or imperceptible or Impersonal at one time or in one aspect especially at the beginning and perceptible and Personal at other times and in other aspects, especially at present. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to all Hindus to realise God fully (*Samagram*) as both Impersonal and Personal with both *para and apara prakriti*, and this is in accordance with our real nature. Experiences of those who have concentrated on God without any narrow prejudices have shown them that while dwelling in their hearts upon the Supreme blissful person called Narayana, etc., the ultimate residuum is bliss with the absence of any personal factors. Neither the worshipper nor the worshipped is present there. The bare feeling of bliss alone remains. That does not, however, in practice continue for a long time. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, (Ch. XII) those who try to rest themselves on the *Avyakta* come back to the Personal and dwell upon that as being more akin to the normal state in each individual in which he conceives of himself as a personality practically identified with the organism which puts forward the notion of personality. In the Impersonal, there is no question of foot or our remaining at the foot of the Supreme except in a very vague and metaphorical sense. When this is reached, dvaitism and advaitism do not make any difference in the result of contemplation or concentration. In the case of Sai

Baba, he almost invariably referred to Allah, Hari, etc., but occasionally referred to the widest aspects of the Supreme, namely, being in all creatures and all places without form and being all. That is the same as Brahman which is mostly considered as Impersonal in the Upanishads (Kena, etc.). Especially for a devotee of Baba (as this chapter on Dixit's spiritual progress shows) it is perfectly needless to stress the difference between dvaitism and advaitism. Dvaitins and Advaitins alike can safely follow the lead of Sai Baba and begin with the Personal as invariably everyone must. Then, ultimately, they will see for themselves whether at the end there is any difference between the Personal and the Impersonal. Dixit, whatever his ancestors and his sect might lean to, had no predetermination or preference to the Dvaita or Advaita group and trusted to the safe guidance of the Samartha Sadguru Sai Baba and began his religious course properly. To reach Personal God, it takes many janmas (BG (VI) 48) *Aneka Janma samsiddhah* (VII)-19 (*Baluintim Janmanam ante jnanaran maam prapadyale, Vaasudevah sarvam itii* and then he sees God is All. The All is evidently Infinite and Impersonal while Vaasudeva is Personal. Till that stage is reached, the religious aspirant is wisely content to deal with God as a separate personality and in acting under the guidance of an All-knowing Guru like Sai Baba he is perfectly safe, for mostly the pupil in his burning love to the personal Guru identifies God with him. Tyagaraja of musical fame similarly left the question of preference between Dvaita and Advaita to God himself — "*Dvaitamu sukhama.*"

Baba disapproved of his devotees launching upon purely metaphysical disquisitions, i.e. all intellectual feats not required for their present course. By trusting to his guidance, the devotee's progress is assured and he will understand after making some progress, how the above and other problems are solved — especially by noting how Sri Krishna taught in Gita, e.g.,

Brahmanohi pratishta Aham Amritasya Avyayasya cha

Scaascvatasya cha dharmasya Sukhasya Aikantikasya cha

which means "I (your personal God) am the basis of Brahman (the Impersonal God described in the Upanishads), of freedom from Death and Decay, of Eternal Dharma and unalloyed Bliss (BG, XIV 27).

Dixit's life shows us that Baba with his wonderful powers and kindness prepares the pupil, and gives him the full development needed for his stage and takes him step by step — one step at a time — to reach the "far off divine event to which the whole creation (i.e., each creature) moves".

CHAPTER V

Anna Saheb Dabolkar (Hemadpant)

The mantle of H. S. Dixit fell on Govind Raghunath Dabolkar called Anna Saheb Dabolkar who proved a good Elisha following in the footsteps of the Elija Dixit. The two were very well acquainted with each other though occupying widely different positions in the world. Dixit was a well read B.A.,LL.B. a solicitor with a great reputation and vigorously carrying on his activities in political, legislative, legal, municipal and social affairs, having an All India fame. Dabolkar was only a humble Government servant devoid of any of those activities and unequipped with the high education and studies and contacts of the former. Anyhow the two got into contact and along with the famous novelist H. N. Apte compared notes and found they had common tastes and uncommon ambition specially in the spiritual field. They agreed that a Samartha Sadguru like Ramdas of Sivaji was decidedly the best person to resort to, if one could be found. They were all feeling that no such person had yet appeared in their horizon. They agreed between themselves that if it was the lot of anyone of them to light on a such a blazing light, he should straightway inform the other two and enable them to share the discovered treasure. Dixit was the first one to find the treasure, in the person of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi in 1909. He at once communicated it to the others. He wrote from Shirdi to Anna Saheb Dabolkar about Sai's greatness and insisted on his visiting Baba.

Dabolkar was somewhat impressed. But he could not definitely make up his mind. A self-made man who studied only upto the fifth standard and passed

his public service examination, obtaining the post of a Village talati and rising from that humble position to the posts of mamlatdar and first class magistrate by sheer ability.—he was also a good student of works like Eknath Bhagavat, Sankara's Viveka Chudamani and he felt that self reliance was the first and foremost virtue in his nature. Contact with numerous Prarthana Samajists also weakens belief in or at least reliance on saints and sadhus. So he was being pressed by his doubts about the good of a guru. When Easter vacation came in 1910, he almost made up his mind and did actually prepare himself for a trip to Shirdi. But the day on which he came to that decision, he learnt that a friend of his lost his son and lost him even though that friend's guru was by his side. "If a guru could not save the boy from death what is the good of a Guru?" was the powerful thought swaying him and he gave up his Shirdi trip. Later on Chandorkar pressed him to go to Sai and then he started (and by the lucky or foreordained intervention of a Mahomadan friend was prevented from missing his train). At last he went to Shirdi where Dixit met him and the rest of his story is narrated below.

Here it is enough to point out that Dixit had a great pan in drawing Dabolkar to Baba. Baba told him, 'Kaka is a good man. Go on listening to him'. Baba made him stick to Dixit who was in many ways better fitted to benefit by contact with Baba than he. His faith and fervour grew by Dixit's contact. Even at the last moment of Dixit, Dabolkar was by his side and had to attend to the disposal of Dixit's body after noting how he was "taken in a Virnana" by Baba. Till then both were working at the Sai Lila Masik for the spread of Sai faith and both were in the Samsthan Committee managing its affairs. When Dixit passed away, Dabolkar was fully prepared to carry on Dixit's work as Honorary Secretary of the Samsthan and a vigorous propagandist and the Sai Lila Editor. In every way Dixit's mantle fell on him and he was a worthy successor and so the chapter after Dixit must deal with Dabolkar. His single monumental work 'Sai Satcharitra' alone entitles him to rank as the next among Sai's apostles.

After Das Ganu, the author of many essays or chapters on Sai Baba in his three big books called Arvachina Mala, Santakatamrita and Bhakti Lilamritha

naturally one must come to the person whose work bulks very largely in the minds of Maharashtra bhaktas of Sai Baba, and that is Hemad Pant (i.e. Annasaheb Dabolkar). His work 'Sai Satcharitra' in Marati Ovi verse extends to a thousand pages and is treated as Sai Ramayana or modern Guru Charitra with the respect due to ancient puranas by the Maharashtra Sai bhaktas, and even by others who get access to it through N.V. Gunjaji's English adaptation of it or translations in Telugu etc. This work is highly meritorious and has been the instrument for many people becoming Sai bhaktas. The verses are highly sonorous and the stories about Sai Baba collected from various individuals consisting of actual experiences of numerous bhaktas, have great charm and are always fresh. This work has a very interesting history. But let us first deal with the author.

The author was a Government servant till the year 1936, his grade being that of a resident magistrate. Before retiring in 1916, he was lucky enough to have contact with Baba. Both H.S.Dixit and Nana Saheb Chandorkar were friends of his. Both were pressing him to go up to see Sai Baba. He did not (as stated already) at first feel sufficient enthusiasm about seeing Sai Baba and his mind was wavering. To go or not to go, that was his question. He was rather attracted to general theories, and it was the Grace of Sai Baba that turned him into such an able author to design a practical work so full of inspiration. When after all he started in 1910 to go and see Sai Baba, he made up his mind to go by the wrong train. Suddenly a Mohamadan acquaintance of his asked him where he was going. He said he was going to Dadar to catch the Manmad Mail to go to Kopergaon for Shirdi. That gentleman at once corrected him saying that Manmad Mail did not stop at Dadar. He also said, 'you had better go straight to Victoria Terminus and there catch it, for there will be sufficient time for you to get a ticket'. He adopted that advice. If that gentleman had not met him, he would have got disappointed and probably returned home, and his mind would have been tossing again in doubt whether to see Sai Baba or not. So, he himself says, 'Baba's hand has been visible in moulding my fate ever from the beginning'. Then when he first went to Shirdi, he was so very superficial in his attachment to Baba

that he fell to a 30 minute discussion with Bala Saheb Bhate, an old friend of his, on the question whether a Guru was necessary or not. Dabolkar was hotly holding the position that a Guru was unnecessary, and that it was a question of free will of everyone to go whichever way he liked. But Bhate contested his views on both points. Bhate said that there was no free will at all, and that the only thing was destiny. On the question of the need for a Guru, he said, 'A Guru is absolutely essential'. Naturally after 30 minutes' talk they completely disagreed with each other, and there was no result from the discussion except Dabolkar's mind being restless. After that, they went to the mosque, and when they prostrated before Baba, Baba pointed to Dabolkar and said, 'What talk was going on there at the wada? And what did this Hemad Pant say (pointing his chin to Dabolkar)?' Dabolkar's name was not Hemad Pant at all. Hemad Pant was a great genius, who in the mediaeval age wrote grand works and so, in one way it was a compliment and in the other, the reference to Hemad Pant was to mere literary skill. Anyhow Dabolkar was impressed by the fact that Baba without being told of anything, knew that there was a discussion, and that he (Dabolkar) had engaged in it with all his literary ability and dialectical skill. However, Baba's influence did not stop with that.

Dabolkar had very poor ideas on the subject of saints. For one thing, even frivolous objections to saints weighed largely in his mind. It was well known that Baba's favoured devotee, H. S. Dixit, called Kaka Dixit, was at Shirdi with his daughter, whose life Baba had saved miraculously at Ville Parle when a whole almirah full of toys was about to fall on her. On that occasion Baba said to Dixit (who was with Baba at Shirdi when the child was in danger at Ville Parle) '*Arre Kaka. Tula Kaiji Kazli Maje Sarakarji Ahe*'. That is, 'Dixit, why should you have any anxiety? All cares are mine'. On that occasion, when a whole almirah full of toys fell on the child, she was unscathed. She got only a scratch on her arm due to her bangle being broken. Yet that child, when at Shirdi, directly under the nose of Baba, died, Baba could not save her. Then Dabolkar thought if a Guru cannot save the child of his own pet devotee, what is the good of a Guru?' This appeared to him at that time to be a sound argument, but he adds that destiny

proved too much for that argument, and his destiny was to compel him to become a Sai bhakta and get along whatever happened to his arguments about pupils and the nature of help rendered by Gurus to pupils or Sishyas. By constant association with devotees, he got wider and more correct ideas as to the functions of the Gurus. He gradually resigned himself more and more to be dealt with by Baba. Baba dealt with him in a very remarkable way, and from the very beginning, made up his mind as to what should become of this Dabolkar.

Dabolkar had been gathering information about the lilas of Baba and, being a very able writer with great command of Mahratti verse and prose, with a good grounding in religious literature, wished to write out a complete study of Baba's lilas, thus forming a good chronicle of Baba. This would be on the lines of Saraswati Gangadhar's *Guru Charitra*, and would give peace and happiness to people afflicted with sorrows and heavily laden with miseries of worldly existence. This would also give them Jnana or knowledge and wisdom on temporal and spiritual matters. The lilas would be both instructive and interesting like the Vedas, and, if meditated upon, they would bring about laya or union with Brahman and mastery of Yoga and Yoga Ananda. So, he made up his mind that he should collect these stories and treat the publication as his own *upasana* of his Guru. It would be specially valuable to those who could have no chance of seeing Baba and who would therefore get an idea of Baba through his collection. Baba's teachings and expressions were the outcome of his boundless and natural self-realisation and Baba himself (so Dabolkar thought), put this idea into his mind to collect and render them as Baba's life or chronicles. Then, he wanted permission for the work. So, Madhav Rao Desphande (known as Shama) was requested to tell Baba, and he told Baba thus: This Anna Saheb wishes to write your life. Don't say that you are a poor begging fakir, and there is no necessity to write your life. But if you agree and help him, he will write or rather your feet (or Grace) will accomplish this work. Without your consent and blessing, nothing can be done successfully'. Baba was moved and blessed Anna Saheb Dabolkar by giving him udhi and placed his Asirvada hand upon Dabolkar's head, and said, "Let him make a collection of stories and experiences, keeping notes and

memos. I will help him. He is only an outward instrument. I should write myself my life, and satisfy the wishes of my devotees. He should get rid of his ego. Place (or surrender) it at my feet. He who acts like this in life, him I will help most. What of my life's stories? I serve him in his house in all possible ways. When his ego is completely annihilated, and there is no trace left of it, I myself shall enter into him and shall myself write my life. Hearing my stories and teachings will create faith in devotees' hearts, and they will easily get self-realization and bliss. But let there be no insistence on establishing one's own view, and no attempt to refute others, opinions of any sort".

So spoke Baba. Then Dabolkar made the promise that he would be in that mood and would surrender. His close intimacy with Dixit, Chandorkar and other devotees enabled him to collect plenty of material. This permission was given in 1916, and when Baba passed away, Dabolkar had hardly written two or three chapters. Most of the work was written after 1918. He wrote 51 or 52 chapters and passed away in 1929. Meanwhile his chapters were published in the Sai Lila Masik which was started under his and Dixit's supervision. Gradually people began to read his work and were highly influenced thereby. The effect of the writing was even more on the author himself than on the readers. One effect of it was to completely change his outlook. When earlier he was introduced to Baba, Chinchinikar told Baba that Dabolkar had a big family and that Baba should bless him to get fresh employment after retirement to maintain his family. Baba said, This cursed Government service he will get. But let him look to my service. That is most important'. And as Baba stated, Dabolkar got again employed, though only for a short time, but the employment in Baba's service was permanent and grew in intensity from month to month and year to year. His thoughts were upon Baba and his lilas, and the effect was that he was Sai-minded, and Sai-possessed. His life and outlook were greatly altered. He felt he was under the protection of Baba and he says, The moment I touched Sai Baba's feet, I began a new lease of life. I felt myself much obliged to those who took me to Baba, and I consider them my real relatives. I cannot repay their debt. I make mental namaskar to them. A peculiarity of Sai Baba's darsan, as I find it, is that by his

darsan, our thoughts are changed, the force of previous action (karma) is abated, and gradually non-attachment or dispassion towards worldly objects grows up. It is by the merit of actions in many past births that such a darsan is got. And if only you see Sai Baba, really all the world assumes the form of Sai Baba'.

That Anna Saheb Dabolkar's thoughts were changed thoroughly, may be more amply set out in what followed. First when he went to Baba, he had just a bit of devotion to Baba, and his main nature was still egotistic, combative, and was largely concerned with worldly ambitions. From 1910-16, his progress was hardly noticeable. But in 1917, a change came and he himself sets it out in chapters XVIII and XIX of his book, and therefore, we shall now proceed to refer to them. When he was shampooing Baba's legs, one Mr. Sathe had a problem and that was mentioned to Baba. Sathe was directed by Baba to read Guru Charitra. and he did so for seven days. At the close of it, Baba appeared in a vision (dream) to him with Guru Charitra in his hand. Kaka Dixit came and asked Baba whether he would explain to Sathe what the appearance meant. He asked 'Is he to go on with a second saptaha or study of the Guru Charitra?' Baba said, 'Yes'. Baba also said, 'If the work be studied carefully, the devotee will become pure and will be benefited. The Lord will be pleased and will rescue him from samsara.'. Hearing these words, Anna Dabolkar (or Hemad Pant) thought, 'For the last seven years (1910-17), I have been serving Baba and never got a vision, and this man, (Mr. Sathe) after a week's stay at Shirdi gets his vision. Like a chataka bird, I am waiting for Baba to pour his nectar on to me and bless me with his instructions'. This was his thought. Baba read his thought at once and told him, 'Go to Shama. Get from him Rs. 15 dakshina, stay and chat with him for a while, and then come back'. Accordingly, he went to Shama and asked for Rs. 15 dakshina: Shama was a very poor man and said, 'I send my 15 namaskars'. Then Hemad Pant said, "I am asked to chat with you and listen to you", Shama then began to tell him the stories of Baba's lilas, and the foremost amongst them that he mentioned was about Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukin.

Shama said, There was a lady, an old woman, who came to Baba and who was resolved to get *mantropadesha* from Baba. Baba did not give it. She wanted

to try satyagraha. She actually began to fast saying that she would fast unto death at Shirdi unless Baba gave her upadesha. After three days of the fast, I interceded on her behalf, and requested Baba to take pity upon her and give her something. So, Baba sent for her, and told her this. "Mother, why are you subjecting yourself to unnecessary tortures and meeting death. You are my mother and I am your child. Pity me. I will tell you my story. If you listen to it, it will do you good. I had a Guru. He was a very great saint and most merciful. I served him very long indeed. Still he did not whisper any mantra into my ear. I was anxious never to leave him but to stay with him and serve him and receive some instruction from him. But he had his own method. He just got my head shaved and asked me for two pice as dakshina. I gave the same at once. If you ask 'how a perfect Guru could ask for dakshina. and yet be called desireless,' I explain to you that what he asked for was not coins. The first pice that he asked for was *Nishta* or firm faith and the second pice he wanted was *Saburi* or patience or perseverance. These two I gave him, and he was pleased. I served my Guru for 12 years. He brought me up. There was no lack of food or clothing. He was full of love. He was Love Incarnate. His love was indescribable. He loved me keenly. Rare is such a Guru. When I looked at him, I was filled with bliss, and he was in bliss. Night and day I gazed at him without thinking of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other subject to meditate on. I had nothing but the Guru to attend to He was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. That 'fixture' is the first pice - *nishta*. The second pice, *saburi*, is my waiting patiently and very long on my Guru and serving him. This *saburi* will take you across samsara. Saburi is manliness in man. It removes all sins and afflictions, gets rid of calamities in various ways, removes all fear and ultimately gives you success. Saburi is a mine of virtues and is the consort of good thought. Nishta and Saburi go together. My Guru never expected anything else from me. But he never neglected me. He always protected me. I lived with him and sometimes away from him. Still I never felt the want or absence of his love. He always protected me by his glance as a tortoise feeds its young ones. Oh, mother, my Guru never taught me any mantra. How can I give you any? Do not try to get mantra or

upadesha from anybody. Make me the sole object of your thought and actions, and you will undoubtedly attain Paramartha, the spiritual goal of life. Look at me wholeheartedly, and I shall also do the same, that is, look at you wholeheartedly. Sitting in this Masjid, I speak the truth and nothing but the truth. No sadhanas and no proficiency in sastras is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that the Guru is the sole Actor or Doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness of his Guru and thinks him to be Hari, Hara, and Brahma, Trimurti Incarnate'. Shama said, 'The lady then accepted the advice'.

After hearing Shama, Anna Saheb went to the Masjid, and there he sat next to Baba, and when the Arti was going on, Baba asked him whether he went to Shama and asked for dakshina and had a chat. Dabolkar said, 'Shama sent his 15 namaskars. In the chat, he gave an account of Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukin's incident'. Baba asked, 'What is it?' Dabolkar narrated the whole story. Then Baba said, 'Wonderful is the story. Did the story strike you, and did you catch its significance?' Anna Saheb said, 'Yes. The restlessness of my mind has vanished. I have got true peace and come to know the true path'. Then Baba said, 'My method is quite unique. Remember well this one story, and it will be very useful. To get knowledge (realisation) of the self, *dhyana* (meditation) is necessary. If you practise it continuously, the *vrinis* (thoughts) will be pacified. Being quite desireless, you should meditate on the Lord who is in all the creatures, and when the mind is concentrated, the goal will be achieved. Meditate always on my formless nature, which is Knowledge Incarnate, Consciousness and Bliss. If you cannot do this, meditate on my form from top to toe as you see here night and day. As you go on doing this, your *vrittis* will be one-pointed and the distinction between the *dhyata* (meditator), *dhyana* (act of meditation) dhyeya (thing meditated upon) will be lost, and the meditator will be one with the consciousness and be merged in Brahman. The mother tortoise is on one bank of the river and her young ones are on the other side. She gives neither milk nor warmth to them. The mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones do nothing but remember (meditate upon) their mother. The tortoise glance is, to the young ones, a downpour of nectar, the only source of

sustenance and happiness. Similar is the relation between the Guru 'and disciples.' Baba gave him sugarcandy and said, 'If you take this story to heart, remember it well, your state will be equally sweet. Your desires will be fulfilled and you will be happy. Meditate on the story; assimilate its spirit; then you will always remember and meditate on the Lord who will manifest himself to you.'

Now Hemad Pant was lucky enough to get a Government job for a short while, and thereafter he acted upon Baba's advice that he should serve Baba. So, he helped greatly in the management of Sai Baba's Sansthan, after 1918 or 1920-21. He looked after the accounts and helped greatly in the publication of Sai Lila Masik also. But his most important service was the writing of the first 51 or 52 chapters of the Sai Satcharitra. After his death in 1929, the 53rd chapter was added on and the complete book has been published. It is a monument of masterly, sonorous, Mahrathi verse, picturing Sai Baba's lilas and setting forth Baba's utterances and conduct in a way that would always be remembered. So, the effect of the study of Baba's lilas is the great service Hemad Pant renders. Baba himself said that a study of his lilas would put an end to ignorance and ferry people across samsara. It would make them get laya (absorption) in Sai by constantly remembering his lilas, words, and nature, especially his nature as *sarvantaryami*. Baba, as he himself declared, is the soul of all souls. Every thing is his form. By constant meditation on Baba's lilas, one can get an experience of Baba in all forms.

*Sarvabhutastham aaimaanam sarvabhatanicha aatamani eekshate
yogayuktatma sarvatra samadarscanah*

(EG.VL29)

i.e. seeing God in all creatures, and all creatures in God, by steadfast practice of yoga, the yogi has equality in viewing all. Numerous other passages of the Gita, e.g. (18)61, (5)7, 10(20), 7(9) show how important it is to get a correct view of and feeling towards all creatures proceeding from reverence, to sympathy or love and finally to identity with them. The technique to be adopted for achieving these steps is pointed out here. And this is the greatest service that Dabolkar has rendered.

Before closing the chapter, we might well note that the most important contribution is the central truth of Sai Baba's life and teaching, viz, that true religious growth is not based upon the study of the Vedas or mantras or the adoption of any yoga practice or any ritual but the recognition of love as the beginning, middle and end of all religion and that love is best and easiest when directed not to an abstraction or peripheral idea but to a concrete Guru whom you love and who loves you, and that all other '*sadhanas*' are unnecessary. There are other truths Dabolkar gained in his contact with Baba which have been revealed for the benefit of others though they have little importance.

Baba takes charge of his bhaktas even when he does not expressly use the words which he used to Dixit "Kaka why have you any cares, all cares are mine". Baba said of Dabolkar "I serve within his house" i.e. Baba agreed to look after the temporal welfare as well as the spiritual welfare of Dabolkar. The reality of this protection and guarding influence not only in his case but also in those of his relations, Dabolkar noted time and again. Having found Baba a precious gem or mine, he took with him to Baba his two sons-in-law, one after another (R. R. Samant and Galwankar) as also the rest of his family. The experiences of these two sons-in-law are found in Devotees' Experiences, Vol II, published by All India Sai Samaj, and they prove how Baba looked after their interests. Galwankar's statement is specially interesting. He stated in 1938 when he was still in official harness that Baba fixed him birth after birth on the high moral and spiritual level of truth and integrity and provided satisfactorily for all his wants. Once Baba appeared to Galwankar and asked him "What do you want?" Galwankar wanted nothing but Baba's grace and he got it. He used to get sudden spells of bliss of Baba. In the midst of his official work he would suddenly stop and for some moments he would be enjoying the bliss of Baba, His services to Sai Baba are his gift of sites, etc. and what he did when appointed as trustee of Sai Samasthan, an office which he held upto his death in 1945. The benefits to other relations are not recorded by Dabolkar or others, but some of the benefits to Dabolkar himself have been recorded. We shall just refer to one and close.

The receipt in miraculous circumstances of Baba's portrait is considered of great value. In Chapter 40 of Sai Satcharitra Dabolkar records such a favour. One Alii Mohamed, a friend of his, had many big pictures of saints including Sai Baba. To a very orthodox Mohamedan, pictures of saints are taboo. In a fit of iconoclastic zeal all the pictures he had were thrown away in the ocean near Bombay but strangely enough Sai Baba's picture which was over the door escaped notice and was not thrown away and Alii Mohamed did not want to destroy Baba's picture. He came and gave it to Dabolkar on the Holi festival of 1917. Just a few hours earlier Dabolkar had a dream or vision. A sanyasi (evidently a form taken by Baba) came to him and said that he would attend the Holi dinner as Dabolkar's guest. So while serving leaves and dishes to the entire family, a central seat with a fully served leaf was placed in expectation of the Sanyasi or Baba in any other form. None appeared and the family was just about to start their meal when steps were heard on the stairs. Dabolkar got up and met the visitor, Alii Mohammad, who then gave him the picture, promising to account for the presentation at a more convenient time later on. The picture reverently received was placed in the seat of honour, the central seat, reserved for the guest. Thus Baba kept up the promise made the previous night to attend the Holi or Shimga dinner.

That convenient occasion came only in 1926. Then Ali narrated to Dabolkar how Ali was operated on for a swelling in the leg and had to stay for months at Bombay in his brother-in-law's use. That brother-in-law told him that his (Ali's) health would improve if he threw away or destroyed all the pictures of saints kept in Ali's Bandra house. A manager was sent to carry out the order for destruction and all other pictures had been taken and thrown away or destroyed. For some unaccountable reason, Baba's picture alone escaped the fate of the rest. Ali had faith in Baba and yet did not dare to keep his portrait. So after consultation with some friends, he took it to Dabolkar as the proper recipient for the same. The presentation following the dream vision impressed Dabolkar, as a remarkable chamatkarcic favour of Baba to himself.

CHAPTER VI

Sri Upasani Baba or
Kasinath Govind Upasani Maharaj
(as he was known when he lived at Shirdi)

Very high praise to him is found in Sai Leela Masik and Sai literature written a few years after Baba shed his mortal coil. His (Upasani's) very great service to Sai Baba is the fact that through him myriads, if not lakhs, of people came to know about and worship Sai Baba. Sri Upasani Baba was widely regarded as a wonderful saint with vast and miraculous powers that could help individuals and even nations, and that was why Mahatma Gandhi with a view to secure national welfare approached him about 1927. The fame of Sri Upasani Baba was at one time so great (1920-1934) that people found it difficult even to get access to him. About 1930 he visited the house of Sri Sail Govind Banathwalla at Volkeswar, Bombay, and he sat up on an upper storey, and people wanting to take darsan of him had to climb up by one flight of steps and get down by another flight of steps. This procession of darsan by pilgrims went on from 1 p.m. till 9 p.m. Such was the vast mass that wanted to take Upasani's darsan at Bombay. If in a city like Bombay tens of thousands were attracted to him, one may safely assume that throughout Maharashtra, Upasani's fame drew lakhs of people to him, and Sai Baba, as his Guru, was introduced to lakhs of people as the cause and source of Upasani Baba's greatness and powers. "If the chela is so great, how much greater must be the Guru", people said.

This was the first and direct service of Sri Upasani to the Sai Baba movement. The second and indirect service of Upasani Baba is mentioned later on.

Sri Upasani was born of a very orthodox sect of Brahmins who were village priests, that is, priests in the village of Satana. His grandfather Sri Gopal Sastri had left the village to stay at Baroda as the Raja's Court adviser in religious as well as literary matters for a number of years. Gopal Sastri was also the adviser to many other Petty States on matters of religion and was the author of several books, none of which has probably been printed, Govinda Sastri, the father of

Upasani, though a good scholar, had to earn bread for the family by being a copyist in Dhulia Civil Court. Upasani was one of the five sons of Govinda Sastri, and stayed with his grandfather Gopal Sastri at Satana. The family during the time that we are considering was really not very well off. The earnings of village priests being very small, they had just enough to eat and get along.

Kasinath Govinda Upasani Sastri, which is the real name of Upasani Baba, was born in 1870 (May 15, 1870) and his early education was practically nil. He was sent to an elementary school and very early in that period, a merciless master named Gharpure birched him severely. The boy cried and roaring with pain went to the Village Munsif to lodge a complaint. There the matter ended and his education also ended. He could have picked up the rudiments of the Purohit's learning necessary for carrying on the work of the Village Purohit, but Kasinath did not care to do so. On the other hand, he had a strong dislike for any education, and so was treated as a very dull boy and an exception to the family traditions of love of learning. His elder brother, Balakrishna Sastri, was highly advanced in Sanskrit study and became a Professor of Sanskrit in the Fergusson College, Poona, and was an Examiner for Sanskrit in M.A. in the Bombay University. But Kasinath was treated by everyone as good-for-nothing, and yet according to old and senseless customs, his parents insisted upon getting him married in spite of his protests, at the age of 14 (i.e. in 1883) to a girl of 8, who died in a year (1885). He was again married in 1885 to another girl who also died a year later. The home was already bitter; this marriage obligation tied round his neck made it worse. So he hated home and took to running away from home. At first he returned after a short stay outside. His later ramblings were prolonged. None of these is worth mentioning except the following.

In one of his long tours (in 1890). he was attracted by his habit of yoga or control of breath and meditation, and love of solitude, to Boorkhad Hill. There he could see from a great distance that in the midst of a forest, the hill projected from the forest and disclosed a natural cave or cavern. There was luckily a tree near it. As he approached it, he discovered that he could climb up into the cave with the help of the tree growing adjoining it and sending one of its branches into

the cave. He thought that this was excellent for his meditation. He sat up in the cave and tried to meditate. At first he thought he would like to see what his starvation (for there was no chance of getting food in the forlorn cave) would end in, and he wished to see death coming and taking him away. This, of course, was absurd. When death came, he might have no power to see death coming even if death had a visible form (cf. Nachiketas in Mythology). He spent days without food or drink, and finally before he became unconscious started namajapa of God, and his body was there in a fixed posture for an unknown period, and, due to lack of food, his muscles and skin were shrunk. He woke up to find that he was still alive, and there was the feeling of thirst. To quench it he could not discover the means. Luckily, the kind heavens poured down rain in a short time, and that rain, coming down the cavern, poured a mass of water into the cave that collected close to him. All his muscles were rigid except those of his right hand, and with this he could reach and pick up the collected water, and he drank up as much as he could. This restored some degree of vigour in him, and he massaged his rigid body. He began again dreaming and he had a vision which was as follows:— "A Hindu and a Muslim standing by his side pulled off his entire skin disclosing thereby his divinely bright body within him. Pointing to that body they said 'Why do you wish to die? We will not let you die! we are behind you'¹ and they vanished." He then ventured to move like a lizard on to the branch of the tree which adjoined the cave. And from that branch, he dropped down. He was glad to see that he did not break his limbs by a fall of about 20 feet or so. He moved on slowly on his haunches to an adjoining village where the poor residents were living by collecting fuel from forests and selling it. He passed some time living upon the milk and wild grain supplied by these villagers, and then came back to his home. This stay in Boorkhad cave is still remembered by his devotees who have tried to erect some memorial there of his early yoga practice in the cave. After his return, misfortune still dogged him, and he resumed a rambling life.

Sri Upasani Maharaj had bitter experience of life in his ramblings. He went to Poona City where his elder brother was leading a respectable life as Professor of

a College. Sri Upasani would not go to his brother's house. He went out begging his food in some nooks and corners, very often being refused any food.

This bitter portion of his life may be said to end with his grandfather Gopal Sastri's death in 1891. After that, Kasinath began to realise that he must do something to earn his bread, and so, he went to Sangli and got coached up in Ayurveda and Sanskrit Grammar under Sangli Venkataramanachar (1892-1895). Thus equipped, he went out to Amraoti, and there practised medicine (1896-1905). He was unlucky at the outset but soon began to prosper. Amongst those who accepted medicines from him was G. S. Khaparde, a leading lawyer and the right hand man of Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak. Sri Kasinath started and conducted for three years (1902-1905) a Medical Mahratti monthly (*Beshaja Ratnamala*) in which he advertised the patent medicines that he manufactured and with his practice and sale of medicines, he collected a small capital for which he wanted good investment. This was about the year 1907 when, in Gwalior, the State was disposing of Malguzari lease estates. One estate of 2,000 acres could be had by merely paying down Rs. 600 as advance money and agreeing to pay fixed rents which might be collected from the tenants or from the forest or other produce. So, the doctor invested his money in Malguzari, and went to live on his estate (1906-1908) but found that he had made a huge mistake. The estate had been thrown up by the previous holder because he could not pay the fixed rental instalments as the tenants would not pay, and the forest and other lands would not yield. Not knowing all that, he had taken up the estate, and found it difficult to pay up the dues to the State, whereupon warrants for seizure of his goods were executed by the village officers even at night when his wife was alone. And to harass him, there were plenty of enemies. The tenants defied him to collect the rent, and the village officers, whose co-operation was necessary to collect the rents, withheld their co-operation. So, after a year or two of struggle with adverse circumstances, Kasinath could not get anything there, but lost his health and all that he had and returned home a broken man with broken fortune and ruined health. Soon after, he bethought himself once again of holy pilgrimages, and started with his wife (the 3rd) in April 1910 to Omkareswar Lingam on an island in

the middle of a river (Narmada and its Branch Cavery), and there tried to practise Pranayama himself, and his wife was seated at the foot of that huge lingam (called Somanath or Gouri Shankar) with a diameter of about 6 or 7 feet. He fell down unconscious and his wife sprinkled river water, and that restored his consciousness. But his breathing was not restored, and remembering the usual practice of artificial respiration, he began to heave his whole body and uttered groans so as to move the respiratory muscles of his chest slowly and with considerable groaning and effort, he began to breathe. But he felt that his breathing might stop at any moment. He was afraid to strain at stools or to go to sleep, lest during these times the breathing should stop. He tried to get medicine. But the doctors stated that he had got trouble in the course of his yogic practice and they could not furnish him with a cure. Thinking that he should resort to yogis only for a cure, he went (April 1911) to Rahuri where there was a yogi Kulkarni by name. But that yogi, after listening to his account, stated that he was not having any disease at all, that his breathing was one of the accidents of yogic practice, that it would become normal again, in due course, that his yogic condition was far advanced and advised him to go to Sai Baba. Hearing the name 'Sai Baba' uttered by the Rahuri yogi, he said, 'Sai Baba must naturally be a Mohamadan, and I am a Sastri's son and grandson, and so bowing to a Muslim is out of the question'. Therefore, Kasinath declined to go. But while staying with that yogi, he was walking in the streets, and he met an old Mohamadan who questioned him about his trouble, and then gave him the advice: 'This trouble is *vatha* and will be cured by your avoiding cold drink, and drinking water as hot as your mouth can bear'. Dr. Kasinath had no respect for this advice and treated it as worthless, and went away to Jejuri on his way to meet a Hindu yogi Phatak by name at Moregaon. At Jejuri he again sat up for yoga practice under a thick prickly pear bush, and there, after some time, he felt (he pangs of thirst. To quench it. he went to a stream and was about to drink its cold water. Suddenly the old man that appeared at Rahuri, 156 miles away, was seen at this stream, and he said, "What! Are you trying to kill yourself? I told you to drink hot water and avoid cold water". So, he went into the village and was taking hot drink only. With that i.e.

with what he first thought to be a worthless recipe, health was fairly restored, for he got good sleep which he never had before.

Then he went to Narayan Maharaj¹³ of Kedgaonbet, Bombay, a famous Datta Upasaka possessed of marvellous powers. When he represented to Narayan Maharaj that he wanted help for health, Narayan Maharaj made him chew betel and nut, and said that he was finely painted inside and outside, and asked him to go away. Kasinath could not make out what he meant. When he went again and asked him, Narayan Maharaj said that there was nothing more for him to do, and so he started back for Satana, and, on the way, called at the Rahuri Yogi's house, and on the insistence of that Rahuri Yogi, went to Shirdi just to pay a brief formal visit to Sai Baba. This was on 27th June 1911.

The first interview between Sri Sai Baba and Kasinath is a very interesting study of the personalities of both, and the method of operation of Sai Baba peculiar to each case. After staying a day, Kasinath went to take leave of Baba to go home. Baba said, 'What so soon? When are you returning?' Kasinath protested that it was not easy for him to return, 'Then' Baba said, 'you had better stay. Do not go away'. The alternatives presented to Kasinath were both bitter to him. "What, either to stay on for ever or to go and return in eight days!" and when he was thus puzzled, Sai Baba said, 'Well, go. I shall see what I can do'. This might appear a threat to those who knew Sai Baba's powers. But as Kasinath understood none of his powers, he simply thought permission had been given to him to go, though rather gruffly. He then went away. He was anxious to get back home now that his health had been restored and have a pleasant Grihasthasrama life with his young wife (third wife). But a strange thing happened. He went out a few miles and stayed at a neighbouring village for a bath in the Godavari. Then another day he started and went a short distance, and again was stopped by something attractive. Like this for seven days, he was within a radius of eleven miles, and on the eighth day he was at Kopergaon with the Brahmachari at the Datta Temple on the bank of the river Godavari, i.e., only

¹³ *It was Narayin Maharaj's blessing that thus pushed Upasani lu Sai and helped him to achieve greatness. It was Narayan Maharaj's blessing that enabled B.V.N. Swami to get the help of Sai Devotees to write about Baba

six miles from Shirdi. That Brahmachari told him to go to Shirdi and be with Sai Baba. Kasinath, however, declined to accept that proposal. As they were talking, a tonga drew up, and the inmates came out. They were asked by the Brahmachari, 'Where are you going?' They said, 'To Shirdi'. Then the Brahmachari said, 'Take this Kasinath with you'. Kasinath said, 'No, I have been there already'. Then the visitors said, 'That is the best reason. We have not been there. We want some one to be with us to guide us'. Kasinath said that he had not taken his meal and he had no carriage fare, and thus pleaded vain excuses. They said, 'We have the carriage fare, and we will give you food'- So, in spite of himself, out of a mere desire to oblige these visitors and to oblige the Brahmachari, he got into the cart which straightway sped on to Shirdi. There they all alighted. They all bowed before Baba. Baba said to Kasinath, "You have come back! How many days is it since you left?" 'This is the eighth day', confessed Kasinath. 'What!' Baba remarked, 'You said you would not come back in eight days'. Then the spell over Kasinath seemed to disappear, and he woke up and said, 'What, Baba, I cannot understand this. I was eager to go home, and I wonder how I did not go back home. This must be all your doing'. Baba said, 'Yes. I have been with you all these eight days dogging your heels'. Then it flashed upon Kasinath that Sai Baba was (always) wielding vast powers over people's mind, that when he could not think of going home, and when the Brahmachari and others were asking him to go to Shirdi, it was all the work of Sai.

So, he was under Sai's *Akarshana and Sthambhana* and that was how he could not think of his home under that spell! He was -aghast at this vast control over minds and bodies of not one but of many. Then he resigned himself to fate as he called it. He thought 'Some vast Power is seizing me. So, I must bend to it'. Then he was staying on, hoping time and again to get leave of Baba to get back. Through Shama he asked for permission. Baba said, 'Let him stay on'. Then Shama asked what he was to do. Baba's answer was, "To do nothing". Kasinath could not understand what he should do remaining there doing nothing. But doing nothing was only the external appearance. "Doing nothing" in Baba's

parlance meant being receptive and receiving everything from him. In Baba's Guru parampara, Sishya's work is simply nothing. The entire operation of moulding, remoulding, raising and reaching the top of the highest spiritual experience is the work of the Guru and the Guru alone. His mighty power moulds everything, internal and external, and the result is, the sishya is turned into the likeness of the Guru (*Apana Sarika Karitat*) and that is what Baba meant by saying, 'Let him remain doing nothing'. Baba asked him to go and live in solitude (as he already loved solitude) at Khandoba Temple, just outside the village, and not mix with people but to remain alone, doing nothing.

Kasinath's tendencies could not be so very easily overcome. Dull as he was considered to be as a boy by the superior members of his family, he was a great pandit especially after his studies at Sangli and literary efforts at Amraoti, when compared with the people at Shirdi. His learning, his mastery of Sanskrit and general information were far superior to those of the ordinary pandit. He was anxious to go on either with mantra or with study which alone he understood to be the constituents of real religion. Baba allowed him to indulge in these for a time, but these were not part of Baba's course for his pupil. Studies are hindrances, as they raise the thought in the minds of the pupil that he is learned, that he is something, and that he must understand everything put to him with his intellect and then rise with the help of that intellect and his book learning. These are all egregious mistakes in Baba's course. In Baba's course, the spiritual experience is a sort of chemical extract inherent in and constituting the spiritual body of Baba, the Guru, and is poured into the soul of the sishya which must receptively receive and absorb the same. The entire work is that of the Guru. The sishya must swallow with deep humility, passivity, and receptivity and assimilate the pre-digested food. Kasinath could not understand this, and went on with his studies especially when he met congenial spirits like G. S. Khaparde, Chidambaram Pillai and others and later went on telling stories and lecturing. Anyhow Baba had given him directions, and set to work upon him in a number of ways.

The first essential preparatory step in Baba's course is not book learning, but the development of humility and receptivity. These would result from perfect faith, absolute faith, unlimited and powerful faith in the Guru. The Guru must be everything to the sishya, the giver of bread, the giver of life and light and the giver of all that life is worth living for, and at one stroke. He must not regard anything else. This alone is the tyaga of *Tan, Man, Dhan* - body, mind and possessions. This, Baba himself has fully described in setting out his relations with his own Guru (See BC & S. 175) already set out in a previous chapter, Baba expected that others who came as pupils to him should adopt the same course. But none of the persons that came to Baba could adopt the entire course. As Baba himself said on one occasion, Is there anyone who will serve me as I served my Master, that is, with perfect *nishta* and with absolute surrender? There was none. However anxious Kasinath might be to benefit from Baba's goodwill, absolute surrender of self was not there. Absolute ridding himself of all the contacts with external world was not there and no idea of giving up Grihastha Ashrama. He was still thinking of his own home at Satana, his wife, his mother, and others. He hoped to join them after achieving progress under Baba and enjoying the result of that progress with his family. That was his idea. But that was not Baba's idea. Baba wanted him to be free from all shackles and absolutely independent of all family or other connections. Sai Baba wanted to make him feel that he was entirely dependent upon Sai and Sai alone at least during the period of probation. Hence. Baba suffered him to get into a number of difficulties for the very essentials of livelihood. Food was easy for a time to get, but very soon the food problem became the main problem of his life. At first he had some moneys, and lived with the help of what he could get with his moneys. But Baba had strange purposes in asking for dakshinas. Upasani Maharaj had given some dakshinas but retained Rs.10 with him thinking that he could bank upon it and live upon it till he could get further sums. But Sai Baba asked him for dakshina of Rs.10 and deprived him of his bank and reduced him to zero. Then suddenly Kasinath felt he was in mid air unsupported. That is just what Sai Baba wanted him to feel. That is, the sishya must feel that he has no earthly support

barring the Guru. But *akinchanya*, i.e. no possessions or help, is a very painful experience. Persons who carefully read this book, especially with a view to get from Baba the fullest blessings, would take great interest in the experience of Upasani and others who had this feeling and who found it difficult at every step, even to catch the meaning of every experience though they were with Baba. Sai Baba acts on the principle, '*Yasya anugraham ichchami, tasya sarvam harami aham*', that is, God says, 'When I wish to benefit any one, I take away everything from him'. This seems a strange way from the worldly point of view of benefiting a person by reducing him to a 'Zero'. But worldly zero is the beginning point of the spiritual pile on the fort that is about to be built in the soul of the sishya. The zero is the first essential for attaining humility and faith and courageous confidence. Zero on earth is the first step to heaven or self-realisation. One should not feel ashamed to beg. One should not have any feeling of fear or shame at all. One should have the *Daivi Sampat* (E.G. XVI), steadily built up into him, beginning with

"Abhayam, satva samsuddhih

Jnana Yoga Vyavasthitih

Kshama.....scanti.....dhruti.etc"

i.e., fearlessness, clarity of pure insight or intuition, remaining in the state of knowledge and yoga, endurance, calm or peace of mind, self-possession or assurance, etc. or what is aptly expressed by the English poet thus:—

"Fine breadth of vision, self control, a boundless charity A gentler tongue, a stronger faith, more perfect clarity. In spirit vision; patience vast—more patience still, and more, Wisdom to know—and to forget—all that has gone before; Courage to smile, though sorrow fill unto its brim your cup~"

These are required to make a pupil an adept under Sai. For all these the background has been and is being furnished by Baba in his omniscience and kind control and open avowal of protection reminding us of the very similar offers and exhortation of the Palestine Samartha addressed to the men trained as his apostles, thus:—

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not therefore: Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

It is by the confidence in Guru and God developed by such assurances and training that the apt pupils have thus set out their bold attitude like that of Kunti who said "*Vipadah santu nah scascvat*" i.e. let frequent sufferings come to us, for they make us remember you, the remover of sorrows. We then welcome trial, sickness, ennui, privations, injustice..! All of it can only come, directed by God's Hand, and will wound the soul only in order to cleanse some spot within. "God (i.e., Guru Deva) will allow no suffering, no trial above what you are able to bear"; "If we are slighted, misunderstood, maligned, or persecuted, what does it matter? These injuries will pass away; but the peace and love of God will remain with us forever, the reward of our faith and patience."

Sai's sishya should not have preference for nice dishes and hatred for either bad dishes or no dishes or starvation. All Dvandvas, that is, (1) the presence or absence of food, (2) the presence or absence of shelter, (3) fame or obloquy, should all be one and the same to the sishya; and his *ashta pasas*, i.e., eight fetters should be cut. The Guru's love to him is a shield against all attacks. He must in such bitter circumstances raise his faith to the highest pitch and feel, 'Come what may, I have still my Guru to support me. He knows what is best for me and will provide it'. This absolute love to the Guru is accompanied by a surrender of every thing else. The love and the surrender are the two sides, obverse and reverse, of the discipleship.

Therefore, Baba put Kasinath into the 'Zero' position which became very distressing to him. He had to depend upon doles of grain given to him by some visitors. But seeing his difficulties, the manager of Dixit's Wada and the free (food) hotel run there invited him at the suggestion of Kaka (H. S.) Dixit to take his meals there free. He did so for a time. But the number of enemies that Kasinath had, had grown, especially on account of the marked declarations by Sai Baba favouring him and the unsocial behaviour of Kasinath. He thought highly of himself and would not care to placate or hobnob with the big men of the

place, or among the visitors that came there. So, one day, the Manager said to Kasinath, in the presence of several, as he sat at his dinner, 'From tomorrow forward you are not to have your meal here'. Kasinath became indignant. He said, 'Then why have the meal even to-day?' He got up and said, 'I do not want the meal. It is the dependence on the meal that makes us servile, and our position bitter'. So he went away and starved for two or three days. Gradually some relief or other came to him, but still it was already fasting—Upavasa. His name was often played upon, as "Upavasani", that is, the man starving. Diseases attendant upon such starvation, namely, constipation and piles troubled Kasinath and added to his miseries. Sai Baba was aware of every thing and allowed him to go on enduring all these bitter experiences.

Many a sishya turns against the Guru and says 'If he is all powerful, if he is taking care of me in so many other matters, why does he not save me from this trouble?' Unfortunately, many a sishya fails to answer this question properly and loses his faith in the Guru or weakens his faith. It was much the same position in Kasinath's case. He could not understand how he was to get on at Shirdi without any funds and without any persons undertaking his feeding, etc. He resolved to fast as much as he could and put up with suffering. Baba's aim was that amidst such suffering he must pick up faith and feel that his Guru was supporting him. This is set out in Baba's parable of how his own Guru treated him. When he met his Guru, he said, his Guru tied a rope to his feet and that rope was tied to a tree, and he was allowed to dangle, head down and legs up, his body being just over a well, not touching the water, but almost touching it. This is the position of a sishya like Kasinath and sishyas like Baba. The allegory of being hung over a well is easy to see through. Samsara is the well. We have heaps of difficulties. We are tied to our position and kept in the midst of these difficulties, The Guru wants to see whether the difficulties strengthen or weaken our faith. In the case of Baba, his Guru after some time returned to Sai's place and untied his rope and asked, 'How have you fared all this time during my absence?' Sai Baba's answer was, 'Exceedingly happily'. That truth was an extraordinary answer for a man whose body was hung up over a well and tied to a tree and left to himself in the

above fashion. But Sai Baba's answer showed that he had perfect faith in his Guru, and that in the midst of all difficulties in Samsara, he never lost his faith. He knew that his Guru would protect him and come and help him at the time chosen by the Guru. The Guru did come at his own fixed time and removed him from trouble. Unfortunately, in the case of others like Kasinath, the result of the trial is not equally good. Kasinath could not understand that these trials were meant to sharpen and strengthen his faith in the Guru. He thought that sorrow was sorrow whatever might be the occasion, and he could not see in sorrow the hand of Baba, who was using this sorrow for a very high purpose.

'For who can so foreclose the years. And find in loss a gain to match Or reach a hand through time to catch The far off interest of tears?'

The present sorrow has a distant gain, and one must have ample faith to keep steadfast in the midst of present sorrow, and dwell in the mind upon the distant gain. But alas, how few realise this! Anyhow, Sai Baba was there to look after him, and he got on fairly well. We shall see how Baba coached him up for his course.

Baba's course was to give first *nishta* or full faith and secondly *saburi* or patience, to wait for the benefits of the course to be given at the time considered by the Guru to be proper. These are the two coins which Baba's own Guru wanted him to place at his (Sai Baba's Guru's) feet, and Sai Baba said he did give them to his Guru. Similarly Baba expected Kasinath to develop *nishta* and *saburi* and offer these as *dakshina* to him. Kasinath was slowly developing both *nishta* and *saburi*, and when these two were perfect, the seeds of instruction sown in the heart of the pupil would bear fruit. We shall proceed in further paragraphs to point out what those further courses were, and how important realisations were invisibly and imperceptibly planted and developed in the *sishya's* heart and nature by the Guru. Before proceeding to these, it is just as well to refer to the *Nishta* or faith question once again.

Faith in a Guru and treating him as God, that is *Guru Deva*, is absolutely essential, the *sine qua non* of all real advancement in Baba's line. Faith seems to be easy to place but when any one tries to place faith in a particular Guru or a

holy person that he visits or meets, he discovers that there are very sharp limits to the faith that arises. Faith in one sense is voluntary, but if one traces the real starting and progress of faith, one sees that it depends upon so many circumstances which are not under one's control. And the growth of faith seems to be peculiar to the constitution of some. The previous mental habits cultivated have a great deal to do with a person's faith. Some people are cursed. They are ever determined to contradict anything and everything and some are sceptic or ever doubting. This habit of doubt or aggressive competitiveness is ruinous to the starting or development of faith. Some, on the other hand, are generally very receptive, as they say in Mahratti 'Bale Bole' that is, ready to accept and believe. Such people will find the starting of faith very easy, because faith is a habit with them, faith in anything and everything that is placed before them by any one and every one. Some may fancy such an attitude ruinous to one's safety and progress in worldly affairs. But this is really not so. It may be that in one or two matters such Bale Bole people get duped, but for one or two losses that way, the sympathy that they receive from others and the help that they get from superiors like Guru will make ample amends. So, even from the worldly point of view readiness to believe, that is a disposition to grow and develop faith is not a disadvantage. It is not meant here to say that people should not reason and find out whether truth, facts or courses placed before them are acceptable or not according to the principle of reason implanted in each by God himself. 'Prove all things' said Saint Paul. That is to a certain extent correct. Even the man, who has faith, depends upon proof in a number of things, in many a matter. But on the whole his tendency to have faith and accept things on faith predominates. It is in such characters that faith grows rapidly and yields fruit also abundantly.

No doubt mere faith is not enough. Strength and purity of character are absolutely essential. Strength requires some degree of standing upon one's own legs and estimating even the Guru that one accepts for one's faith. In the beginning, even the Bale Bole has some test by which he determines whether to accept a particular person as Guru or not and whether the circumstances put forward before him justify such faith. But once accepted, the faith-natured people

stick on to their faith, and that is about the best disposition, often hereditary but sometimes developed by events or environment, and this is considered a special asset in matters of religious progress (as contrasted with perpetual doubters. *Samscayatmas* BG (IV)(40)

In the case of Upasani Baba, he was brought up under very orthodox parents, and there was abundance of faith in his home. But there was also a certain amount of dependence upon one's own judgement as to the materials necessary for progress - even for spiritual progress. Gopal Sastri was after all a village purohit and for the welfare of people, temporal and spiritual, would administer mantras, tantras, etc. not always resting upon mere prayer with faith. Even yantras, mantras and tantras depend upon faith. So, to some extent, Kasinath was accustomed to regard faith as an essential element in his nature. But to a large extent he was proceeding on rationalistic lines, which also are developed in a purohit's home, could not easily be settled by a short stay of Kasinath with Baba.

Kasinath's great difficulty in the matter of faith was the peculiar *modus operandi* of Sai Baba. Sai Baba on one or two occasions declared everything openly, and Kasinath was lucky in having Sai's plans disclosed to him at the very outset of his contact with Sai Baba. Sai disclosed to him that he (Sai) was the person who cured Kasinath's disease by prescribing a recipe at Rahuri and enforcing the same at Jejuri, that he was intimately interested in him, ¹⁴that their ancestors were intimately connected with each other for thousands of years, and therefore, the obligations between the two were so great that they could not easily be settled by a short stay of Kasinath with Baba. Baba said, 'These accounts will take two or four years to settle'. When Shama asked on behalf of Kasinath 'What account?' Baba said, 'I have to settle the accounts of every one who comes to me'. This was rather inexplicable because Sai Baba was not running a money-lending or pawn-broker's business. Anyhow one thing was clear, that is, that Sai Baba did declare that he was under a very heavy obligation

¹⁴ Baba had his peculiar way of revealing this to Upasani alone, leaving others present in ignorance of what he meant

(RINANUBANDHA) arising from contact for decades or centuries towards Kasinath, and that he was determined to do his level best for the uplift of Kasinath. But what the latter was to do for his part was not clear to him at all. Shama asked on behalf of Kasinath 'You ask him to remain here. What is he to do?' Baba's answer was, 'Let him do nothing'. This would appear ludicrous in the eye of any one, to stay in a place doing nothing for four years! Though Kasinath did not leave the place, he could not easily understand what he was to do "doing nothing" for four years. Then the way in which Baba prepared him to rope him on to himself (Baba) was totally unintelligible. Baba seemed to be totally indifferent and not doing anything like an ordinary teacher or Guru. On special occasions, no doubt, he gave some instruction through visions and once or twice orally also when Kasinath met him in the flesh. But these were so few that they were apt to be forgotten, and Kasinath really would fancy nothing was being done towards him by Sai Baba. In point of fact when he met his elder brother, Balakrishna Sastri, probably (31-12-1911) he told him I do not understand what this Sai Baba is doing to me. It is totally unintelligible¹⁵. And Balakrishna Sastri also did not understand.

Forgetting the glorious future promised for him by Baba, Kasinath believed that he was soon to die at Shirdi in 1912, 1913. He said to Chidambaram Pillai that he was tortured like a dumb brute; this was the middle of 1912 and 1913. In November, 1912, he told a Samudrik Sastri, Palmist, that his life was miserable and wasted and wished to know if his future would be bad. That palmist evidently knew of Baba's assurances to Kasinath and believed them, and his words of Kasinath's divinity (divinity inferred from body marks) were valued by Kasinath though Baba's earlier assurance of achieving divinity had been undervalued or

¹⁵ (1) In the early part of Kasinath's stay at Shirdi he was not sure that his respiratory disease was cured, and had fears that he might die suddenly. He communicated his feeling to Shama who in turn transmitted it to Sainath Maharaj, who thereupon said (BCS7)

"Ye Jaga Maran Ko Nai, Taran Ko Hai!"

(means:- This Shirdi is no place for death, but a place for crossing death).

forgotten. One thing was clear, namely, that he was getting (so far as his physical and mental condition was concerned) from bad to worse. His discomforts were great and his mental peace seemed to be also lost. First when he was suspected to be a political refugee or a C.I.D. Officer, the villagers and the police threatened him, and he had to go to Sai Baba and complain. Baba said, 'Do not mind all that. I will look after you. Everything will be all right.' That trouble ceased after a while. But again other difficulties arose.

Baba told Kasinath that he was to remain there for four years and, though he did not like this, he had to put up with it. He had to simply keep quiet at the temple (Vittoba temple as Baba called Khandoba temple), and at the end of four years he would be the recipient of God's full favour and Shama would then come to him and take him out and place him in the open, i.e. as an object of reverence to all people, for he (Upasani) is or would be God or the full recipient of God's favours, which amounted to the same thing. Baba had told him that he need not do anything at all. Kasinath was not able to understand the course sketched out by Baba, and had no ambitions for God-realisation at such cost. He was a total stranger to that place (in fact he felt he was an exile) and appeared to many to be unworthy of the high honour conferred on him by Baba. So some devotees of Baba were jealous and one of them, a Prabhu (from Bombay), asked Baba, 'What, Baba, we have been attending upon you for years, and you seem to be conferring a copper plate grant of all your powers to this stranger, and are we all, therefore, to be neglected? Is it true that you are giving all your powers?' Baba was not to be frightened by any such questions. 'Yes', said Baba, 'I speak only the truth sitting as I do in this Masjid. What I have spoken, I have spoken. I have given everything to this person. Whether he be good or bad, he is my own. I am fully responsible for him, and, as for *sasana* or a grant, why a copper plate grant? I have given him a *Gold plate Grant*'. Turning to Kasinath, he said, 'Think which is better, copper or gold?' Kasinath was too much dazed by the prospect of four *gloomy* years to be spent at Shirdi, away from his wife and kith and kin at Satana, to give any rational answer. He said, 'I do not know, Baba'. Baba said, 'See, copper gets corroded and tarnished. Gold does not. Gold remains pure

always. You are pure. *You are Pure Bhagavan'*. In this way, Baba by his declaration of special consideration for Kasinath had caused considerable jealousy amongst some, and yet this did not succeed in making Kasinath place entire reliance on him and feel happy with his lot.

There were other sorts of troubles also for Kasinath. He was advised to keep himself to himself as far as possible and spend his time in solitude. But at first this was causing misapprehensions in the minds of some people. For a time in 1911 and 12 he and G.S. Khaparde and others had study classes for several months, and during that time, Kasinath was a student attending at Khaparde's study classes (of Paramamrita and Panchadasi) and took an active part, reading the text, putting questions and getting clear elucidations from G.S. Khaparde, who generally acted the part of the teacher in those classes. These catered to Kasinath's natural intellectual bent and were highly appreciated by him. But after these were over, the time was dull and Kasinath thought that the best way of his utilising the time was to do mantra japa. As every Sastri does, he also counted his mantra japa. For this purpose he was keeping pebbles to reckon the total number of hundreds of japa he had achieved. On one of these occasions, Baba came and asked what those pebbles were for. When told they were for reckoning the japa, he kicked them aside, and asked, 'Who asked you to do all this? Keep quiet. Do nothing'. Kasinath could not understand how mantra japa was unnecessary, and what he could do by doing nothing or how he could benefit by doing nothing. He was a total stranger to Baba's methods of interior moulding or instruction of the sishya through the soul, not through the intellect, without the utterance of a single word and without meeting him in flesh. There was no study class with Baba, and Baba rarely talked to Kasinath. So there was no formal oral instruction, and what he got was in some strange way, which he realised to be Baba's teaching only very much later. We shall set out some of these strange teachings of Baba otherwise than by oral instruction. One strange method adopted by Sai Baba in the case of Upasani (for Sai Baba adopted different ways for different persons) was to convey the instruction through vision and pictures.

One may wonder what "pictures" could be seen at Shirdi, where there were no cinema houses. Let us see how Kasinath began to see pictures and get instruction and edification. However, we must remember that edification through pictures was a very minor item in Baba's procedure for the main portion of it was concerned with Baba as the powerful dynamo of love, gripping the Sishya's little vessel of love and charging it fully (though slowly and gradually) with all its fullest power (*Apana Sarika Karitat*).

Kasinath was a regular performer of his *trikala sandhya*, and for the noon *sandhya*, the orthodox take water in their palms and offering it to the Sun throw it out towards the east. This is called '*Arghya with Gayatri*'. On such an occasion, Kasinath held water in both his palms, and the noon day Sun was glittering brightly in the reflection found in the water held in the palms. Kasinath went on gazing at it, and the result can easily be guessed. As medical books describe it, an excessive exposure of the balls and needles found at the end of the optic nerve results in paralysing them and the power to see and discriminate with the help of light is lost by reason of such paralysis. A full description of this is to be found in medical books. Kasinath's experience on that occasion was his first, and he could not understand how seeing the reflection affected him. He lost the power to see anything, and everything appeared dark to him, though it was noon day. Then he began to think that the sun's rays were coming into his head and going out through his eyes: He fancied number of things, because he could not interpret the physiological effects of over-exposure to sunlight and he feared that these symptoms betokened the approach of death. He ran up (thinking that he had some disease) to some friendly or well disposed houses in the village and asked them to cure him of his trouble either by fomentation or by other means. They found fomentation and other processes useless and they believed starvation was the cause and gave him liquid food. He could not gulp it. They thought this stage of his, which may be described as craziness, was *Brahmishta Avasta*, to which Yogis developing Yoga are exposed, and which he had got by Sai's grace.

The various misfortunes that befell the physical and mental constitution of Kasinath at Shirdi during his probation are too numerous to be fully set out and we shall deal only with a few of them and show how these misfortunes were turned into gain. As mentioned earlier, in June or July 1912, further feeding at Dixit Wada was refused, and he indignantly resolved not to touch food, as food it was that made people fawn, cringe, and become dependent. He fell into a violent rage of *Anna Dvesha* ailment phobia. Even when friends send him food afterwards, the food looked repulsive in his eyes. It smelt and looked like excreta. If he put a bit into his mouth, he could not gulp it. It stuck in the throat. When it was in his mouth, he fancied he had already eaten it. If by chance he swallowed a bit, he felt his stomach was overloaded. Therefore, all the food that was sent to him was thrown away to dogs, pigs, birds, and other creatures. All this look extremely distressing, and none could guess whether there would be any good out of this. In fact Kasinath also was very much perplexed, and he felt that life was indeed very bitter. He thereafter had occasion to express his real feelings only to those in whom he could confide such as Sri Sai Baba, Dr. Chidambaram Pillai. and Narsobawadi palmist (Nov. 1912). When he reported his condition to Sai Baba, Baba said "I am always with you. You need not fear. The more you suffer now, the happier and more excellent will be your future. You in one scale, and the world in the other. You are going to be an Avadhuta (naked). Hundreds will rush to take your darsan'. This was Baba's prophecy, and it really came true (1920-1935). But at that time, they could not be appreciated by the pupil. One thing was noticeable. In spite of his starvation, his physical frame did not give way. He could still roll stone rollers on the road and do other bits of hard physical labour, and, as for his pulse, Chidambaram Pallai examined it about April 1913, and found it 40 to the minute. By July he found it 20 to the minute. And yet Kasinath was able physically to undertake hard manual labour. This was treated to be Sai Baba's miraculous intervention on his behalf. Yet Kasinath could not get over his bitter feelings. When the dazzling sun robbed him temporarily of eye sight, and made him fancy that the sun's rays were coming out from inside his

head through his eyes, he feared as stated already that these were symptoms of coming death.

Again in July 1913, he mentioned to H N. Apte, the famous Mahratti novelist, that his life was bitter, that he did not expect to live long, and would, therefore, be glad to see his relatives before he died. In consequence of his statement, Apte wrote to Balakrishna Sastri who came and visited him. After that his mother came and visited him. Still, he could not get over the impression that life was extremely bitter, and (as he told his brother) he could not see what was being done with him by Baba in connection with his spiritual attainments. Perhaps the starting of Upasani Maharaja's worship on 18-7-1913 (Guru Pournima) by Baba's orders might be expected to overcome this mentality. But it did not. One effect of his vision and mentality being upset was that he developed a peculiar habit. Suddenly, before him specks of light would float. Circles would be formed, springing up suddenly and expanding in front of him, coming near his body and disappearing. Several of these circles contained edifying visions like cinema pictures, and they suddenly vanished. He gave his own interpretation to some of these visions. Once, heaps of small specks of light were floating before him, and he thought at once that these were *paramanus*, that is, the primeval atoms of which the Universe is composed. That vision enabled him to understand the physical constitution of the Universe. Again he had another vision, after his long starvation. Suddenly the Earth, the Sky, and the Sun (*Trijagat*) were revolving round themselves many miles away from him, and he stood outside these three things and watched their revolution. The whirling Cosmos came gradually nearer and nearer to him all the while diminishing in size and finally vanished like a whirlwind at his side or into him. But in fact there was no wind or whirlwind. He wondered where he was, to see the world apart from him and the Universe apart from him. After 15 or 30 minutes, this vision disappeared. Kasinath drew the inference from it that this vision denoted the spiritual truth that all matter is in motion and that a person must get over his *Jagat Bhrama*, the whirl and illusion of the world, by getting beyond it, that is, by realising himself as not included within it. Therefore, he got the impression that the Universe, being in perpetual

revolution and change, is not permanent, that is, not real (Real or Sat is *Trikala Atita*) (the soul or Spirit etc.); for it appears, exists for a time, and ultimately disappears, that it emanates from him and reemerges in him, and that he is really outside and beyond all this seeming Universe. The world is evanescent (Maya) or Maya *manomaya* [SB XI (7) 7; (14) 46; (13) 26] and as the body is part of the material world, which is evanescent, the body is not he. This is something like subjective idealism, and is referred to as *Jmmodaya* in Upasani Lilamrita -the Mahratti memoirs of Upasani Baba written under his supervision and guidance.

The main work of turning and moulding the sishya Upasani's self into the Guru's self (*Apanci Sarika karitat*) is a hidden work, and no light can be cast on it by any of the incidents narrated here. In the moulding of Baba by his own Guru, love, wonderful, one-pointed, all-forgetting love, was the means. Baba's dealing with his devotees would rouse up love. But he adopted other processes also. The processes are mysterious and defy description. ¹⁶But several truths are realised by the pupil in the course of the development, and they might well be set out here. The real process of development is one complete whole. In our trying to understand it, we piece out one part or another and describe it. All our parts put together cannot make up the whole, and yet we are forced by our own defects and the peculiarity of the situation to describe only some parts and leave the description at that.

Now the ordinary worldly minded Upasani Maharaj had to be turned into a Samartha Sadguru absorbed in God, i.e. his Guru-God. The complete process involved a few threads which we shall trace now, however imperfectly it may be. In order to make the attached soul thoroughly detached by laya in Brahman or Guru God, one important essential or fundamental step emphasized in all religious courses is the conquest of desire. [c.f.B.G.(2) 70-72; (6)2,24,35, (7) 27, (16) 21 etc.] So long as attachment to earthly things lasts there is no possibility of

¹⁶ Condition of Baha. young Baba (5 to 15 years of age), lovingly dependent on his Guru is so markedly different from Kasinath's, aged 41. with a wife and fixed ways of thinking and feeling.

laya or merger in God, Guru God, or the Absolute. So, the first and foremost step is to dissociate oneself from one's attachment to worldly objects. Now this attachment takes the form or name of urges, physiological urges, psychological urges, etc. The lowest or the grossest are the first ones to be taken and crushed in the onward march. If we analyse the urges, we notice that we identify ourselves with our physico-psychical organism, and whatever is necessary for the maintenance and progress of that organism, we feel attached to. We are strongly drawn to that. So, the hunger urge, the sex urge and the self assertion and safety urges are the primary urges of every organism. Every organism, therefore, tries to sustain itself, if necessary, by beating down obstacles and obtaining whatever is necessary for it. This at once involves egotism (combative egotism), *Ahamkara*, and possessiveness, *Mamata*. The things to be possessed may be goods necessary for the stomach or things connected with sex. All these must be controlled by the sadhaka aiming at reaching the highest. If any ordinary person in his ordinary worldly condition wholly sacrifices these attachments, his organism will perish and he will die. So this course of crushing out urges is a thing peculiar to those aiming at the highest, and it is possible for them under the guidance of a Samartha Sadguru to keep on the physical organism and yet attain success after a length of time and a series of experiences. We shall now proceed to mention some of the experiences of Kasinath which enabled him to strengthen himself in combating these urges.

Let us take first the conquest of desire. Kasinath Maharaj had a vision one evening. He saw his grandfather Gopal Sastri standing outside Khandoba temple door and extending his arm as though to draw Kasinath's attention. When Kasinath looked at him, Gopal Sastri said, '*Aham, Madan, Gar*' twice. Kasinath could not make out anything. Then the grandfather flourished his hand and spoke loudly emphasizing each syllable that he uttered. He said '*Aham.....Madan.....Gar*' and then vanished out of sight. At once the meaning became patent. '*Aham*' means Ego or egotism, *Ahamkar*. '*Madan*' means lust or sex urge, *Kama* and *Mamakar*; and '*Gar*' means, poison. So, the whole phrase '*Aham.....Madan.....Gar*' was the declaration that egotism and lust were poison

and ruinous to his spiritual welfare. He noticed how excellent this teaching was and began repeating the words his grandfather uttered, namely, 'Aham.....Madan..Gar' as a very valuable teaching especially for one in his condition, for Kasinath was undoubtedly egotistic and had not overcome lust. Unless he got over both these, his soul would be ruined. So he went on repeating 'Aham..... Madan.....Gar' loudly to himself even though some of the onlookers thought that this was a mad prank of his.

We take next *Madan-lust*, conquest of Kamini and find out how this truth was being worked into his system. Kasinath Maharaj had from the time of his Omkar or Somnath Yoga practice (about April 1910) his breathing trouble and had thus the picture of sudden death haunting him every minute so as to drive away sleep from him for fear that sleep might mean death. He could not even strain at stools for then his breath might stop. So sex urge was unsafe or out of the question for such a person. During his Shirdi stay, which followed 14 or 15 months later. Baba took charge of him. Kasinath Maharaj declared openly at Sakori in the presence of this author (Sri B.V.N. Swami) and others that his Guru rendered him then and thenceforward physically impotent and mentally free from sex craving. This is a clear proof that Baba was carrying out his undertaking. Kasinath was to keep quiet and the Guru was to take every step necessary, in fact to book him the ticket, put him into the train, and send him to the destination, and all that Kasinath was to do was to keep quiet '*nimitta mat ram bhava savyasachin*', BG (II) 33. that is, 'Stand merely as a stalking horse'. These words uttered by Lord Krishna to Arjuna applied very well to this Kasinath Arjuna. He had merely to remain there at Shirdi doing nothing, and everything was going to be done and was being done by Sai himself.

This overcoming of the sex urge for the sishya by the Guru is only a single item in a more ambitious programme, that is. a programme of forgetting difference. *Neha nana asti kinchana* i.e. there is nothing different. One difference, of course, to be forgotten is the difference between the male sex and female sex. Baba helped Kasinath to overcome the feeling of difference in a very extraordinary way. One day Kasinath saw a circle expand before him, and inside

it a vision was enacted. He himself was there. Large groups of girls were there aged about 16. Two of them came out, caught hold of him, and tied him to a huge column in the middle of an extensive plain. They would not release him however hard he might beg. At last a couple of girls released him on condition that he should agree to become a woman. He doubted whether it was possible, but as they said it was possible, he agreed. They said they would put bangles on his wrist, which would render him permanently a woman. Then they gathered round him and told him several moral stores which went deep into him. Maharaj said that he frequently remembered those stories and felt that he was a woman, though his body was physiologically that of a man. Maharaj often in his later days at Sakori put on female dress and appeared as a woman. But this is hardly essential for us now. The main point is that it was the training to make him forget his sex, as thereby he became a fit person for persons of both sexes to resort to, i.e. a Samartha Sadguru. If only he had served out four years at Shirdi under Sai as ordered, his history would have been different.

Conquest of Kanchana: *Kunchana* means wealth, and conquest of desire for wealth seems impossible. For the body or the physical organism requires so many things, goods and services, and none of them can be had without wealth. So the wonder is how any sadhaka, even for aiming at the highest, can overcome desires for possessions; but Sai's order to Upasani was 'Sit Quiet, do nothing'. That means he was to do nothing to get wealth or to retain it against attacks. Baba had taken away his last Rs. 10 by asking for dakshina. So he had no money, and his cloth got thoroughly torn. When his brother sent a new cloth, that was stolen before he could wear it. Therefore it was clear that Sai intended that Kasinath should have nothing except unenviable rags and Sai would look after him. Sai had already said, 'You are going to be an *Avadhuta*, (naked),' and he did make him naked by making him lose clothes and having nothing to buy things with. But this is not sufficient. In the case of Upasani, his long courses at Satana, at Gwalior, and other places had strengthened the common idea that wealth is the "main chance", an advantage and a necessity. So, in order to get rid of this craving of a poor man for wealth, much spade work had to be done. Baba

again helped him through visions. As Kasinath sat up one day, he had the following visions. The first of these may be called *Papa Purusha Nirasana*. Baba came up to him at some mysterious place and sat up. Baba asked him to come near saying, 'I am going to give you Upadesh'. When Kasinath was trying to approach the Guru, a dark and dirty person behind Kasinath exactly like him, that is, his replica (old Adam) pulled him up and said, "Don't listen to the Guru. But listen to me". Twice this interruption took place. Then Sai got up, seized that dark person behind Kasinath, took him and placed him on a pile of faggots and burnt him. All that time Kasinath was saying 'Baba, it is me whom you are burning, it is me whom you are burning'. After completely burning him out, Baba turned to Kasinath and said, 'Yes. That was you no doubt. But you were in that sin form, namely, *Papa rupa*. I have destroyed him. You are now free from sin. By our united efforts there are many things to be achieved in the future. How can that be done if sin remains?'

Another vision which Kasinath Maharaj had was this. As he was passing along, there was a deep dark pit. A hand came out of that pit as he stood on the brink of it, and tried to pull him down into that dark abyss. Maharaj cried, 'Hands off. Who are you? Why do you drag me? If you do not let me go, I will report to Sai Baba'. At the mention of Sai's name, his feet were released. In that very vision, he learnt that the black abyss and black hand were Hell, that Hell would seize any one who came near, and it was a mistake to come near and tempt Hell. Later in another vision he was offered a lamp, and Baba told him, 'You must accept the lamp. It would light you and protect you everywhere. You will never be obstructed. You will escape obstacles, and will give light to hundreds in the future.' Maharaj accepted the light. Baba told him at one time, 'I will take away half of your head and give you half of my own'. Accordingly, Kasinath had a vision. Some ruffians came and cut his head off, scooped up the brain, ate the contents and ran away. Then in a later vision, Sai Baba took Maharaj to some mysterious place and showed him a heap of silver rupees, 225 feet long. 120 feet, broad, 4 feet high. Over that there was a princely bed with bolsters of lace cloth, and over all this was a richly dressed and gaily ornamented person. Sai

Baba asked Kasinath to see that man. Kasinath asked, 'Who is that?' Baba said, 'Have you not recognised yourself? It is you. Your body of sin has gone. That *papa purusha* has gone. This is your *punya purusha*'. Then, pointing to all the rupees, vast hoards of rupees, Sai Baba showed him a big room full of rupees and said 'There are hundreds and thousands of such houses filled completely with rupees. All these are ours. You will come to know all this by yourself. Thus, the subconscious mind of Kasinath Maharaj was being impressed by Sai Baba with the feeling that it was cloyed and glutted with ample possession of wealth.

The next lesson that Baba taught was through the same picture. Kasinath was trained in methods of karma and bhakti and though he professed adoption of Sankara's Advaita, his practice was all on the lines of bhakti and karma adopted by Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita. This is the practice of Uddhava Mutt to which Upasani's family belonged. So, he was not accustomed to Advaitic questioning on the lines sketched out in Vivekachudamani or to raise the question through introspection as to what the Self is by asking oneself 'Who am I? Though this was the last thing that he could think of, Baba made him take that very step. After seeing his own *punya purusha*, Kasinath asked Baba, 'If this figure is my *punya purusha* and the other figure that you destroyed was my *papa purusha*. who am I?' Baba's answer was, 'You are beyond these two, beyond *punya* and *papa*. That which constitutes me constitutes you. That is, you are myself. This is a combination of *Aham Brahmasmi, Tatvamasī, and Prajñanam Brahma and Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*. There is only one thing in existence, and that is Sat. That is the Parabrahman, Tatvamasī, 'You are That', Aham Brahmasmi, That Brahman I am. So, what constitutes you, namely, Jnanam and Brahman, constitutes me. So, there is no difference between you and me'. This express teaching is found even in Srimad Bhagavata SK.IV-28-60 *Parapurāṇanhyā Upākhyāna*. The Universal Soul or Parabrahman thus addressed the individual soul.

Aham bhavan nachanyas tarn

Tvam eva aham vichakshva bhoh

Na now pascyanti kavayah chidram jaatu maanakapi.

That is, I am You. You are not different from me, Yourself only I am. See it. The wise do not look on us as different. Even a jot of difference they do not see'.

This truth was flashed across Kasinath's mind for a moment and then it disappeared. Kasinath continued for very many years, that is, till about 1935, to think on purely dualistic lines and realistic lines. The idea of all personalities being one, or losing one's personality in the Absolute by yoga practice, appeared to him to be totally wrong and unwarranted, and it is only after 1935 by Sai's grace, he took to Ashtavakra Gita study and accepted wholeheartedly the doctrine of the Absolute as put forward therein and by Sankara. Sainath himself said to Advaitins, 'Search the Sastras and see whether the Atman is one or many', (B.C. and S. III and 125). But at that time during Kasinath's Shirdi stay, this truth made no impression upon Kasinath. These are some of the elements that go to make up Kasinath's new personality which was being evolved out of his personality by Sai's invisible process. Sai gave also some oral and express instructions which were useful to his pupil and were also useful to others. So we may proceed to set them out with more confidence than when we deal with invisible operations.

Sri Sai declared himself to be the one Iswara, the Antaryami of all and, therefore, he wanted his best pupils to realise him as their Ishta Devata or God First and next find him and feel him in every creature that they met. The Bhagavad Gita says in Chapter VII that Brahman has two forms; the entire Universe or *Apara prakriti* is one, and that which is beyond the Universe, *Para*, is the other. The manifest and the unmanifest are the two forms of Brahman. Unless a person feels that his God is in every manifestation in the Universe, he has not understood God fully. (*Samagram* - BG.(VII)!; see SB. III SK.(29) 16,27,34) So, God being divine and the invisible power that now appears visible as everything in the Universe, one has, in order to arrive at a perfect understanding of his Iswara to realise one's Iswara in everything. This is not easy at all. Sai Baba declared that his own Guru helped him over the stile in this matter. Baba said, 'My Morshad (Guru) has taken me away from this (pointing to his body); that is, his Guru helped him to see and feel that the body was not he,

¹⁷but that he was the one force which was responsible for manifesting itself as everything in the Universe. If you are not your body, and I am not my body, it is easy to infer that you and I are the same, the difference being caused only by our bodies and not by our real nature.

To Kasinath as to most of us this was a very, very, tough lesson that all souls are one and the same, that Iswara or the Guru God was, and is, in all and was and is All. Yet Baba determined to teach, him this lesson. So, even in the first year of his probation, Baba taught him some portion of this truth. Kasinath was cooking his food at Khandoba temple, and naturally wanted to take the food to his Guru Sai Baba, and to get back the same or rather part of it as prasad from him to eat. But while he was cooking his food, a black dog was watching, and even when he took the food towards Sai's Masjid, it followed him part of the way and suddenly disappeared. When first the dog was present and anxiously looking for the food, Upasani with his orthodox ideas thought it would be absurd to give that low creature, a dog, any food before offering it to God and before men ate (for that was against orthodox ideas). So he did not give any food to that dog. But when he went in the hot sun at noon, with his food to Sai Baba, Baba asked him, 'What have you come for?' Kasinath said. 'To bring you my naivedya', 'Why did you come all the way here in the sun? I was there' Baba said. Kasinath said that there was none but a black dog there. Baba said 'I was that black dog. So, as you refused to give me food there, I am not going to take this food'. So, Upasani returned that day bitterly repenting his orthodox frame of mind refusing to give food first to the dog. Next day, he was determined to avoid that mistake. So, when he was cooking his food, he looked out for the black dog but found no dog. Then, when he was proceeding with his cooking, he noticed that a sickly Sudra was leaning against a wall and watching the cooking. To the orthodox mind of

¹⁷ Sri Sai helped his Sishya Kasinath in many ways to see that he (Kasinath) was not his body. He showed him the previous Janmas, the various bodies his self had inhabited. So he was none of those bodies, and neither the Papa Purusha nor his Punya Purusha. but distinct from them all.

the Brahmin Kasinath, it was *drishii dosha* and improper for a Sudra to look on when a Brahmin was cooking. So he said, 'Get away', and accordingly, the Sudra left. When that day Kasinath came near Baba with his food, Baba was very angry. He said, 'Yesterday, you did not give me food, and today you told me to go away.' 'Where were you, Baba?' asked Kasinath. Baba said, 'I was leaning against that wall'. 'Could it be you, that sickly Sudra?' Kasinath asked. 'Yes, I am in everything and beyond', said Sai Baba in words reminiscent of Purusha Sukta mantra of the Rig Veda, "*Sa Bhumim Visvato Avritva Atyatishtat Dascangulam.*" "This means. That Purusha (or God) having pervaded all the world, exceeded it, and went ten inches beyond it." That is, Iswara is both immanent and transcendent. This truth came out of Sai Baba's mouth to Upasani. Just as he told other bhaktas that he was in the pig or dog that they fed or failed to feed, similarly he told Upasani that he was in the man or dog that he neglected to feed. The advice given by him was '*See me in all creatures*'. 'Me' means Baba. whom one is bound to worship on account of His great powers, good heart, and venerable position — Vide Upasani's words "*Aneka ascruta utarkya lila vilasaih samavishkrita iscana bhasvat prabhavam*" i.e. Sainatha who reveals his God hood by many, unheard of, and unimaginable miracles, etc. How can you conceive of Baba being in a dog or a sickly Sudra? They have not Baba's powers or nature. This was the great problem for Kasinath as for many others also. But yet, Baba's grace impressed the lesson on him. Though it looks so absurd at the beginning to believe that everything is really God, still by impressing it upon yourself with humility and faith, you can begin to feel that every object is your Sai Baba and that you must treat it with as much reverence, affection and sympathy as you can. For the Bhagavata. *Manasa Etani Bhutani Pranamet Eahumaanayan iswaro jivakalaya - SB III (29) 34; Pravishto Bhagavan hi. SB III (29) 27 says 'Athamaam sarva bhuteshu bhutatmanam kritalayam arhayet danamanabhyam maitriya abhmnena chakshusha, i.e.* Kapila (God's Avatar) tells Devahuti that He (as God) should be felt to be in all creatures and they are given respect, gifts and love on the basis of non-difference. Next he says, "Make mental obeisance to every creature, with

this idea in your mind i.e., Iswara (the Universal Force or Bhagavan) with a fraction of his powers has entered each creature". That is, the Universal is found in each particular. The root cause or origin is in each being. In another part of Bhagavata, Siva mentions how he bows to persons.

Pratyudgama prascrayana abhivadanam

Vidheeyate saadhumithah sumadhyame

Praajnah parasmai purushaya chetasa

Guhaascayaaya eva na deha manine 22

Satvam viscuddham vasudeva scabditam

Yadeeyate tatra epuman apaavritah

Satve cha tasmin bhagawan vaasudevo

Hyadhokshajo me manasa vidhiyate 23

Srimad Bhagavata-IV (3)-22-23

This means "O Parvati, when wise ones go out to greet, bow and prostrate to each other, in their hearts, they do these to the Supreme, the great one, the *Para Purusha* dwelling in the heart and not to the man who thinks himself to be his body. In the pure *Satva Guna* called Vasudeva, there is the Soul or Purusha. i.e. personal God. In that Satwa, my mind pictures Bhagawan Vasudeva or God". Siva in effect advises us thus; 'Mentally fancy that God is inside each being and make your mental pranams to that being or person'.

So various devotees of Sai Baba like Kasinath have been directed by him to adopt this process of mentally conceiving Sainath as being inside each creature they meet. For instance, a young man went out at night and under a tree saw an evil spirit, or ghost, and hastily returned. Baba the next day asked him what he saw. The young man answered, 'I saw an evil spirit'. Baba said, 'No, It was I'. The person answered again that he saw an evil spirit. Then Baba said. 'Go to your mother and ask her'. The man went to his mother, and she told him that Baba (being God) is in every creature, evil spirit or good spirit, and, therefore, 'Baba wants you to remember that He is in everything and that you need not fear anything.' Similarly, when Baba passed away from his body in 1918, Lakshmi was praying, 'Baba, should you not show yourself to me?' and

came out in the dark from the Mosque. On her way, there was a snake. At once she said, 'Baba, if you come to me in this form of a snake, what am I to do?' In spite of the terrible form of the snake, she was able to picture Baba within the snake and prayed to it. This is the practice commended by Baba even to those who are at the lowest rung of the ladder. Those who are capable of achieving the highest aim find "that Baba's advice or lesson is far more patent and easily achieved by yogic means. If you dip yourself by laya in God constantly, then you feel that you are part and parcel of God— BG XI (9) 22-23. Similarly everything is part and parcel of God¹⁸. The dog, the snake, and everything is a manifestation of that sacred force which you call your God, and, if so realised, it will really react on you like God. Stand still before a snake. Worship it as God, and it will not bite you. Stand before an evil spirit, and say: 'Thou an Brahman'. The evil spirit will not harm you. The very moment you are thinking that everything is God, your spirit is part of God, you cease to be your body and no harm can befall you. This is the most valuable teaching and training that Baba gave under this heading of Cosmic feeling of Godhood.

The second great reason for giving prominence to Upasani Baba in a life of Sai Baba is the indirect service that he has rendered to the SAI cause and movement. Though the service is indirect, the number of persons reached and the amount of benefit conferred in respect of the whole movement by it make it as good as the first service. The indirect service of Upasani Baba is his being the cause or the occasion of this present author being drawn to Sai Baba just at the time when there was the danger of his frittering away his energies in all sorts of pilgrimages, studies, and lectures and never reaching personal contact with God in the form of the Gurudeva SAI. A fuller account of the same may be given later on in a different chapter. But at present it is enough to mention that B.V.N. Swami was one of the foremost in the ranks of lawyers and political agitators, legislative councillors and Home Rule workers, when suddenly it pleased Providence to draw him away from all these by what appeared to be a terrible

¹⁸ Cf. Sarvam Khaluidam Brahma ChU (3)14 (cf.SB XI (17), 32, 35 Sarvabhuteshu maam param; Madbhavah sarvabhuteshu.

domestic calamity. In 1921, he had a sad bereavement by the loss of two of his children at one stroke through their accidental drowning. The blow was very severe but the giver of the blow, who is no other than Iswara and, therefore, no other than Sai Baba, intended everything to have a special beneficial effect both to the person on whom the blow appeared to be inflicted and to the public. Swami who was then a grihasta, and a political agitator, was drawn away from all this by the blow and he was, when in full possession of the powers of body and mind, made to use them for the largest spiritual purposes. Agitation for Home Rule for India and asserting the rights of the people in the Legislative Council and outside was no doubt service to the public. But the scope for effective work in all those directions was very limited, and there were other workers coming into the field with much greater energy and much better chance of turning out results. Therefore just at that time this author by his resolve not to take any further part in worldly affairs including political affairs was rightly drawn on to the religious and spiritual field. Even before the bodies of the children were taken out from water it had dawned upon him that this dreadful thunderstroke had a meaning and that Providence was directing him thereby not to use up his energies and attention in Law or politics and social or domestic affairs but to consecrate himself for the service of mankind by the search for God and the ascertainment and adoption of steps for realisation of God and the self. These were at first very indistinctly perceived, especially the goal, but there was no mistaking the fact that they were in a direction totally different from the direction till then pursued by the author. Hence, after a resolution to make a tyaga or absolute renunciation of everything he was till then connected with, and to lead a secluded or consecrated life, he took the immediate step of cutting short all his previous connections. In 1925, he returned his Vakil Sanad to the High Court, having long ago resigned his connection with the Legislative Council and politics and released his interests in property, and resolved not to attend to any political affairs or other controversial affairs, but to develop his bhakti. And after completing his efforts for rebuilding and equipping the Lakshminarayana temple at Salem, he left home and grihasthrama and proceeded to seek the direction of his family Acharya and

other Gurus or elders. Being advised to resort to the Sage of Arunachala, he spent three years there and led a life of cloistral seclusion concentrating all his efforts on the study of Vedanta works and adoption of the necessary consequential steps. He there wrote the life of Ramana Maharishi and at the close of three years discovered that he had lost the bhakti in which he had made good progress before leaving Salem and approaching Ramanashram. Hence in 1930-31, he resumed his efforts at readoption of the Bhakti marga and in quest thereof was going to visit various temples, shrines and holy places such as Pandharpur, Nasik, etc. While staying at Nasik, he contacted Meher Baba, the pupil of Upasani Baba and being advised by the former's followers, proceeded to contact Sri Upasani Baba. Sri Upasani Baba made him stick to the bhakti marga (without filtering away his powers in metaphysical speculation) and develop his knowledge and tendencies through well recognised methods such as japa, bhajan, parayana or Pothi, etc., and the leading of the *Akinchana's* life (i.e., life of holy poverty or asceticism). When trying to progress on these lines with the help of Upasani Baba, he was startled to discover that there were elements in that Baba's teaching and methods which jarred very much against his previous opinions and expectations as to the correct religious life and so he left Sri Upasani about the beginning of 1933 with the idea of never returning to him. He then went back to Madras and was planning to visit holy places including Dwaraka. While he was in this frame of mind, Sri Upasani was saying at Sakori, 'Where will this Madras Swami go? I shall draw him back again here'. He said this to the Ashramites there long before Swami approached or thought of approaching that Ashram again. In fact Swami never wanted to approach that Ashram as he was under the impression that it would never suit him and that he had better be elsewhere. But this powerful *akarshana* of Upasani Baba was quite as powerful as that of Sri Sai Baba when directed against Upasani himself in June or July 1911 as described already. In the case of this author, an exactly similar thing had taken place. When Sri Upasani was saying to his dependants that this author would go back, the latter had no idea that Sri Upasani had said so, and in any case had no idea of going back to him. On the other hand he

wished to visit holy places and began with Siddharudha's Mutt in Hubli, Pandharpur, etc. Strangely enough his commiseration for a poor devotee in trouble at Hubli made him promise to help that devotee to get some place for a fixed habitation and adoption of a purely religious life of service. Step after step along with that devotee this author went on from Hubli to Pandharpur, thence to Khedgaonbet (i.e. Narayanbet), then again from Narayanbet to Sakori. The only safe place for that devotee seemed to be Sakori and being informed that Sri Upasani Maharaj was not at Sakori, the author agreed to take that devotee to Sakori, intending to proceed immediately thereafter to Dwaraka, without meeting Upasani Baba.

With that mentality, having gone to Sakori, the author was greatly surprised to note that Sri Upasani was there. In any case, having abundance of regard for the merits of Upasani Baba in spite of the defect that seemed to hamper those merits, the author bowed to Sri Upasani Baba and wished to leave Sakori. Just at that time, the devotee mentioned above came running back and said that Upasani Baba would not allow that devotee to remain there. So the author was obliged to meet Upasani Baba and in the course of the conversation, he resolved to give up his tour programme and adopt the advice of Upasani Baba that stay at one place, for instance, Sakori, and the adoption of strenuous religious practice, was the thing absolutely necessary in his own case, for, as the saying goes, 'Rolling stones gather no moss.' As the author stayed at Sakori, that devotee also was allowed to stay at Sakori, and after the author arrived at that determination, the dependents of Upasani Baba mentioned that long ago Sri Upasani Baba had declared that the 'Madras Swami' would be drawn back to Sakori. The author's surprise was as great as Upasani's surprise at being drawn back to Shirdi in 1911.

Thereafter for a number of years, the author stayed at Sakori and went on studying both Upasani Baba and Sri Sai Baba, the latter being the Guru of Upasani and the latter's place being only three miles distant, an easy walk from Sakori. The author slowly gathered information and went on with his research about Sai Baba and noted that it was Sai Baba after all that was drawing him

through Upasani Baba and that, in one form or another, he had been drawing him for decades, all unknown to him (the author). Thereafter the completion of the work of research about Sai Baba and the fuller development of strong one-pointed bhakti towards Sai resulted in a perfect surrender to him to complete the above process. Till that time, this author never knew what it was to surrender and what it was to banish his ego. He had been touring and touring and seeing hundreds of saints and never staying with any except a very few. But none of the saints he saw could put down his ego and make him surrender. It was the unseen Sai Baba acting at first through the seen Upasani Baba that enabled him to approach him with an effort to surrender, and the surrender also was an increasingly manifested principle as years went on in the life of this author. The fullest surrender comes only when everything including the ground underneath one's feet is cut away. That occurred to the author in 1953 and once again what looked like a calamity as great as, if not greater than the calamity of 1921, proved to be the turning point of his spiritual life. It demonstrated and impressed indelibly on the author the truth of Sai's saying that he gives everything to him who surrenders everything to Him. That is, He looks to the devotee who looks solely to Him, of course, with '*ananya chinta*', with perfect and complete confidence and reliance.

Therefore this second mishap or thunderclap of 1953 was essential to develop the personality of the author and to make him produce this present work extending over a thousand pages in fulfillment of a resolve or vow that he had long ago made (to present a full and up to-date scientific or modern sketch of Sai Baba to the world) but which for some reason or other he could never accomplish. It was Upasani that drew him out of his distracting currents and fixed him on to Sai Baba. Without that, so many years or decades of work in Sai literature and Sai devotion and so many efforts to spread Sai faith throughout the length and breadth of this country by 600 or 700 lectures all over India in incessant tours and publication of innumerable pamphlets, books and journals could not be accomplished. Even now the movement which had overflowed the limits of Maharashtra is markedly the result of Sri Upasani's attracting this author.

And if toady Sai movement has far overflowed its original banks and promises to reach the farthest corners of the country if not of humanity through the latest works like the present work, Sri Upasani must be given much of the credit for this result. That is why the second aspect of Upasani's influence has been stressed here and he is given a prominent place though not in the strict chronological order of the Apostles of Baba that have spread his faith.

So far we have picked out what looks like apparently disconnected bits as constituting Upasani's life or rather its moulding by Sri Sai Baba. An attempt to take a fuller or more complete view of Upasani Baba's life as it was in June 1911 when he came to Baba, and the shape it took during his Shirdi stay and the further shaping after he left Shirdi, would no doubt complete the picture and would prove very interesting reading even from a general humanitarian standpoint or the standpoint of the moralist and the psychologist. But apart from the difficulty of securing the material therefor, there are further difficulties standing in the way of this author. One misfortune that befell this author in his dealings with saint after saint till he reached Sai Baba was that though he was trying to understand saints and write their lives, he was not writing them out from the viewpoint that was and is best for himself and for the public, namely, the viewpoint of a bhakta or of a pupil or of an admirer of a beautiful structure being built.

On the other hand, he was taking an unconcerned stranger's critical view, sometimes perhaps too critical a view, and sometimes perhaps it was too threadbare and tattered bits of criticism. That was his reading and writing of saints till he came to Sai Baba. The misfortune that befell him was that aptly described by one of the saints whose life this author had written. That saint said, 'What! Criticism?' [referring to his (saint's) own life]. That showed how the saint disapproved the idea of the intrusion of the critical spirit in the writing of a saint's biography. The net result also was unsatisfactory to practically every one concerned. One therefore appreciates the modified form of the same advice given by Sai Baba in the writing of his biography. Sai Baba said that there ought not to be the spirit of aggressive egotism, the spirit of controversy, defending a

position and assailing other positions, and that the biography should consist only of a detailed description of facts that help one in one's spiritual development, and the truths dealt with by the saint, the way he lived, the way he put them before his pupils, and the attendant circumstances calculated to enhance the value of the advice or its power. So, that is the spirit in which this author has attempted to write out this biography, and it is difficult to deal with Sri Upasani Baba's history from June 1911 up to the end of his term of life or up-to-date in a manner that would satisfy the devotees of Upasani Baba and other religious students. When unfortunately events happen in the life of a saint that interfere with the main line of development sketched out by a great spirit that took charge of that saint, the life seems to crumble or get distorted, and the author feels very much distressed to have to describe the apparent crumbling or the shattering of hopes. Yet the spirit of truth has to be adhered to. We must all remember the golden advice in the stanza:-

*Satyam bruyat priyam bruyat na bruyat satyam apriyam
Priyamcha na anrutam bruyat esha dharmah sanatanah*

This means 'Speak the truth. Speak the pleasant. Do not utter the truth that is unpleasant nor utter the sweet words that lack truth (like flattery). This is a permanent rule'. Therefore, the truth has to be told wherever possible in the least offensive manner so as to produce the least harm. Keeping this in mind, we shall proceed next to note what were the main teachings or pushes given to Sri Upasani Maharaj by Sai Baba, what the results were, and what explanations can be offered for the variation between the original intention of Baba and the final development.

Sri Upasani Baba when he came to Shirdi in June. 1911 came only as a grihasta but in such a broken-down condition and in such a mood as to warrant his giving up that ashrama and developing into a *virakia sanvasi* or an *avadhuta* working entirely as a man of God for the benefit of humanity That is just what Sai Baba intended to make of him. He came as an *Artha* one suffering from one trouble or another or a number of troubles, and it is such a person that can be made use of for higher religious purposes. Sri Upasani Baba himself acted on

this principle at his own Sakori Mutt, and when people came in extreme distress such as recent loss of a husband, he gave the advice, 'Convert this bitter sorrow into something sweet'. The lady to whom this was uttered by Upasani Baba was shocked, but that is the truth of what Upasani Baba did in many cases and what Sai Baba also did in numerous cases. It is all right to help a man out of worldly trouble and get him into worldly happiness wherever that is possible. But where that is not possible, the next best thing is to give up the idea of worldly betterment or at least complete worldly betterment and recognise the fact that human beings are not born merely for perfect worldly enjoyment and comfort, that life has some higher aim even from the individual standpoint, that from the social standpoint a few suffering souls must be made to suffer for the benefit of humanity, that persons must rise in the spiritual scale through suffering and higher perceptions and make of themselves something superhuman, something divine, and that the ego has to be crucified so that the divine may be raised out of it. The divine force will work such wonders not merely from the standpoint of siddhi but also from the standpoint of moral and spiritual improvement of the world. This has been the ideal on which Baba's Guru trained him and Baba himself tried to train several people, one of whom was Sri Upasani Baba. Others who came to Baba were sought to be improved mainly from their own individual standpoint, though incidentally their individual improvement tended to help others in their improvement. But in the case of Upasani, the improvement was clearly stated to be to make a Samartha Sadguru out of him so that he might benefit mankind. So, let us see how far in this aim efforts were made by Baba, and in what way, and what became of his efforts.

First let us take one item. A Samartha Sadguru is generally one unconnected with family and unfettered by any burdens. Sri Sai is the best example; he had no relations whatever when establishing himself as Samartha Sadguru; no father, no mother, no brother, no sister, no children, no wife, no relation of any sort. A person devoid of relations may be thought to become unfit for human sympathies and love, and relationships are considered to be the best fields for developing human sympathy and human love. Family ties being excellent means for

propagating love, the love of the child and the love of the mother are excellent means for, if not archetypes of man's love to God and God's love to man. If a man can love everybody that he sees with the same love which he extends towards his own dear children, then indeed his condition is grand and the world is happy. Therefore, the aim for saints has been to treat the growth of family love as the basis for the development of further love which should be expanded within limit. One ought to have, no doubt, some experience of love of sister, brother, mother, etc., but the love should not be circumscribed within the narrow limits of a family circle. To a person who has a world-wide mission or at least a wish to have a large scale of spiritual activities, any concentration of affection on close relations is ruinous. That is why a wife is not allowed in most systems to a sanyasi. In some systems no doubt they allow it. But Sai Baba's ideal seems to be that of the majority of the Hindus that a wife is a fetter upon a sanyasi and that relations with women, apart from the general relation which one has to all women in society, are ruinous. This is the idea found in Srimad Bhagavata, Ekadasa Skanda, Ch.(14) 26 and Chapter XVIII, 20 and Ch. (26) 22 and 24 where it is pointed out that a sanyasi should avoid contact with women and should develop himself in seclusion. That is the reason why Sai Baba when welcoming and almost confining Upasani to Shirdi kept him away from his third wife, who was at Satana, 80 miles off, longing to see her husband. Baba did not allow him to go back to Satana, though he was very anxious to go back to his wife and mother or bring his wife to live with him at Shirdi. Baba had prescribed to him the course mentioned in SB XI (14) 29:— "*streenam stree sanginaam sangam tyaktva durata aimavan, Ksheme Vivikta aaseenas chintayen maamatandritah*", i.e. "the self-controlled person should keep away from the company of women and those fond of women, sit in seclusion and ever concentrate on ME (the Lord)." The wife and mother relations are all good, but one must begin to feel that every woman is one's mother or sister. This is the general feeling everywhere amongst saints. The Palestine Samartha Jesus found the existence of relations a stumbling block to his fellow townsmen who said 'Is not this the son of a carpenter and are not his brothers and sisters with us?' and who therefore could not believe, that he had a

heavenly mission. When he was told that his mother, sister, and brother were approaching,

48. he answered and said unto him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, behold my mother and my brethren!

50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.

(St. Mathew, Chapter XII, verses 48-50)

Here evidently Jesus considered even the usual affection for a sister and mother to be a powerful fetter interfering with one's loving relations and duties towards all. Jesus was unmarried and if there was a wife, he would have expressed the same views even in stronger terms about a wife for a person having a mission towards the world, for a wife would interfere with that mission. This is the feeling of Sai Baba and other saints. Srimad Bhaga-vata says a wife and others block the way and stop a man from going into sanyasa. XI (18), 14 says that 'The gods, who are jealous of the progress of the sadhaka who might rise above their position, work through his wife and other relations and stand in the way of the sadhaka's spiritual progress'. Sri Sai definitely told Sri Upasani that there was nothing for him to go back to Satana and that he must remain at Shirdi for four years with him. This was felt to be a bitter sentence of internment or exile by Sri Upasani Maharaj for he felt that he was still a grihasta. His thoughts, ideals, and nature had not changed. His views and his feelings and sentiments at Shirdi were the same as those he had before he came to Shirdi. Baba's intention was to effect a change even in these feelings, Baba knew that the strongest tie to his wife (in this case his third wife) must be cut off and would be cut off even by her Karma. In the beginning of 1912, that lady was to die and when a letter came to Upasani Maharaj that she was seriously unwell, Maharaj took it to Sai Baba and asked for permission to go. Sai Baba refused permission and told him. 'You had better remain; you can do nothing there'. A week later, a letter came announcing the death of that wife. The blow to Upasani was terrible.

He thought that life was useless without his wife. His own idea was that when he accomplished greatness with the help of Sai Baba, he would use his great position for having a happy life along with his wife. That was his confirmed opinion, which he mentioned on receipt of the news of his wife's death. He said, 'Now that the wife is dead, what is the good of remaining here at Shirdi, because the wife, who was to share the glories and joys of sainthood, has gone.' She was a congenial spirit that shared with him his *yogabhyasa* at Omkaralingam.

Such being the notions of Upasani Baba, Sai Baba had much uphill work to change his ideas and see that the natural tendency for the male to consort with the female, seek her company and revel in it, as the main joyous portion of one's life was wiped out in Upasani's case. Sai Baba is the highest power known to us that can effect such a change. From what has already been stated in this chapter, one would see what great success he achieved through visions and in other ways. But there seems to be a certain limit to the success achieved in transforming a sadhaka into a perfect siddha. It may be that some sadhakas are like curly hair which however much one may straighten out would again curl up. Anyhow, in the case of Sri Upasani, Sai Baba tried to keep out woman's contact with him as long as he was at Shirdi. Upasani's third wife died. No other marriage connection was then possible. Then what Baba expected was that after four years of novitiate under him at the Khandoba temple were over, Upasani would develop into a perfect Samartha, a Guru-God, for all persons and that Shama would bring him out from his solitude in Khandoba temple to a public place so that all may worship him as the patent perfection of Divinity. But this consummation was somehow not to be. It was prevented in various ways. The solitude itself was oppressive. The older tendencies though being snuffed out could not be snuffed out completely. A little remaining spark is enough to restart a flame and destroy a forest.

After three years of novitiate, during which there was daily, hourly, or even perpetual contact, seen and unseen, with Baba, Upasani cut himself away at midnight of 25-7-1914 and went away to Scinde, Nagpur, and Khargpur, many hundreds of miles away. Miles do not form by themselves a hindrance to the

operation of a great power like Sai Baba. But the surroundings there are totally different from Shirdi surroundings and act in a totally different and opposite way. The tendency to self-assertion, the development of the ego, and of other unwanted but deep-rooted tendencies would go on apace in all those places and the perpetual contact with Sai Baba would not be available there to check those unfortunate developments. So the result was that what Sai Baba intended was realised only in part and not fully. A tree grew from the seed sown, but it did not shoot up in the way in which such a tree ought to shoot up. On the other hand it had a bend and a bent of its own. Sri Upasani's older tendencies, idiosyncracies and ideas, though modified by what he picked up at Shirdi, were remoulding him and the result was to develop a Upasani Baba working on lines reminiscent of Shirdi but in directions totally different from Sai Baba's.

Let us take the present matter of family connections as one instance. Upasani Baba for a series of years was leading the life of a lonely *avadhuta* away from his family, and he began to exhibit some powers and was regarded as a notable pupil of Sai Baba. His moral tales like some of the tales of Sai Baba carried great influence with them and made people feel that they were in the presence of a moral power. Some siddhis began to shoot out of him, e.g. mind reading, mind control, clairvoyance, psychic healing etc.. and these added to the respect which people had for a saintly looking *avadut* (for he was perfectly naked except for a gunny bag covering him). Then his worship grew apace. So long as he observed Sai Baba's directions and example of keeping away from women and wealth and avoidance of storing either women or wealth by his side, his influence and power for good were notably increasing. By about 1927 or 1928 one might see that these reached great heights though signs were not wanting to show that contrary tendencies were beginning to work and to undermine the foundations laid by Sai Baba. In time these contrary tendencies fully developed and wealth (counted in lakhs and taking the shape of loans, 80 acres of land, massive buildings, and hundreds of cattle) was stored up and women were stored up. It does not matter in whose name the wealth was stored up. There was the feeling in Upasani Maharaj and in those surrounding him that he was the owner of this wealth,

which is exactly the view of the Government which levied income tax, etc. on him. The noticeable point is that so long as he was scattering away wealth as Sai Baba did as soon as it came, that is, till about 1925 or 1926, his popularity was unbounded. He had no enemies.

Yasman na udvijate lokah lokat na udvijate cha yah

Harsha amarsha bhaya udvegaih mukto yah sa cha me priyah.

(B.C. Ch. XII, 15).

This means, 'He who is not repulsive to the world and who does not feel it repulsive, a person free from the ebullition of joy, anger, etc, is dear to me', says Sri Krishna. Till that period, like Sai Baba (who had no friends nor foes), Upasani Maharaj also had no friends nor foes, or rather every one was his friend. But as soon as he stopped distributing all the things that came to him and began hoarding or piling them up and investing them, began trouble then i.e. animosities, jealousies, etc.¹⁹ Thereupon began a sense of ownership of properties evidenced by numerous benami transactions and execution of testamentary or other documents and a declaration that in the temple he had built no Harijan should enter. Then the idea also of keeping a band of women next to him as his close associates began to develop. During the novitiate at Shirdi, Sai Baba tried to take away the one wife he had. But Upasani had later on twentyfive wives, a regular harem with a castle and an *Antahpuram* in it. The results are most noticeable. Sai Baba after leaving his fleshy body is not dead but is still taking active interest in the welfare of thousands and is the friend and father of all. Sri Upasani passed away in 1941, and thereafter the general public are not feeling that he is still existing and serviceable to them. Even before he passed away, the antagonism between him and various classes and the way in which he had to figure in courts as witness or as accused or party shattered all chances of his leading a pure Sai Baba sort of life. He went on accumulating the

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- ¹⁹ SBXI(8) 11 and 12. *Na sangrinhita Bhikshukuh Makshikali iva saiigrmluin Saiia tenu Viriascyati*, i.e. The ascetic should not hoard. If like the honey bee he hoards, the hoard and self will perish.

number of his wives, now by one process and now by another, first by marrying people to Krishna images and, when that was stopped by a special Act of the Bombay Legislative Council, next by marrying heaps of women to himself, an act which is now prevented by the Hindu Code or the Anti-Polygamy Act. Thus Sri Upasani's acts even during his life tended to decrease his popularity and strengthen the Divekar agitation. About 1926, Upasani's following or admirers could be counted in tens of thousands. Divekar began his agitation in 1934 and carried on his agitation through Kirloskar magazine and Court proceedings till 1936. Before it was even half way up, the entire tens of thousands evaporated. It was difficult to find even a thousand people enthusiastic over Upasani Baba. People felt ashamed to say that they had anything to do with Upasani Baba. All that became possible only because the great aims and standards set up by Sai Baba of having nothing to do with wealth or women had been abandoned.

In the earlier years of the third decade of this century (20th), praises of Sri Upasani Baba were sung alike by those of the Sai Sansthan at Shirdi and by others. In the classic Sai Satcharitra of Dabolkar (Hemad Pant) in ch 44, 122, "*Bhakta Sereshta*" Upasani (i.e. the eminent devotee) is mentioned as performing at Kasi the annual *sraddha* ceremony for Sai Baba; further reference is made to his doing *pratishta* of Baba's Paduka in 1912 at the foot of the Gode Neem tree. Sri Nilakantha in Sai Lila Mask II (1) said in 1924 that Sainath was great because he made a saint of Upasani. People then believed that Sri Upasani was a saint of the type of Sri Ramadas and Sri Sai Baba; and there were powers (siddhas) shooting out of him off and on which justified the hope that in due course he would be in full possession of the innumerable and practically endless armoury of siddhis which were always at the disposal of Sri Sai Baba and which, according to Bhagavata, skanda XI, Chapter XV, any one intensely concentrating upon Iswara can and often does get. The question of possession of powers by saints has to be dealt with in a special chapter by itself, but it may be mentioned here that Sri Upasani Baba himself in his Mahimna Stotra, which is daily recited in the worship of Sai Baba, refers to Sai Baba's

divine personality being revealed by the marvellous lilas (i.e. siddhis, etc.) which he performed.

Aneka ascntta alarkia lila vilasaih

Samavishkrita Iscana bhasvat prabhavam.

This means, 'Sai Baba whose brilliant divine nature glowed through the innumerable, unheard of, unfathomable miraculous deeds'. This was evidently referring to Sai's lilas of which hundreds or even thousands can be traced now in Sai literature alike as happening during his life time and after he left his body. Here the inference of divinity from the possession of superhuman powers is most natural and even based upon scriptural texts. The Chandogya Upanishad mentions the eight special siddhis which appertain to Godhead and this is stressed in Bhagavata, Skanda XI, Chapter XV. The latter adds that a complete possession of these 8 siddhis belongs only to God, that sants and sadhus have only imperfect or incomplete mastery over them, and that the accomplishment of the remaining siddhis (about 18 in number) may be achieved by ordinary persons who have not reached divinity of nature. In the case of Sri Upasani, stray instances were forthcoming of his ability to read the hearts of others and to control disease or foretell mishap or good fortune etc. in several circumstances. These lent some support to the belief that in due course he would arrive at the full perfection that people noticed in Sri Sai Baba.

Sri Sai himself once declared to a questioner who asked him, 'Baba, are your powers to die with you or will there be any successor?' (According to Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe who made this statement to this author), 'Arre, will there not be some man coming in tatters?' This was long before 1911. In June 1911 Kasinath Upasani Maharaj came in tatters and Sri Sai Baba fixed him up for four years, novitiate under him to be spent in solitude at Khandoba temple, after which period Baba stated that Sri Upasani would be in full possession of God's powers and that Shama would drag him out of his solitude and place him as an object of worship, as God should be worshipped (by all). Baba even mentioned that he was making a gold plate grant of all his powers to this Upasani Maharaj. Many people, therefore, were hoping and believing that Sri Upasani Maharaj

would become a full-blown Samartha Sadguru and take the place of Sai Baba to serve devotees, old and new. But this was impliedly (or even expressly) conditioned by Upasani's stay for four years under the direct control and in perpetual contact with Sai Baba at Shirdi. As fate would have it, or as perhaps Sri Upasani would have it, this condition was not fulfilled. After three years of novitiate, Sri Upasani having cut himself away, the prospect of his attaining full Samarthaship under Baba and continuing his mission, especially from his stay at Shirdi, was shattered. One may ask whether Baba could not mould him when Upasani went to Scinde, Nagpur, Kharagpur or Sakori. No doubt that may be a possibility. But we are not here to discuss possibilities. We have to discuss what actually happened and whether the novitiate continued even after Upasani's cutting himself away from direct and perpetual contact with Sai.

As for difficulties of continuing the novitiate, one thing is patent. At Shirdi there was perpetual control and perpetual concentration on Sai preventing one's running away on one's own lines and developing egotism and other allied harmful tendencies. At Scinde, Nagpur, and Khargpur, the scope for developing one's own tendencies and running into one's own and even harmful lines was very great. In fact it was a lapse back again into old lines of thought and one may notice after going through all this vast mass of report of what Sri Upasani said and did at all these places and at Sakori that Sri Upasani had revolted against not merely the control of Sai but also against the line of thought and action pursued by Sai which line and action were no doubt invisible and rather ill-perceived by Sri Upasani. Nature tends to recur to old familiar lines and Sri Upasani was recovering his old lines of thought developed from his grandfather's house at Satana, i.e. the lines of thought of a village purohit considering that the main item in religion is the pursuit of observances, rituals, vows, mantras, yantras, etc. It is these that we find to be predominating in the Upasani literature that is now at our disposal. No doubt Sri Sai's influence also is seen to be intermixed with these writings, sayings, and views.

Upasani Baba has been holding the torch as high as he could to draw people away from mere worldliness of a low type, and turn them to God at least for

success of temporal ends and to aim as high as their circumstances would permit. But the main stress over and over again in Sri Upasani's lectures and writings is on the accomplishment of the various Purusharthas or goals of life (and notably on *saumangalya* and *success* or *wealth* etc.) through the methods recommended in numerous sastric works such as japa, tapas, dhyana, dana, vrata etc., on purely conventional lines. No doubt Sri Upasani's original genius is brought out here and there by his departure in method and technique from the old standards. Yet, on the whole, Sri Upasani at Sakori was practically continuing the work of his grandfather Gopala Sastri, an eminent purohit, highly learned in the various sastras and able to administer to the needs of his clients most of whom wanted only success, *saumangalya*, Lakshmi prasada etc. No doubt in the case of Sri Upasani there were additional powers based upon the inner working by Sri Sai Baba and upon his practice of solitary dhyana. etc., and upon the prestige he acquired as Sai's disciple, worshipped by the pujari of Sai Baba, namely, Bapu Saheb Jog, for a number of years, a fact which would impress most people with the idea that Sai was being continued (as Jog thought) in the personality of Sri Upasani. But any one who looked beneath the surface could easily discover that the main line of thought, action, and being of Sri Sai was clearly different from that of Sri Upasani. Sri Upasani was flying off from Sri Sai at a tangent in the matter of his thoughts and deeds. As stated already two glaring instances would show the marked difference between the two. Whereas Sai never tolerated the piling up of any wealth which could be thought to be his, Sri Upasani (after some years) did exactly the opposite. Whereas Sai Baba had no relations and no women to contact him, Sri Upasani worked exactly in the opposite direction. He was storing up groups of women to live with him; at first a batch of 5 and ultimately a batch of 25 were tacked on to him by ties of marriage. No doubt these marriages were explained by Upasani Baba as emblematic and holy and not as a case of Mormonism or of uxorious cravings of a wealthy householder or ruler. Anyhow these betray serious and glaring differences of views and policies.

Sri Sai Baba prescribed Ekadasa Skanda of Srimad Bhagavata for the study and practice of his devotees, and in that we find in Chapter XXVI, verses 22 and 24—

Athaapi na upasajjeta Streeshu straineshu cha anhavit (22)

Tasmat sango nakartavyah Streeshu straineshu cha indriaih

Vidushaam cha Api Aviscrabdha Shadvargah kimu

madruscaam (24)

This means, 'A man of discrimination should neither associate with women nor with those attached to them, and no association through the senses should be made with women or with those attached to them. The passions are not to be trusted (or tempted) even by the learned or wise'. Baba's dealing with Kaka Dixit during his vanaprastha probation was marked by his keeping him away from contact with women, and Baba's own example was the very best demonstration of the correctness of the principle. There was no woman associated with Baba and he tried to make those who were to occupy a position like his, if not his own position, adopt the above principles. That is why he prevented Sri Upasani from going back to Satana or even have his Satana wife brought to him at Shirdi, as prayed for by Sri Upasani. Upasani's ideas however were exactly opposite to and poles apart from Sal's. Even in 1937, when he made his speeches to admiring people, he mentioned that it was a great good for ardent devotees to donate their girls and women to sants; of course, he, Upasani himself undoubtedly was considered a sant. He has mentioned this times without number later on and his speeches and writings abound with such sentiments. Acting upon these declarations of Upasani, some devotees presented their wives to him and some (rather a large number) gave away their daughters to him in marriage so that they might live with him, and that is how he got such a large number as 25 wives or satis by the end of his career. In an earlier speech, he mentioned that hundreds of women would be offered to him. The rationale of the gift was expounded by him very ingeniously. He expounded a new and revolutionary doctrine that men could achieve their salvation through women (the very opposite of the Bhagavata specially SK III (31) 35 and SK XI (26)22 and 24, and other

orthodox scriptures). It was Sri Upasani's theory that women by nature were "*prarabdha rahita*" i.e., free from Karma or sin, whereas men by nature were full of Karma; and women, by avoiding active mingling with society and refusing to undertake responsibilities, would remain totally free from Karma and by their purity, they would raise their husbands and parents to Heaven.

This achievement of salvation by marrying kanyas was a favourite doctrine with Upasani and the Kanyasthan with its 25 kanyas wedded to him as satis (sati being the foamy adulterator of a saint) became the standing illustration of his doctrine. The question how these kanyas could achieve the salvation of any one by wedlock, is not easy to comprehend. In the case of Upasani himself, he did not require any wives to lift him to Heaven or Salvation, as he declared that he was God, and in the case of others it is not these kanyas whom they could not wed that could raise them to Heaven. The solution offered by Sri Upasani seems to be this. These kanyas by doing yajnas, yagas, and anushtanas, would accumulate such a heap of merit and constitute such brilliant examples as to induce other women to become like them, and being free from karma and marrying men, they would make the husbands also fit for Heaven by their own freedom from karma. These notions are very hard to comprehend and we are not aware of even a single case in which this ideal has been accomplished, though it is about 20 years since they were promulgated by Upasani Baba and acted upon by him.

However we are not here to criticise Sri Upasani or his theory or his actions. The above is mentioned with all due reverence to Sri Upasani merely to indicate that he went off at a tangent from the lines or ideals adopted by Sai and that his activities *pre-mortem* and *post-mortem* were not such as to justify the hopes once entertained by Sai Baba and others that he would continue Sai's mission and work on Sai's lines. This is not however to condemn Sri Upasani's life or activities or thoughts. He has led a noble life devoted to the cause of religion drawing many thousands of people away from materialism to the path of bhakti and many thousands have been benefited by him and led a religious life.

Again, in the matter of development of high powers of endurance and self control, Sri Upasani Maharaj advanced very far. as one more instance of which the following may be cited. In 1914 when he went to Scinde he suffered severely from piles and that necessitated an operation. The Civil surgeon who came to pull out cauterise and stitch the piles would do the same only after administering chloroform to the patient. But Sri Upasani declared that chloroform was unnecessary, and without it he underwent the painful operation calmly and without twitching and disturbing the surgeon, who was consequently so much impressed by Upasani's endurance as to prostrate himself to the Maharaj after the operation was over.

So there is much to admire in the conduct and work of Upasani and even in his utterances and writings whatever may be his own idiosyncracies of thought and action. However, we shall conclude this chapter by noting once again the fact that Sri Upasani did not develop completely on the lines expected from him during his Shirdi stay and his tutelage under Baba. He devolved on his own lines and built up his own ashram and left traditions and an institution with properties to work on certain lines chalked out by him in his will or other document executed at the closing period of his life. But whatever may be the merits of these need not (we repeat) be discussed here and no further mention of Upasani is called for here.

The author has given a pretty full sketch of his own ideas and appreciation of Sri Upasani in a separate book called, 'The Sage of Sakori' which he wrote and published in 1936. More mention of Sri Upasani would be necessary in a later chapter dealing with succession to Sai Baba. At present, it is sufficient to say that Sai's lines of thought and action and Sai's brilliant continuance of his personality up-to-date promising to continue it for ever, based upon his brilliant divine personality are not to be found in Sri Upasani so far as this author is aware of. Fourteen years have passed since Upasani Baba left the body, and this author is not able to discover whether the grand output of splendid divine work of Sai Baba has any counterpart in the posthumous life of Sri Upasani. In fact it is not known whether he is working from his *sukshma* body after he left his physical body in

1941. As the main idea of this chapter is to show who were the apostles who carried on Baba's name and fame and helped in his mission, we have to set out Sri Upasani Baba as one of the bright apostles who by his first instalment of service and his second instalment has rendered great and yeoman service and, therefore, is deserving of the fullest gratitude of all the world, especially of Sai bhaktas.

It is a very important duty to discharge in closing this chapter to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that the defects noted above in this great personage should not be allowed to outweigh the great service rendered by Sri Upasani to the Sai movement and to humanity. The defects appear to loom large on account of the very greatness of his personality whereas in a smaller personage, these would hardly be noticed.

Gomutra matrena payo vinashtam

Takrasya gomutra scatena kimva

Alpaischa doshah mahatam vinashtih

Papiyasam papa scatena kimva

This means, "Pure milk is destroyed by even a tiny drop of cow's urine, (and it is milk no longer). In the case of buttermilk any quantity of such urine will not alter its nature; it will be buttermilk still. In the case of great ones, even small specks of faults destroy their greatness. In the case of sinners, hundreds of sins do not matter." Sri Upasani Baba's grand work of keeping the public drawn to high moral and spiritual levels for about two decades cannot be undone by his failure to reach the acme of perfection sketched for him during his Shirdi novitiate. His achievements were remarkable, indeed so remarkable that persons like Mahatma Gandhi had a right to hope for even great national benefits from him. Unfortunate circumstances, however, prevented the fullest use being made of his faculties. Yet the reader and ourselves should never forget the greatness achieved. His services rendered to the Sai movement and to the public should not be ignored or slighted by reason of any defects. Humanity is frail and frailty attaches even to persons who reach great heights like Upasani Baba. That is the one lesson we may draw from the defects noticed above. To go beyond that and

either lose respect for him or to treat him and his institutions with disregard, contempt, or hatred would be totally unwarranted and harmful to the persons harbouring such feelings. Sai's own teaching warns us against such a mistake. (BCS 296). Following Kabir's

'Sab ghata men Rama jage

Kyoum Kiska dil dukhalana'

which means 'Ram or God is in all bodies. Why cause pain to any one?' Sri Sai told H. S. Dixit, *'Kaka turn Konala Vayit mhatles kim, mala dukhne, etc., i.e., 'Dixit, if you talk ill of any one, I feel pain.'* The same lesson is conveyed by the well known Niti Sloka ;

Gunadoshou hudho grinhan indu kshvela iva Iswara

Scirasa sctaghate purvam param kanthe niyacchati

which means "Just as Maheswara (Lord Siva) receiving the Moon and Poison, displays to all the former on his head and conceals the latter within his throat, the wise dealing with others' good and evil qualities praise and proclaim the former and ignore the latter (by relegating them to the background)". Our wise readers will surely follow this advice.

CHAPTER VII

G.S. Khaparde

In the life of Sai Baba, the description of the starter of Sai worship and an account of other leading apostles and propagandists should be followed by a brief reference to later workers in the same field. Yet Sri Upasani's work carries us far into the third decade of this century (20th). Thereafter it devolved on less prominent workers, who yet had each notable achievements for Sai's mission to his credit, B. V. Dev and others should now engage our attention. Yet as G. S. Khaparde has been included in the list of workers and as he was regarded by Upasani in the light of a Guru, still more because his (G.S.K's) high social and political standing in the country attracted public notice to Sai Baba, who had power to release him from the jaws of Government prosecution in 1911-2 and because his daily diary (kept at that time at Shirdi and published later to the

public through S. L. Masik) forms an important source book for Sai history, he is given a prominent place here next after Upasani.

The late Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur Ganesh Sri Krishna Khaparde, Advocate of Amraoti, was a notable figure in Indian politics and law courts of Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh) and in the Legislative Council. He was a redoubtable lieutenant of the extremist leader Bala Gangadhara Tilak in the Indian National Congress. The British Government was greatly afraid of the extremist section which drove home the lesson taught by Dadha Bhai Naoroji in 1904 National Congress, 'Swaraj is India's Birthright and must be granted'. The extremists wanted complete independence of India and adoption of every conceivable method by the people to get rid of the foreign yoke and roused the masses. But the moderates, formed a powerful party in the Congress headed by Sir Pherosha Mehta of Bombay, one of whose lieutenants was H. S. Dixit. who was a very successful lawyer practising at Bombay, a Member of the Bombay Corporation, and a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council. An accident to his leg in England drew H.S. Dixit to Sai Baba in 1909. The repressive activity of the Government trying to imprison and harass extremist leaders drove **G.S.** Khaparde, an extremist leader, to Baba's feet. Both G.S.K. and H.S.D. were thinking of their worldly need of Baba's help and fancied that they were coming of their own accord to Baba. But Baba revealed the truth when he said that in a former birth Baba, G.S.Khaparde, H.S. Dixit, Bapu Saheb Jog (the priest), Shama (Madhav Rao Deshpande), and Dada Kelkar were all together living with their Guru in a blind alley, and Baba added, 'I have therefore, brought all of you together'. (B. C. & S, 502). Baba also mentioned (B. C. & S, 56), when a devotee objected to people coming to him for temporal benefit, 'Do not object. My men first come to me on account of that only. They get their hearts' desires fulfilled, and after being comfortably placed in life, they follow me and progress further. I bring my men to me from long distances under many pleas. I seek them and bring them to me. They do not come of their own accord. I bring them to me. However distant, even thousands of miles away my people might be, I draw them to myself, just as we pull birds to us with a string tied to their feet'.

Already before the end of 1908, there were signs of the minds of the Members of Government in Bombay, Central Provinces, Delhi, and other places getting ruffled and arrangements were being made to prosecute the heads of the extremists including Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak. Tilak was prosecuted at Bombay. The Government being so powerful in the country, charges of sedition under 124-A I.P.C, a conveniently plastic and all embracing provision against patriots were sure to end in conviction. Still the lawyers were putting forward as much of defence as they could in such cases, chiefly with a view to point out to the public in India and Europe that what was considered ordinary and proper language in the mouths of opponents of Government in Europe and America were considered grave offences in India, punishable with transportation for life and forfeiture of all property, and this enabled Government to strangle the agitation for popular freedom in the country. Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak's trial thus was launched and finally ended in his conviction of six years of imprisonment in India and Burma. In pursuit of the same policy, other extremists in other Provinces were subjected to similar trial.

Even on the 5th December 1910, and much more in 1911 December, G. S. Khaparde, the Amraoti lawyer, with a very good practice and a very powerful influence in the extremist circle, both inside and outside the Congress, naturally expected that his turn would come to be placed in the dock with its natural results— loss of liberty, loss of health, loss of money, etc. He had the good fortune of having heard about Sai Baba's wonderful personality, that he could grip the minds of even the highest officials and was at the same time a saint of the highest type and that it would be a privilege to meet him for any person anxious to secure temporal as well as spiritual welfare. Sai was visited by both officials and nonofficials—Mamlatdars, Collectors, Judges, society leaders, etc.— who met him and fell at his feet.

On the 5th December 1910, G. S. Khaparde visited Shirdi and found numerous officials, high and low, and masses crowding to the feet of Baba. Baba was teaching people in parables and was able to protect, for instance, police officers, such as a head constable charged with extortion at a court, and to get

them acquitted, and was rendering great temporal and spiritual help to all and sundry. By 12th December 1910, he got permission to go away and left Shirdi. It is after that date the most serious time for G.S. Khaparde began. The year 1911 was a period of trials for all extremists, as Government had the support of the Moderates for crushing the Extremists and G.S. Khaparde being high up in the list of extremists naturally stood in the same perilous position. Any vigorous activity of patriots sufficed to increase the severity of the policy of repression which therefore attained Makshasic dimensions in all Provinces. Khaparde realised his own danger. Though he had a very lucrative and roaring practice especially on the criminal side, part of his clientele fell. It was feared that the man who today argued as a lawyer would tomorrow be locked up in jail, at first as an under-trial prisoner and finally sent away to the Andamans or some distant prison. His income declined. With it also his health and the spirits of all the members of his family. But he had already known where his Palladium or Sanctuary was. So on the 6th December 1911, he arrived at Shirdi. Even at his previous visit, Baba had said on 9-12-1910. 'This is your house. Why should anybody fear when I am here?'¹ This assurance was again given to Khaparde. But as his funds were low, he and the members of his family who often visit Shirdi, were very anxious that he should go back to Amraoti to resume his practice. However clever he might be as a lawyer, he himself could not say when the Government might pounce upon him and send him to prison. But there was one person in the world who could say it, who had that knowledge and who could exercise his powers to sniff out all danger from him completely.

G.S.K. had ample proof that Baba had knowledge of everything that was happening everywhere and could control the minds of everyone and control objects also including the elements. So he like others felt perfectly safe in Baba's immediate presence. Whenever he got letters or telegrams at Shirdi offering cases, the desire was strong to get back to Amraoti. So his sons and relations and clients came to take him away. Shama on his behalf frequently asked Baba whether he could get back. Sometimes Baba seemed to encourage him by giving affirmative answers. But Baba would soon recall them and say 'Go tomorrow',

which was Baba's way of saying 'Do not go'. Baba wished to make perfectly certain that Khaparde would not be prosecuted. 'My eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love Me' said Baba, (B.C. & S. 9). and he was perpetually watching the minds of the Governor and the Home Member of the Central Provinces Government and elsewhere; and he revealed to Mrs. Khaparde what he did and how he watched. It is quite evident that the Government Members were considering the prosecution of Khaparde for sedition in respect of many of his speeches. There would be no difficulty in finding matter for prosecution under 124-A, Indian Penal Code, in the speeches of Khaparde or any other patriotic extremist, for anything and everything may be easily twisted and brought under 124-A. But the Government were noting that the sensation created in the public mind by the trial of Lokamanya was itself a powerful impetus to the demand for Indian Independence and, therefore, if possible, they should avoid sensational trials. In the case of Khaparde who came to Baba on 6th December 1911 and stayed on at Shirdi with Baba for 3 months or more, refusing to accept cases in various courts, rumours got abroad that Khaparde had got crazy and had been fascinated by a crazy fakir at Shirdi, and, therefore, had refused offer of cases and given up practice, politics, society and everything else, preferring the company of a fakir. Such rumours must have reached the ears of the Government Members or made to reach their ears by Baba, and Baba must have made them think, 'Let sleeping dogs lie'. That is, the foreign Government had more advantage to gain by not ordering more prosecutions of leaders which would keep up political excitement in the country. It is this decision among high places which was obviously denoted by Baba's words.

It is noted in Khaparde's diary dated the 29th December 1911 as follows :
'He (Sai Baba) told my wife that the Governor came with a lance, that Sain Maharaj had a tussle with him and drove him out; and that he finally conciliated the Governor'. G. S, Khaparde adds—

'The language is highly figurative and, therefore difficult to interpret'.

Being too close to the trees, he could not see the forest. At this distance of time, there is no difficulty whatever to interpret the above words. Sai Baba had

given him *abhayam* saying, "Why fear when I am here?" and he was carrying out his duty of protection. That protection involved the prolonged stay of Khaparde at Shirdi, but with his extremely aggressive worldly attachment, the confinement within Shirdi was obviously irksome to the impatient spirit of Khaparde. Sai never confers a temporal benefit without attaching to it a spiritual benefit also. '*Saburi*' (Patience) or calm self-possession amidst trials is wanted alike for spiritual and temporal purposes and comes easily to men who can surrender themselves and all they call theirs to Baba, like Bala Saheb Bhate and H. S. Dixit. G. S. Khaparde in his diary notes the great calm that prevailed in the hearts of these two and also appeared in their faces, and expressly mentions that they turned a new leaf after they came to Baba. Staying with Baba is the best stimulus and help for surrender and *sahuri* (patience). Baba gave this stimulus and help to Khaparde also, but his nature could not receive them fully. Khaparde notes in his diary on the 30th December 1911, that is, the day next to the reference to the

Governor that Baba narrated (as he often did) a small tale calculated to impress (on G.S.K.) the virtue of patience. The impression of the tale on Khaparde however was poor. Baba noted his impatience and told him on the 1st January, i.e., next day, that he (Khaparde) was "anxious to run away." He dismissed all the company with him and retained only Khaparde to tell him that. But still the impression on G.S.K. was poor. The very next day his son came to take him back to Amraoti, for his absence therefrom meant loss of income and increased expenditure. On the 3rd January 1912, his son and one Gopal Rao asked Baba for permission. Baba gave it first and soon after rescinded the permission. Shama also went and asked Baba leave for Khaparde's departure. Baba replied that Khaparde had his house both at Shirdi and at Amraoti and that he might stay where he liked, and that he might never return to Amraoti. That settled the matter. Some time later, when pressed about the same by Shama, Baba said, 'Conditions are not favourable to Khaparde for his return to Amraoti'. Moreover, Khaparde was far too deep in the world and the world was far too deep in him, and Baba wished to give him a double advantage by his stay at Shirdi to escape prosecution and to advance in detachment. Unfortunately, the

very high degree of attachment to the world that persisted in Khaparde despite his great learning in sacred books and his daily prayers, attendance at a good number of puran, bhajan, and kirtans, prevented his receiving adequate benefits from Sainath Maharaj.

Baba's company was the highest education one could get. As a Mahratta saying goes, 'Let us stay with saints. If they do not give us Upadesa, let us note what they do and say. That is the best Upadesa'. H. S. Dixit had the very great advantage of six or seven months' stay with Baba, and he also kept a diary in which he noted not only what he did and other visitors did but also all that Baba did and said. G S.K's diary is printed in the Sai Lila Masik', the official organ of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, Volumes II and III, in English, for he kept his diary in English. He gives such varied information about Baba, and his visitors especially about the stories that Baba narrated. That is. his diary is justly regarded as a valuable mine of information about Baba; and 'he may be regarded as the *Shirdi Pepys*. There is considerable resemblance between Pepys and Khaparde, in their mentality.

Only 3¹/₂ months were over, when Baba had completely swept out all traces of ideas of prosecution of "the extremist Khaparde". Baba had extinguished the idea of prosecution from the minds of all responsible authorities. Evidently it was after the official files regarding Khaparde's Prosecution were sent to the record room to be lodged that Baba allowed Khaparde to return to Amraoti. Meanwhile his stay at Shirdi was not without benefit to him. Khaparde was a master of Sanskrit and Maharatti. He was conversant with the chief books in both these languages on spiritual subjects, and as there was some leisure for him after perusing the daily newspapers, and chats with visitors, he studied those books. He went on reading *Parama Amrita*, an excellent and exhaustive treatise on spiritual topics in Mahratti and Panchadasi in Sanskrit, (the latter both he and Baba labelled as 'our treasure house of information'). Khaparde was studying Ranganatha's Mahratti summary 'Yoga of Vasishtha' and listening to Gathas of Eknath, Das Bodha, etc. Baba's moral tales and Baba's chamatkars were also the subject of his talk with his usual companions there, viz., Upasani Maharaj,

Dada Kelkar, Babu Saheb Jog, and occasional visitors like Mrs. Koujalgi, Balakrishna Upasani sastri, N.G. Chandorkar, C. V. Vaidya, B V. Dev, Mr Mankar, etc. The talks he had were always full of much spiritual food for reflection and absorption. His maintaining a diary should have served a double purpose, namely, not only to make a record for future reference but also to constitute a good photograph of his mind and the influences brought to bear on it at that time. Psycho-analysts advise their visitors to note down freely all that occurs to them, page after page, and day after day. This is a valuable means to discover how the mind of the writer works, what its predilections are, and what its peculiar avoidances. Mr. Khaparde's diary when placed side by side with H. S. Dixit's is a valuable index to show the difference between the two²⁰ and the points of similarity between them. H, S. Dixit was an England returned M.L.A., a successful lawyer, and an active Congressman. But he retired from all these and in 1912 was leading the life of a Vanaprasta with Baba enjoying thorough peace and developing considerably in his spiritual state. Khaparde also was an active politician, lawyer, and an England returned Congressman, who had retreated to Shirdi and stayed there though not with a view to making spiritual advance, but mainly with a view to ascape from the Governmental claws, when that British Government was trying to clutch at his throat. Khaparde was in matters of study of religious books far more advanced than H. S. Dixit. In fact he was a teacher of a group at Shirdi for Paramamrita, Panchadasi, and Yoga Vasishta classes and lectured on contemplation and other similar subjects to his small class. Sri Upasani Baba declared about 1936 in the presence of this author that he regarded Khaparde as his Guru, evidently by reason of his teachings in those classes at Shirdi. But Dixit's advance in calmness and appropriation of Baba's

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- ²⁰ *No doubt comparisons are said lo be odious. But when two eminent politicians, eminent also in the service of Sai. have both of them maintained diaries and these are published, a few thoughts may be humbly offered in any biography of Sai about them. But nothing written here detracts from the great merits of either of these.

spiritual gifts was much greater and Dixit's death revealed that he had been "taken in a vimana" as promised by Baba after being rendered fit for being taken in a vimana, i.e., after dedicating himself to Sai Baba and rendering a whole life of service to Baba and humanity. With Khaparde there was no such dedication. His heart was engrossed too much with the world. From Baba he went back to practice and politics, to accumulate wealth and fame, and he achieved practically all these, i.e. all that he could or should expect from the part he played in politics and social affair. His son after successful practice became a Minister, and he (G. S. Khaparde) himself became a Member of the Council of State. After living for a long time he passed away full of honours and fame and that is just what one would expect by reading his diary maintained at Shirdi.

In the list of the chief "Sources for Sai's History" one is glad to note that Khaparde's diary is a notable source of information. So far as it goes, it contains references to all external things that took place at Shirdi during his stay and the talks and behaviour of Sai Baba which may be noticed by any spectator. The tales of Baba that are narrated in the diary are the notable exceptions to the view that the diary is mainly worldly. One other important exception to the rule of worldliness, the one matter of which Khaparde could give direct information, is a matter of considerable importance. Khaparde notes on several dates that Baba cast on him and on some others a '*Yogic glance*', a sort of *Saktinipata*, as a result of which the person receiving the glance, e.g. Khaparde, was immersed deep in an ocean of bliss for hours and hours. On some dates he says Baba gave no yogic glances. These glances were probably part of the inducement by Baba to pull Khaparde away from the depth of his worldliness and external attachments in order to make him lead a life of surrender, detachment and *Atma Nishta*. We note the frequent mention of Khaparde's morning prayers everyday and we may presume that in these prayers, he endeavoured to get free from his cares and troubles. Evidently these prayers were the usual prayers e.g. Pratah *Smarana* and not special ones nor addressed to Baba. He was firmly convinced that Baba knew everything and could arrange everything, and he felt that while remaining at Shirdi he was perfectly safe from molestation from any quarters. But

he was too much overpowered by the ideas in his religious books to feel and say that Baba was God. In fact when writing a preface to M. W. Pradhan's 'Glimpses of Indian Spirituality', decades after he had left Shirdi, he writes that Baba came very near to his idea of God, not that Baba was God to him. His preface (in 1936) to an English translation of Upasani Baba's utterances shows how little of the self had been snuffed out from him and what spiritual stage he reached. He writes there in a patronizing way to defend Upasani Baba against the attacks that had become innumerable and that defence perhaps was the only object of the preface or foreword.

Khaparde never revealed in his diary the innermost portion of his heart. In fact the diary is an extrovert diary. It is quite possible that Khaparde derived notable benefit for his soul from his contact with Baba, but he has not expressed it either in his diary or in any of his writings that we come across. The public have in any case to be grateful to Khaparde for maintaining his diary for nearly four months of his contact with Baba and making them available for Sai history. He was undoubtedly a great religious scholar and one who could perceive the greatness of Baba. The fact that he had achieved great fame and name in politics, law, and social affairs (denoted by Baba's terming him. 'Sarkar¹') would also have rendered his stay at Shirdi an additional means of spreading Baba's name abroad.

Two very important things about Khaparde are not found detailed in the diary, viz the facts of Mrs. G. S. Khaparde's previous births and previous service to Baba, and Baba's withdrawing the plague from his son Balwant's body to himself. The last is to be found in Shama's statement (See Dev. Exp.). From Dec. 1911 for 3 months plague raged at Shirdi and Balwant, son of Khaparde, had an attack. There was the bubo and fever, and the mother of the patient went to Baba with tears asking whether it was to sacrifice her child that she had come to Shirdi. Baba spoke in parables assuring her that all would be well. She could not understand him and later Baba showed on his own person bubos and told her that he had to bear all these to save her son. He also said that he had saved Balwant and that his orders were supreme, *Ajna Apratihata*. Accordingly Balwant

recovered and so also Baba. This reminds one of a similar sacrifice of Baba on behalf of another devotee. Mrs. Tarabai Sadahsiv Tarkhad of Poona came to Shirdi with a long-standing eye trouble which her doctor could not diagnose or cure. She came to Shirdi and sat before Baba. Baba cast his glance at her eyes and her eyes ceased to pain or water and Baba's eyes were watering. That was an end to her eye trouble, and she wondered how instantaneously Baba worked the cure of a disease which baffled doctors. Similarly Noverkar with high fever sent his son with Rs. 500 to Baba. Baba received the sum and at once limbs began to shiver. Baba explained that he had to bear the burdens of his devotees. Noverkar was of course cured.

In the case of Khaparde, Baba mentioned no doubt the rinanubandha noted already in this chapter. The most interesting statement of rinanubandha was in respect of Mrs Khaparde. One day when a number of naivedyas were placed one after another before Baba he did not touch any one of them. When Mrs. Khaparde's naivedya was brought, he at once put it into his mouth. Then Shama, who occasionally took liberties with Baba, asked why he was so partial to Mrs. Khaparde's naivedya and Baba gave an account of Mrs. Khaparde's love and service to him birth after birth. Baba said, 'She was formerly a cow of a bunya and gave (me) plenty of milk. Then she was born of a mali (gardener) and later went to a Kshatriya. Then she married the bunya. Then she was born a Brahmin. After a long spell of time, I am seeing her again, and the food she gives me is sweet (with her love)'. Mrs. Khaparde's prema more than Mr. Khaparde's self-interested visit to Shirdi it was that operated powerfully on Baba and made him take so much trouble for each member of that family, Baba did not give mantra upadesa except in exceptional cases. Baba gave it to Mrs. G.S.K. thus: Go on saying "Rajah Ram, Rajah Ram".

Referring to Mr. Khaparde's ambition, Baba stated that the ambition was deeply ingrained and evident in a previous life also. Baba stated that in a former birth, 'You (Khaparde) were with me for two or three years, and went into royal service, though there was enough at home to live in comfort.'

Baba's help, therefore, to Khaparde's family was partly temporal but the most notable part of it was the development of Mrs. Khaparde's soul stage after stage in furtherance of which he gave her Rama mantropadesa.

Strangely enough, the husband's diary makes no mention of such highly important and interesting facts.

A few words more about Sri Khaparde's diary are here called for. The first point that has struck many a man who saw the printed diary in Sai Lila Masik, Volumes II and III, is that it is extremely dry and so very uninteresting to the general reader as to make him skip over the pages. However, here and there some highly interesting matter about Sai Baba gleams through the rest just like bits of gold gleaming through a mass of mire or ore. No doubt the ore is valuable and no part of it is usually thrown away till it is subjected to the proper chemical process for extraction of the precious metal. Here also a good deal of the diary will be found to have its value when dealt with properly. But who are the persons who can so deal with it? Usually, the devotee is not possessed of the necessary patience or ability. No doubt to every Sai devotee, anything connected with Sai becomes important. Small things about chilm, about songs, about the way Baba walked, about the persons he met, are all found to be highly interesting to certain sets of persons. But to many others the matter may be either unattractive or repulsive. However, in the case of this diary most of the matter can be turned into interesting matter by a proper historian or biographer taking up the same and piecing out the necessary parts from it and putting them into the biography or history that he is compiling. In fact the great value of a diary like this is its historical value. In the matter of ascertainment of dates and facts, its value is indeed very great.

We shall just mention one instance.

Upasani Baba was a very important person who came under the influence of Sai Baba and attained to great heights, and the facts of his biography are therefore of very great importance in understanding him and his history as also the way in which Baba dealt with him. One gets sometimes puzzled when he notes that Sai Baba mentioned that for four years Upasani was to stay at Shirdi and at the end

of that period he would attain to full-blown divinity. According to Upasani Lilamrita, which is either a biography or at least chronicles of Upasani, written practically to his dictation and revised by him carefully, mention is made that Sai Baba stated that Upasani had undergone the four years and had attained full divinity. A student of Upasani's life, who may have great reverence for Upasani, would still be compelled to admit that the full-blown expression of divinity did not occur in Sri Upasani's life, that is, in any portion of Upasani's life up to the end of it in 1941, and he may, therefore, wonder how Sai Baba could have made such an inaccurate remark as that stated above. Here then comes the value of this Khaparde's diary. Upasani had clearly forgotten the date of his arrival or even the year of his arrival and the year or the date of his departure from Shirdi. He fancied that he had really spent four years under Sai and thus dictated to his biographer that four years had been spent and the biographer puts it into Sai's mouth as though he uttered it. As for the date of his arrival, Khaparde's diary discloses that Upasani had not been at Shirdi in December 1910 and therefore did not arrive that year at Shirdi. Again in his entry of 8-12— 1911 Sri Khaparde notes that Upasani vaidya who was not at Shirdi in the previous year, was present at Shirdi in 1911, was under an order of Baba to stay for four years there, and was living at Khandoba's. That fixes the arrival date of Upasani as June 1911. And about his departure also similar investigation, though not in this case with the help of Sri Khaparde's diary, furnishes proof that he departed not in 1915 but in 1914 itself. Therefore it is an unavoidable conclusion that Upasani did not spend four years as required at Shirdi but only three years and therefore one begins to understand how Sri Sai Baba's words about him that he would attain full-blown divinity had not been fulfilled. No doubt Sri Upasani attained divine qualities of a certain sort and carried on splendid religious work, but that is not the same as saying that he attained complete divinity, and thus we find the use of Khaparde's diary used strictly as a history source book for purposes of research in dealing with Sai Baba and his devotees.

Again one may admit that chronology and history might receive too much of attention. Neither Upasani nor Sai Baba cared for chronology as such. In point of

fact, Upasani Baba dissuaded people from going into research about the origins and dates of the earlier period of his life. However, people with great affection for Baba, naturally wish to discover as much as they can inspite of the saying *Nadimoolam Rishermoolam Vicharyam na kadachana* which means, 'Do not go into the origins of sacred rivers or Rishis'. The obvious reason is that many a man who has great reverence for these might discover that their origins were quite contemptible and might run the risk of losing his reverence for these in their later developments. Take the Godavari for instance. It is a grand river which is highly venerated and referred to as Ganga, but its origin high up in the Triambak hill shows it to be a petty thing, a tiny spring, and though it is worshipped there by some, there is nothing suggestive of anything great about it. So one is apt to lose one's regard for Godavari by seeing its origin. The origin of Palar, Cauvery, etc., may similarly be found to be petty and not worth the trouble of visiting. About great Rishis, the origins of Vyasa and Narada, for instance, are extremely unfortunate. Vyasa was the offspring of Parasara through his sudden contact with a fisherwoman whom he happened to meet on the banks of a river. Parasara immediately proceeded to contact the woman because he considered the moment auspicious for the production of good issue. Vyasa was that product. Hence the question of Vyasa's caste has been raised, and respect for Vyasa's grand productions is apt to be imperilled by those who consider his origin as important. About Narada also, it is mentioned in the Bhagavata that he was the issue of a slave girl, and anyhow by his efforts he had risen high and obtained a momentary sakshatkar or vision of God. When he wanted that vision to become permanent, he was informed that his birth having been so low, he was not to have permanent sakshatkar in that janma and so he had to take another birth and in the subsequent birth he had perpetual sakshatkar. So the man with a tendency to cavil at things might consider the utterances or productions of Narada like Narada Bhakti Sutras lose their importance or value by reason of Narada's being once a dancing girl's child. We have gone very far afield in explaining above stanza, but to come back to the main point, there is nothing low in the known life of Upasani Baba and practically nothing at all is known about

the origins and early life of Sri Sai Baba. There is a certain cloud of mystery hanging over every period of Sai Baba's life and Baba allowed it to remain so, evidently because there is no necessity to remove that mist. The haze of uncertainty adds to one's reverence just like the haze about the morning sun adds to its beauty in several seasons. Therefore the ascertainment of history and facts is not a necessity or condition in all cases, and one may overdo his attachment to history and that perhaps is the reason why neither Upasani nor Sai encouraged research into history. But to a modern mind, historical research becomes a patent necessity and the educated feel naturally an interest to ascertain facts and their proper arrangement or presentation. Without these, even a holy person's life loses a certain portion of its value. Taking Sai Baba's own case, lack of arrangement in the materials presented by Sai Sat Charitra, which is only a disorderly conglomeration of various events and utterances in Baba's life, puzzles one and leaves one unsatisfied. We have many gems everywhere one feels, but one feels also at the same time what a brilliant diamond necklace can be made out of it if only the diamonds can be arranged in proper order. Hence we must not ignore the value of a history source book.

There is one other matter which one has to mention in connection with Khaparde's diary. Khaparde went on writing the diary in the way in which he would maintain his diary at home for his domestic events, that is, more with a view to keep it as a reminder to him later on when he should attempt to recall which persons on which days met him and what transpired. He was not writing the diary under the orders of any psycho-analyst. Far from submission to psycho-analysis, the diary rather maintains a reticence which one can easily understand when one notes that the writer of the diary had no idea of getting dissected and observed under the microscope of any overzealous scientific student of his life. So far indeed is he free from that set of ideas, that he does not mention even highly important facts necessary to understand his own conduct. The diarist does not say why he visited Baba in 1910 and again in 1911. The diary discloses very little clue to understand it. One has to make extraneous researches and then find out the actual cause of his visits.

Sai Baba was a great spiritual personality and every one would take it that Khaparde went there to get the punya of even a momentary contact with such a high personality as Sai. But that will be a misreading of the facts. On both the occasions, Khaparde had important reasons and these were discovered by looking into the political history of Government activities of persecuion and or prosecution of patriots. With reference to the 98 days' stay of Khaparde (December 1911 to the middle of March 1912) a few incidents are noted which give a clue to the object of his visit. Baba did not allow him to depart and mentioned that the times were not favourable for his departure, and that Baba met the Governor who came with a lance to pierce Khaparde and put him aside, Strangely enough, instead of stating that this meant that his prosecution under section 124-A was being warded off, Khaparde simply notes 'The language is figurative and hard to interpret'. Those of us who are in the know of things find it the easiest language to interpret whatever may have been the reasons for Khaparde's saying that the interpretation was hard.

Apart from the above, the value of a diary in understanding the stage at which he had arrived in his spiritual condition and how Baba operated on him from the spiritual standpoint, is naturally very great. We see that Khaparde went to Baba not at all for spiritual improvement but merely to seek protection from Government persecution and prosecution which none but Sai could give. But Sai Baba always attached a string to his grant of protection. With the grant of temporal benefits he imperceptibly improved the spiritual condition of the recipient. Here, in Khaparde's case, a few facts in the diary disclose how Baba dealt with him.

The first point to notice is that Baba did not force the pace of spiritual advancement in this visitor's case any more than in others' cases. Baba would have had excellent reasons to immediately promote Khaparde's spiritual interests because Khaparde had been in one of his previous janmas a fellow pupil along with Baba under the same Guru, and in another janma had been a member of the same family with Baba, having sufficient to live upon but still, getting impelled by high ambition, Khaparde chose to leave the family and seek royal service in

order to advance his economic or other position. This just gives a hint that ambition was deep in the nature of Khaparde not only in the 19th century birth but in previous births as well. Such a person would have had excellent help for striving high up in the spiritual line. Yet Baba did not force the pace. He allowed him to take his own time and adopt his own ways for his spiritual amelioration. Like 95 per cent of the orthodox religious people, Khaparde also had his religious convictions and ideas of spiritual improvement. Therefore, he went on with his prayers, attendance at bhajans, and study of Panchadasi, Paramamrita, Yoga Vasishta, Dasa Bodha, etc. These no doubt have their value, but most of the orthodox people make the study of these and the adoption of the other programmes mentioned above, the be-all and end-all of religion. They stop all their spiritual practices with these. In Sai's course these formed a very minor item in one's spiritual advancement. The main thing is to surrender to the Guru wholeheartedly and be at his mercy for everything, depending upon the Guru for everything and treating him as the all-in-all of the sadhaka. Khaparde was certainly not prepared to make such a surrender. In fact the two great essentials for a sadhaka are (1) *Nishta* and (2) *Saburi*, that is, full faith in the Guru and a readiness to wait long, very long for seeing the benefits. Baba had adopted that course himself and had given *Nishta* and *Saburi* to his own Guru. As for Khaparde, he was not prepared with full *Nishta*, that is, full faith in his Guru. He maintained his old line of thought, that is, great attachment to wealth, comfort, name, position, and a slight veneer of religiosity combined with respectable life as quite sufficient for his purpose. With such a mentality, one could not expect any great advance in his spiritual condition. Sai Baba did not force the pace and make him surrender all that.

Sai knew or foreknew or foreordained the subsequent life of Khaparde after releasing him from the immediate danger of persecution namely that his ambitions and energies were all to be utilised in totally different fields and his greatness was to consist in becoming an M.L.C. and the father of a Minister of the Central Provinces etc. All that Khaparde achieved. No doubt he has made a fairly good advance in religion as understood by him. However great that

advance may be, especially from his own standpoint, that advance cannot be treated as advance from Sai's viewpoint. Any Sai sishya would see that all that is insignificant and practically amounts to nothing when compared with what Sai could achieve for him had he surrendered himself to Sai. But in the case of Khaparde he was very far from attempting the Sai viewpoint.

Humility and a readiness for poverty were the prerequisites for one to benefit by contacting a Samartha Sadguru. In the case of Khaparde, he (Khaparde) notes that, when his wife massaged the feet of Baba, the latter said that Dixit should give Rs. 200 to her. This at once mortified Khaparde. His pride felt wounded at the idea that he, a practising lawyer, should be thought so low as to make his wife receive Rs. 200 from a Bombay lawyer like Dixit, though his (GSK's) funds were indeed very low and he badly required Rs.200 or more. Later he understood that the Rs. 200 was only symbolical, that it meant Dixit's achievement of (1) poverty and (2) patience or contentment with his poor lot. Khaparde rebelled at this idea also. He did not want poverty. He did not go to Shirdi to remain poor for ever. On the other hand he wanted to amass wealth and attain high position and Sai was his cat's paw to get at the desired things. Khaparde never forgot that he was an Hon. Member of the Council and had visited England, was high up in politics and looked up to by all and sundry as a great social and political leader and a highly learned scholar who could even teach Panchadasi to Upasani and others. The diary frequently mentions that his position was all in all in his eyes and when others came to Shirdi, he was an institution to be visited by them just as they visited Baba. He spent his time in talks with such visitors and in his study of the daily papers to note especially what happened in the world generally, perhaps with special reference to his own condition and the possibilities of his own delicate position getting more delicate and more dangerous. A psycho-analyst studying the diary would at once declare that the mentality displayed in the diary is almost the antipodes of what the mentality of a sadhaka like Dixit should be and was. Dixit made considerable advance and, as Khaparde notes, turned over a new leaf, and there was a calm visible on his face due to his internal peace. He notes the same in the case of

Bala Saheb Bhate, a retired Mamlatdar, who had the same calm on his face, though he had forsaken the lucrative office of a Mamlatdar, without anything to fall back upon. Yet he was able to achieve great calm. These are the exact opposites of Khaparde. Baba's dealing with such a person on the spiritual side is highly interesting. In some matters Khaparde's moral and spiritual condition was far from being satisfactory, and it was known to Baba. Of course, this should not be discussed either in the diary or in this biography, but there is sufficient hint given of that position in Baba's dealings with him mentioned in the diary.

Khaparde notes that Baba gave him advice in a fatherly way keeping him (Khaparde) alone for giving that advice. To show him that at the age of 58 he should no longer be thinking of sex gratification, Baba gently gives a hint by calling his wife 'Ajibai', meaning 'an old lady'¹. Khaparde unable to take the same viewpoint mentions the same in the diary regarding it as something unintelligible whereas for one who is able to read between the lines and note what is behind the scenes and what was to happen later on, it is clear that Baba was pressing the button just at the proper point and gave a valuable suggestion.

Again as to the possibility of further progress, especially in the matter of reaching God, that is realising Satchidananda, nothing could be done in dealing with a sadhaka in Khaparde's condition unless he should thoroughly submit himself to Baba's rigorous discipline. Yet what did Baba do? Did he give up the task as hopeless? Certainly not. To Baba nothing is hopeless. Khaparde could work at reaching Satchidananda, but not at that time nor perhaps in that life. So, he eggs him on to great efforts in that noble direction. He gives him a Pisgah sight of that promised land. He favours him with a few Yogic glances off and on, the effect of these yogic glances being to immerse Khaparde deep in a pool of bliss without any external visible stimulus whatever. Khaparde's joys in getting a fat sessions case or success in a sensational trial or getting loud plaudits or cheers from the mass listening to his humorous and highly cutting utterances, and his domestic joys were perhaps the highest that he had experience of. Till he came to Sai all his joys evidently were joys due to external causes, but when Baba's glances came, without any external stimulus, (without any fee, or birth of

a grandchild or applause) he was feeling waves of joy swallowing up his being for hours. This is an indication that the soul has vast resources of the highest sort of bliss independent of external stimuli. This is a very valuable spur to one to work hard and proceed to realise Parabrahma or Satchidananda, which would give him joy and peace without any external cause for ever. This is one of the valuable spiritual services rendered to Khaparde by Sri Sai. There may be one or two more of that sort noticeable in the diary, but perhaps in this article unconsciously the dissection of Khaparde has gone to unpardonable lengths, and it is high time that such dissection stopped. A careful reader of his diary might light upon the other points not mentioned here, that is, points in which Sai Baba analysed his character and promoted the chance of his reaching a high spiritual state and reaching God or Satchidananda.

One thought that preponderates in the mind of any one studying carefully the diary of Mr. Khaparde and the possibilities that he had before him is the extent to which those possibilities were achieved. One clear possibility is that a person who had been a fellow student with Baba in a former janma under the same Guru and one who was a member of the same family with Baba and who left the family to seek royal service would be a person who would be advanced by Baba to the fullest spiritual height that Baba could help him to. Baba's powers were immense. He himself said (B.C.S. 91) 'I have very great powers', as shown in the case of Upasani and others. Baba could mould the inmost soul of any person attending upon him with a receptive and passive mood of surrender. So it was possible for G.S. Khaparde to have reached great heights like that of Sai Baba himself. But from the facts of Khaparde's life being now well known since he died in 1938 we note that none of these possibilities ever got achieved. On the other hand he was just developing on the lines he had before he approached Baba and had a brilliant life purely from the conventional or worldly standpoint. The world was too much with him to allow him to benefit by the Sai approach. As Wordsworth wrote :

The world is too much with us; late and soon.

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

Wordsworth says that it is much better to be a pagan and have visions of Proteus and Triton rather than be a highly civilized man without any such visions. But worldly men will always be worldly men. Few care to change their nature completely and begin a new life. To get to great ends, one must abandon all earthly ambition and face poverty and obloquy, if need be, calmly and cheerfully and hold on to the Guru as the be-all and end-all of one's existence. This high ideal we find in the diary is held up before Khaparde for his consideration and concentration. But he never cared to accept that ideal. Passivity was anathema to him. He preferred even at Shirdi, when he could always contact Baba, to spend his time reading up every bit of newspaper and writing letters to friends. Once Baba wanted to draw his attention to the absurdity of frittering away time like that at his age and stage and Baba asked him what he was doing and what he had been doing in the morning. His answer being writing letters, Baba's comment was 'it is better to move your fingers instead of sitting idle'. The next day, even in the act of writing letters, Khaparde went to sleep. The *tamas* in him was so powerful that he was frequently indulging in long sleep when he ought to have attended to *artis* and classes or kept busy. For a healthy man of only 58 (Khaparde's age at that time) day sleep was not wanted at all. Yet Khaparde was having long spells of day sleep and sometimes he slept away when the noonday *arti* was going on in the *Masjid*. When Baba was told that Khaparde could not be roused up by people calling at his place, Baba said that he himself would wake Khaparde up. Khaparde was roused up just before the close of the noonday *arati* about 1 or 2 p.m. and thus was made to attend that *arti*. Baba gave him good advice not to allow this *tamasic* tendency of oversleeping, but Khaparde was unable to follow that advice. Hence for one reason or another, the ideals kept before him by Baba were not achieved even in such small matters as keeping awake.

As for facing poverty, Khaparde notes how bitter it was to him. On the 1st February 1912, when Baba said that Dixit should give Rs. 200 to his (K's) wife, Khaparde notes in his diary as already stated 'Has it come to this? I prefer death to this'. He adds that Baba wanted to put down his pride. But his pride could not

be put down. Baba wanted to show the pettiness of the "great objects"¹ that were greatly moving the heart and soul of Khaparde.

Wealth was the chief aim. On the 13th February, Baba pointed out, 'Here is the cow of Dixit. Formerly it was a Jalna man's. Before that it was somebody else's and before that it was Mahlsapathy's. God knows whose it is'. He was pointing out that property was not anything permanent and not worth striving for. On the other hand he pointed out that so far as the absolute needs of the body were concerned, a person who had firm faith had no fear of lacking them. Baba gave the assurance that none who had firm faith in God would be left in want. Baba also gave the assurance that He was powerful and his orders were supreme. Baba also pointed out the obverse of the above story. In referring to one of his earlier lives, he said that his father at that time was a rich man. Having differences with his father, he left his father and went away. Finding a heap of treasure on the way, he was doting on the same and spending his time thereon. This, Baba said, made him a cobra, that is, a very inferior species of rajasic and tamasic creature. This was the effect of over-fondness towards wealth. Baba pointed out that he got disgusted with that later on, left the treasure, and resumed his human form. Thus Baba tried to hold up before Khaparde the pettiness of men who were hankering after wealth, wealth of the world that never lasts. How was Khaparde to get his wealth? Only by seeking the favour of innumerable persons and avoiding the displeasure of others. All this required that his time and attention should be wasted upon petty creatures. Baba told him that he must serve God alone and he also repeated that advice. Baba said, 'What God gives lasts for ever; what man gives does not'. This was repeated time and again to Khaparde, but all that was lost upon him.

Another hint we derive from the diary is that Baba in addition to launching his attack against the pro Kanchana portion of human nature was attacking also the other weakness that humanity is prone to, that is, the pro-kamini passion (sex urge.) That must he made to grow less and less powerful as age advances. Certainly at 58 the sastras want persons to give up Grihastashrama and take to the next, their evening *savanam*, i.e. take to Vanaprastha leading on to Sanyasa.

That cannot be done if the sex element is allowed to preponderate. So Baba conveyed very gentle lessons after giving "fatherly advice" to Khaparde driving others away from the Mosque at that time so that he might give that advice in private to Khaparde. No doubt Khaparde does not give out what the fatherly advice was about. But there is not much difficulty in inferring that the above point must have formed a portion of that advice. Baba at other times also wanted to press home that lesson by insisting upon one's maintaining the lofty human stature one has already achieved and the further levels that humanity leads to. On one occasion, he asked Khaparde pointing to a fruit, 'How many fruits it is capable of producing?' Khaparde's answer was, 'Thousand times the number of seeds in it', Baba assented and said that the vegetable followed a law of its own. This means that vegetable creation can follow the instinct for reproduction *ad libitum*, but humanity has restraints and high standards in order to achieve higher and higher levels of being. As already stated Khaparde's inability to see the same lesson conveyed by Baba when he called Mrs. Khaparde 'Ajibai' is something striking. 'Ajibai' means old lady or grandmother, that is, the grand mother's stage is one at which no further thoughts of sex reproduction should be entertained. Any person would easily see that Baba's use of that term conveyed a hint to Mr. Khaparde that he should no longer regard his wife as one for purposes of sex gratification or reproduction but must treat her as soul companion for spiritual purposes mainly. All these lessons given to Khaparde were lost upon him completely. Neither about wealth nor about sex control was he in a mood to take lessons. He was quite self-sufficient and quite learned enough in the sastras to take care of himself as he thought. The result is that he came to a gold mine like Sai Baba and took away very little of gold. This loss of a grand opportunity to achieve spiritual success makes one recall the well-known couplet —

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen.

The saddest are these. It might have been."

We have all to be alert and profit by the mistakes of others, lest the same epitaph "Lost opportunity" be ours.

With reference to other entries in the diary, we note how Baba was operating. Strangely enough, hints only are given by the diarist, and he does not explain or even express them clearly. Let us take the case of his son Balwant and his plague attack (which has already been briefly set out but which ought to be further expanded). There was plague in the beginning of 1912 at Shirdi. Baba himself was therefore cleaning up the Masjid, and when a deputation of villagers went to him to save them from plague, he advised them to clean up all the tombs and public places and feed the poor. It is following on that there appears to have been a recrudescence of plague at Shirdi and cases of plague did occur. Khaparde's son Balwant got definitely ill on the 19th January 1912 obviously due to the epidemic, and he continued ill for three weeks and he could not leave his bed. It is only on the 8th February following that he could stir. The all-knowing Baba knew what was coming, and on the day preceding the attack of illness, namely, 18th January 1912, he stated in the midst of a lot of foul abuse that he had saved Balwant and that he had saved also G. S. Khaparde. G.S. Khaparde does not attach any special meaning to the swearing and the use of harsh words on that day or on similar occasions on other days. One who has studied Baba's dealings would find a meaning in those harsh words.

Let us note the following case. Gadgi Bua, that is, a very poor saint, who was the owner of only a mud pot, had the ambition to build a grand edifice for charitable purposes and somehow destiny aided him in putting up a grand structure at Pandharpur. (This reminds of George Muller's powerful faith that enabled him to get nearly twenty millions of pounds voluntarily sent to him from time to time in the course of many years to construct many children's orphanages). When Gadgi Bua started building his dharmasala at Nasik, the flow of monetary help stopped abruptly after he reached a limited success only in putting up a set of rooms. Then he felt disgusted and thought that the best thing he could do was to approach a person like Sai Baba for help. So he went to Shirdi and came to Baba. At once Sai Baba uttered a lot of foul abuse, 'hard words' as Khaparde calls them. Gadgi Bua at once understood what they meant. It is not Gadgi Bua that Baba was abusing foully, but he was cursing away and

driving away the bad fortune that hampered the progress of his work. Gadgi Bua laughed at once and Baba also laughed at once. Gadgi Bua went back. His bad fortune had been driven away and money again came enabling him to build the dharmasala he had begun.

This throws light upon the hard words used on the 18th of January 1912 in the midst of which Baba said, 'I have saved Balwant; I have saved Dada Sabebe (Khaparde) whom the fakir wants to kill'. Baba's words were really magical words of power driving away disease, misfortune, etc. It is on the 19th, the day following the hard words, that the fever began and it lasted 21 days and then ceased. All this was foreseen and foreordained by Baba. The hard words of the 18th coupled with the assertion that he had saved Balwant showed that Baba knew that the attack of plague was coming and the attack was going to be innocuous. Khaparde does not give out the fact that Baba had drawn the disease to himself from Balwant. Shama says in his statement that when Balwant's mother went and cried before him, Baba showed bubos on his own person and declared that he had to suffer for his people's sake. That meant evidently that he had drawn away Balwant's disease to his own body. When Balwant was cured, Baba also was cured. These are valuable facts for us to understand the immense power of Baba and his immense kindness which are praised in the *Sej Arti* every night thus: *Ranjavisi tum madura bolini, maya jaisa nija mula ho/Bhogisi Vyadhim turn cha haruniyam Nijasevak dukhale ho, Dhavuni bhakta vyasana harisi*, etc., which means "By sweet words you gladden like a mother. You remove the diseases of your servants and bear them yourself. You run to relieve them, etc." Such wonderful power and kindness ought to suffice to enable one to give up everything and stick to Baba. Baba showed his powers, as the diary shows, to Khaparde in other matters also. When the Patils were quarrelling among themselves, he could stop the quarrel by simply saying from the Mosque, "Don't beat." Similarly he showed control over the minds of not merely Government Members or the Governor but also over those of others like the Magistrate who was trying the case against his (Baba's) servant Raghu on appeal.

Khaparde's diary gives ample proof that Baba was superhuman in his range of powers and in his ability to help people to the greatest heights of human achievement. Letting alone other points, we may refer to the main thing. Khaparde was very good at his sastras and scriptural study. What do they say? They say that the aim and goal of all life is to reach Brahmananda which rests not upon external contact nor upon obtaining anything from outside, but upon the Atma dwelling upon the Atma alone.

Baba gave proof of the fact that he himself was such an *Anna jnani* immersed in *Paramananda* and that he could draw people into that state. This *Paramananda* or enjoyment, not based upon externals, was brought home to the mind of Khaparde by numerous yogic glances already referred to. In his diary Khaparde notes that on the 13th January 1912, Baba gave a Yogic glance. Khaparde adds, 'I was in ecstasy of bliss the whole day'. Other instances also of similar enjoyment vouchsafed to him are noted. All these are most precious gifts and offers of the most precious thing a man could achieve and yet all these were lost upon Khaparde. Why? Because the world's attraction was too great for the attraction of the spirit or Brahman.

Baba's control of the spirit of any one near him is noted in the diary. For instance on the 17th January 1912, the diary mentions 'Baba smiled benignly. It is worthwhile spending years here (Shirdi) to see it even once. I was overjoyed and stood gazing like mad...' On the same date the diarist also notes that Baba (in Dakshinamoorthi fashion) gave silent instructions which though not understood immediately were understood a few hours later, at the Wada arti. In another place Khaparde notes that Baba made him understand things and solve his puzzles merely by giving him his chilm to smoke. Yet with all these inducements, Khaparde in great anxiety, like his own relations, went away from Shirdi to amass wealth and fame and keep to his political, social and legal position or ambition. This, of course, is quite natural, and not objectionable but yet may be considered unfortunate by those who think that achievement of Paramartha is more important than all these. The fact that Khaparde did not take the latter view beams out from the diary. On the 13th March Khaparde was ready

to go away. A person who had seen such wonderful powers of Baba and noted how anxious Baba was to help him on to the highest by the use of his wonderful powers would surely have been anxious to meet Baba again in the flesh, or after Mahasamadhi of Baba, to commune with him in the Spirit. But strangest of all, Khaparde never cared to visit Baba in the flesh except when B. G. Tilak went to see him on the 19th of May 1917, and then stayed with Baba just for a few hours and never thought of visiting him again. As for the enjoyment of Baba's help, after Baba's Mahasamadhi in 1918, we have ample evidence to show that others were able to enjoy the same. But in the case of G. S. Khaparde, there is not the faintest suggestion that he ever cared to develop contact with Baba in his spiritual condition as *Apantaratma*. The reason is patent. The world, world, world, is ever with us and will not leave us, or rather to put it more bluntly, we will not leave the world and consequently the world will not leave us. It is a vicious circle never ending. That is the chief lesson that one derives from a study of this diary. Yet the reader must not fancy that Sri Khaparde's moral or spiritual position was low. His was a bright, high position as understood in orthodox circles and he achieved great success in several walks of life even after changing his original political faith at least as understood by others.

So far as services to Baba are concerned, we may add one more to the list of services. Perhaps Khaparde was instrumental in drawing Bala Gangadhar Tilak to visit Baba in 1917. This undoubtedly added to the glamour and prestige of Baba's durbar. If Khaparde's visit to Baba gave Baba some prestige, the visit of B.G. Tilak added to it a hundred times more. Unfortunately, the pity of the situation is this. In the relevant solitary page of the diary dated 19-5-1917 Khaparde notes it as the date of Tilak's visit without mentioning how and why Tilak made that visit. That information we derive from other sources and that is valuable. Tilak was far more advanced in his religious studies than Khaparde and Tilak's *Gita Rahasya* is highly valued and Baba himself showed his regard for it by asking one of his devotees who had that book in hand to go on reading it. When such a person visited Baba, it is worthwhile noting that his visit was not made for spiritual reasons. Tilak knew that Sai Baba's powers were vast and that

he knew the future and controlled men's minds. But the reason that made him approach Baba in 1917 was only to find out whether Baba approved of the lines on which he was working for national liberation and when he put that question to Baba, the latter studiously avoided giving him a direct answer. Baba told him, 'You are getting old. You require rest. Why don't you take rest?' This was very significant. Tilak was soon to pass away (in July 1920) and it was high time for him to retire from his political activities and develop his spiritual ones. As for the political aim, nothing more was wanted on the part of Tilak. Work on Tilak's lines had to end. Very soon the national work of reaching Independence was undertaken by a person who was not merely highly spiritually advanced but one whose method of activities, political and spiritual, ensured certainty of success, through the aid of not merely human beings inhabiting the country regardless of their distinctions of race, caste, or colour, but also through the aid of other nationalities and of God. Mahatma Gandhi was coming into the field and his lines were approved of both by Hindus and Muhammadans and his chances of success were therefore indisputably superior to Tilak's chances. Mahatma Gandhi's international reputation was a great factor in helping on the final development; it must be remembered that pressure was brought to bear on Britain in the great war of Hitler against Britain to demolish her empire in India. The sympathies of Russia, America and other great powers were with India, and Churchill was being pressed to liberate India in spite of his distinct dislike to liberate India. Hence, it was Baba's power to foresee the shape that Indian politics was assuming in the hands of the next great leader, who may be justly styled the Father of Indian Independence. That evidently made Baba give the above answer to Tilak. Tilak could not see the future but Baba could. Tilak could safely retire leaving the field entirely open to Mahatma Gandhi and himself concentrate upon his own spiritual interest and upon other religious work for the benefit of the country and humanity. This is not disclosed at all in the diary for, as already remarked, Khaparde's diary is several times more notable for its omissions than for its contents. All the same, the diary is of very great value to devotees who must be immensely thankful to G.S. Khaparde for maintaining it

and allowing it to be published. (G.S.K. 27-8-1854—1-7-1938). His marble statue was unveiled on 2-6-1954 by the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

CHAPTER VIII

Succession to Sai's Seat

The question has several times been raised whether Sri Sai Baba arranged for and left a successor to his position. He was Guru on certain lines to vast numbers of people who looked to him at Shirdi for governing their entire lives. Naturally one would expect that such a person with such vast and mighty power would provide his devotees with some means for their future guidance. Usually a Guru forms a Math or an Ashram and trains up, some time before he passes away, a pupil and even introduces him to those dependent on that Math or Ashram. This has been done time and again in various Maths (following the example of Yuvaraja being put in charge of the kingdom by the retiring Raja). This is necessary in the case of Rajas who leave vast possessions and who have definite policies to follow in respect of friends, enemies, neutrals, etc. In the case of several Maths and Ashrams, they are really similar to kingdoms, because they own properties and have their own policies in respect of various classes of their dependents, followers, and adherents and their own philosophical tenets to propagate. In respect of Sri Sai Baba, however, the most noticeable point is that he never tolerated the idea of forming a Math or an Ashram and treating himself as the head of it. In the exuberant enthusiasm of some devotees, since the arrival of Radhakrishna Aji in 1908, Sri Sai Baba, much against his will, was made to have a durbar with all the pomp and paraphernalia of kingship and with some properties at least which are necessitated by such pomp, etc. There was, therefore, a set of properties resembling regalia. But Baba's attitude towards them was not that of an owner rejoicing in the possession or proprietorship of his properties. On the other hand, he was '*Alipta*' a real fakir in regal roles. He persistently declined to put on a crown, to put on costly robes, and to get upon any palanquin, especially a silver palanquin, or have anything to do with silver articles. He had an utter disregard for wealth. Wealth was necessary for society no doubt, but, in his condition, his necessities of life were sufficiently provided by

his bhiksha dharma, that is true *fakiri*. He went out and stood in four or five places in the village, outside houses and shouted out, '*Pora Pori*', that is, 'boys and girls! *Roti Dhal lav*', that is, bring bread, etc. People from a number of houses invariably provided him with pieces of flat cakes (which he would carry in his cloth) and poured liquids containing lentils, etc., all together in one 'tumbrel' or tin pot. These formed his meal up to the last day of his life on earth.

Occasionally when he was too ill himself to go, he commissioned some devotee present to go out and do this Bhiksha dharma, the begging for him, and the naivedya was brought. For instance, Vaman Rao Prangovind Patil, B.A., LL.B., and G. G. Narke, M.A., M.Sc., were sent out by him to go and do the begging for him when he was unable to go out. Therefore, there was absolutely no need for him to keep any cash or buy anything for his food, and as for his bed, that was on the ground first and later he lay on a rough and cheap mattress called Gadi, with a few clothes spread thereon. These were all the minimal needs, and Baba had no other needs. Therefore Baba had no property and felt no necessity for any property. Yet devotees insisted on getting a horse, a car (ratha), silver palanquin with silver ornaments fixed to them, silver sticks to be carried in front of him, mace, whisks fitted on to silver sticks, etc. Polished tiles and chandeliers, artificial garden and Moons were used to decorate his chavadi, and thus he was made to appear like an aristocrat or royal person. Finally to oblige his overenthusiastic devotees, he fell into their humour, and then money was essential to run a royal court, a big Maharaja's durbar, and he began asking for large sums of money from those who would give it and who were even anxious to give it. Thus his monthly income exceeded that of a Provincial Governor. These would constitute his property but his vairagya came in the way. Every morning he would begin with zero and everyday he would scatter away the entire collection the same evening, and nothing would remain fit to be called his property. He would not have a bank balance or investment on mortgages, etc., and there was no such thing as a possession or property for him. So, there was no necessity for him to leave an heir or successor as kings and several maths do. When he passed away, he left only Rs. 16 in his pocket just enough to

purchase a coffin and bury his body. So far as the *Regalia* were concerned, an Association took charge of them in 1916 on the death of Radhakrishna, and Baba did not own them or care for them. When some silver horses attached to the palanquin were stolen and devotees complained of it to Baba, Baba's remark was 'Why was not the whole palanquin stolen?'

Some people naturally thought that he must have a successor to carry on his tradition.

Once upon a time Sai Baba seems to have had an idea that somebody might be found to carry on his Guru Parampara. Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe in his statement says that some people asked him, 'Baba, are you going to leave the world without entrusting your full powers and possessions to anyone?' Then, according to Sathe, Baba's reply was, 'What? Will there not be some man coming?' That is all. That coupled with Baba's treatment of Sri Kasinath Upasani Maharaj from 1911 onwards made some people believe at that time that Sri Sai Baba hoped that Kasinath Maharaj or Upasani Baba could be developed into his successor, having all his nature and powers, and being able to give all the help to persons accustomed to get their help from Sri Sai Baba. Sri Sai seems to have hoped no doubt in 1911-12 that Sri Kasinath would receive the full impress of Sai personality by perfect laya or merger in him and that on the expiry of four years from Sravan or July 1911, that is, by July 1915, he would be completely transformed into God, filled with Khandoba's grace, absolutely rid of his (Kasinath's) old vasanas, and perfectly prepared to continue Sai's work. So, Sai said, to him, 'Do nothing', (which means, 'Be receptive'). 'Stay in Khandoba's temple doing nothing for four years. Then you will be the recipient of Khandoba's full grace, that is, you will get all his powers, and Shama will come and pull you out of Khandoba's solitude and I will place you in the open. That is, your divinity will be recognised by all and every one will come and worship you as the Gurudeva¹. That might have been Sai Baba's hope in the beginning at any rate. For Baba's Guruparampara the sishya has to absorb the Gurudeva's soul into himself by concentrated love forgetting the entire world beside. This was possible for Sai at his early age of five when he contacted his Gurudeva and continued to

serve him for 10 or 12 years with concentrated love. Baba says that he loved nothing in the world except the Guru and if the Guru was not there, he wondered what his eyes were for. That is a romantic attachment to the Guru and an ability to banish all worldly thought unconnected with the Guru. But this was not possible for any person other than Baba, and especially for persons who have already dipped themselves into the world deep enough.

In the case of Kasinath Maharaj, he came into contact with Sai Baba for such training, only at the age of 41. He had already had two wives, was living with a third wife and had developed disease. And he was anxious for the cure of the disease to resume his domestic life with her wife and continue his position in his family. He had his attachments and there was no particular reason why he should not have his worldly affections. The idea of being completely absorbed in God and forgetting all things except the Guru all day long was totally foreign to Upasani Baba as to so many other aspirants and sadhakas. It was to some extent adopted by him during the three years of his stay with Baba, for then, whatever sufferings he had only made him think of Baba, and in any case Baba was very close to him, and Baba looked after his safety, and there was plenty of mental and unseen contact with Sai Baba. ²¹Kasinath himself had been ordered not to go and meet Sai Baba in person, but there were many persons like Chidambaram Pilai, Kamalakar Dixit, and others who went both to Sai Baba and to Upasani Baba. He was constantly hearing about Sai Baba, and thinking naturally only of Baba when at Shirdi. Other objects were kept out of his mind by life at Shirdi especially under Sai's care. So, to some extent, his mind was directed to Sai Baba, and Baba used every opportunity for developing

²¹ * BCS 40. Night and day. I think and think of my people. I con their names over and over again.

To S.B. Dhumal.— Bhau. the whole of last night I had no sleep. I lay thinking and thinking of you.

At every step, I have to take care of you. Else, what will happen to you, God knows!

Kasinath's soul even through his misfortunes. However, the course prescribed by Sai Baba, namely, thinking only of Sai Baba, was not fully possible even at Shirdi. Kasinath's contact with outside persons could never be obliterated.

Mischievous young persons tortured him. Jealous persons were scandalizing him. A few admirers came and paid their homage to him. He told stories to some of them, and lectured to some others. He kept on his old intellectual lines of advance and wrote out 17 excellent Sanskrit stanzas in 1912 in praise of Sai Baba. He kept up his intellectuality and his learning as important assets. For Sai's course, intellectuality was not wanted. It was an obstacle. One must forget that he is learned and a master of Sanskrit or other language, which would all raise his Egoism, *Abhimana*. One must begin with oneself as a thorough zero, and think of, and work in respect of, Baba and nothing but Baba. This was achieved by Baba at Selu but was not possible in the case of Sri Upasani Maharaj at Shirdi (and was totally impossible after escaping from Shirdi). He could not forget his sorrows and think of Sai Baba in such a way as to deaden his feelings towards harassing events and incidents even when living at Shirdi.

In order, perhaps, to help him to regain some degree of assurance in the midst of all his troubles and fear of approaching death, Sai Baba started Upasani's worship on the 15th July 1913. He sent Chandra Bai Borkar to Khandoba's temple to worship Upasani in exactly the same way in which she and others worshipped Sai Baba himself. So, she brought her plateful of puja *samans*, and started doing puja to Kasinath. She pulled out his leg, wanted to clean it, paint it with turmeric, etc., and place sandal paste, etc. But Upasani objected. He did not want the worship. He wished to be left alone and he had no idea as to the real significance of Baba's sending that lady to worship him. The significance of that puja was that from that day onwards, Kasinath was fully earmarked as a Guru to be worshipped by people and to have no more sense of ownership--or anything personal in his body or reputation. He existed or should exist like Gods, images, etc. for the public and only for the public. It is with that

idea that Chandra Bai was sent up. When Kasinath objected, the lady, however, with her strong hands pulled out his legs, did the puja for them, waved a camphor lamp before him, carried a cup of milk to his mouth as naivedya. etc., and told him that his body was not his but belonged to the public. This cup he dashed down and angrily forbade her from coming again to worship him. That no doubt stopped the puja for a time. Very few persons at Shirdi were as sincerely and earnestly anxious to worship Upasani as Chandra Bai did. But a few did exist, and a few of them did go to Kasinath at Khandoba's temple and tried to worship him. But as fate would have it, Nanavali, a sturdy half-crazy ascetic, used to come and disturb the puja. When others threw flowers at Upasani, he threw dirt. When others offered stotra, he offered abuse, insult, and vilification, and once even tied up Upasani with a rope to a pillar, and danced and romped about, treating Upasani with utter contempt. This was all gall and wormwood to Sri Upasani. He might not care very much for worship. But he resented very much his being humiliated in the presence of his devotees. There was however no way of escape. Nanavali was a sturdy stout person ready to do violence to any one on the slightest provocation. Nanavali regarded Upasani with the same feelings as several of the Shirdi villagers, namely, that he was bringing discredit and danger to Sri Sai Baba, and Nanavali very much wished to get rid of Upasani (as he wanted to get rid of H.V. Sathe) from Shirdi. And it must be admitted that he was successful in achieving his object in both cases. The pestering which Kasinath had from Nanavali and the Muhammadan boys and others was so unbearable that in July 1914, one year after his puja was started, Kasinath could not any longer endure his stay at Shirdi. and he determined to cut short his serving Baba at Shirdi. What was miraculously started in June-July 1911 came to a very abrupt and unfortunate end in the sishya's running away from his Guru without even going to see him. If he had gone to see him, he might have been prevented from leaving Shirdi in 1914, just as he was prevented in 1911. For one reason or another, Kasinath avoided seeing Sai Baba, and with the help of Dr. Chidambaram Pilfai and his friend Dr. Ganpat Rao of Sindhe, effected his escape (nocturnally) from Shirdi and stayed away for over a year visiting various places.

Once he left Shirdi, his thoughts and plans were all his own. They were not directed to Sai Baba, or by Baba, and his own original ideas were running on lines totally different from Sai Baba's, and they were running away at a tangent from Sai Baba's²².

So, after July 1914, Sri Kasinath Upasani Maharaj visited Sindhe, Nagpur, and Kharagpur, and there achieved fame through his moral tales, pravachanas, and by his strict vairagya. The seeds sown in July 1913 of his worship by Chandra Bai bore ample fruit in 1915 at Kharagpur where hundreds were swarming to listen to him and especially to his tales, after Christmas. He was fast ripening into a Guruship of his own. He had developed several powers when under Sai's influence, and they were further developing as time went on. He became a Sadguru to a large number of people from 1915 onwards. But that Gurudom was not a succession to Sai Baba. The lines of thought, the lines of dealing and the nature of the two personalities, were markedly different²³ as Upasani had cut himself away before the full period of time necessary for him to become Sai like. This is what one is compelled to infer from the facts known to us.

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- ²² especially in such vital mailers as living with women and storing property. Sai Baba avoided both- U. Maharaj stuck to both.

²³ *for instance, the thorough blotting of his reputation by the campaign of Divekar Sastri through Kirloskar magazine would have been impossible if Sai Baba's *anasakti* or avoidance of having any store of wealth or women as his had been persistently carried out by Sri Upasani after he left Sai. It was his accumulation of wealth and women that were the chief grounds of numbers hating or despising him, and it is these that resulted in the total loss of popularity or esteem after 1935. It is his persistency getting girls in 1932 by marrying them to an image held in his hand that was the immediate provocation for the passing of Bombay Devadasi Act 1935 forbidding such marriages.

But we need not dogmatise, it is enough to note that Sai did not state to the public when they asked him, what they were to do after his demise, that Upasani Baba would be his successor. On the other hand, he said to Damia (Damodar Rasane) and Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad, 'Think of me, and I am there'. He said, 'Mother, I am not going away. In any place where you think of me, I am there'. ("I shall be active even from the tomb"). That is how Baba arranged for the continued protection of his devotees, not by leaving a successor but by continuing his personality and allowing himself to contact devotees on occasions of their prayer and even otherwise. Whether people think of him or not, he, as the all-pervading soul, is and would be ever watching and guiding his bhaktas especially. Sai Baba identified himself with Allah quite correctly, because he was merged in Allah and had no interests of his own. That is the only way in which we can contact Allah, that is, through a person merged in Allah. He can act also as Khandoba, Lakshminarayan, Vittoba, etc., which are all individual facets of Allah (*Angani-anya devatah Tait. U*). As Baba himself told the Rohilla, Pandharpur Vittobha and the other Hindu Gods are all Allah (BCS 60).

In this matter, Sri M.B. Rege gives us the correct clue as to how to treat Baba. When Baba was in the body, his connection with the body gave a colouring to our notions of his personality. His personality was connected with the particular Baba body and gave the people the idea that he was a Muhammadan personality they were dealing with, with such and such peculiarities and such and such merits, etc. But when once he left the body, he was no longer to be identified with that body. He had receded into the unknown, the unseen, the beyond; and thereafter had no peculiarities, no particularities, no particular merits or demerits. He was merely God. So, Mr. M.B. Rege says, 'Now, I think of him only as God'. This view of Mr. M.B. Rege is widely prevalent amongst the bhaktas that contacted or do contact Baba. In the case of those who contact Baba subsequent to his Mahasamadhi, it is only as God that they come to him. They are in distress, and they want relief. They cry unto him, and they get relief. That is, He is the divine that protects them. Therefore, it is easy for persons contacting Baba after his Mahasamadhi to deal with him as God. The fame of his deeds,

conveyed through innumerable experiences, during his life in the flesh, tends to confirm this idea, for, even during his fleshy life, Baba had said, 'I am Allah; I am Khandoba, Lakshminarayan, Vittoba, Maruti,' etc., and had shown himself in those forms.

So far as powers are concerned, Baba's powers are seen to be as divine as that of any other forms of God. As for his divine mercy, kindness and love, they are so widespread, so just, and so great as to fully justify the application of the term 'Divine' to him. Every experience of every devotee that comes to him now makes him feel that he is dealing with Divinity, a good Guardian Angel, or Ishta Devata, if he likes to term him so. So Baba's assurance of the continuance of his protecting personality after Mahasamadhi (BCS 47-52) is a sufficient reason why Baba did not mind the absence of any person to get into his Gadi at Shirdi and continue his Guruparampara there. It is not necessary to discuss the claims of X, Y or Z, who occasionally put forward the claim that he is the successor of Sai Baba. A few of such claims seem to have been put forward. But they were all pooh-poohed and there is no set of Sai Bhaktas that we are aware of who are deliberately saying and holding to the position that X, Y or Z was the successor to Baba's Gadi. That, however, is a different matter from the question whether there is now any living person who has to be identified with Sai Baba. Just as the Avatars left Nava Nathas as their representatives on earth, sometimes people come forward and say 'I am an *Avatar* of Sai Baba'. This sort of claim has been put forward in various places at various times. It is not necessary to narrate all of them even if that were possible. But it might be stated that to the knowledge of this author himself three or four came forward with such claims. For instance a young man at Karur professed to be Sai Baba, and was attracting to himself worship and money. But this was soon put a stop to and the author discovered, after personally meeting the Karur boy, the absolute hollowness of his claim. Some others also put forward similar claims. A girl at Bangalore put forward such a claim, and the author, on seeing her, discovered the worthlessness of the claim. It is not necessary to mention other cases. But these have occasionally been mentioned in the columns of the 'Sai Sudha' or other papers and invariably

on investigation, it has been noted that any person, claiming to be Sai Baba, does not show even a very small fraction of Baba's nature. Mere power to read thought, mere clairvoyance, mere production of articles from empty box or bands and mere devotion to Sai or God, will not constitute one into an Avatar of Sai.

So, we might conclude this chapter by saying that Sai left no successor to his seat, that there was no seat to succeed to (as God's seat can never be vacant) and that there is no person living who can be recognised by all as having the entire Sai spirit or Soul in his body, that is, who can be regarded as the Avatar of Sai. That question arises because of the statements of Sai Baba to several of his devotees. When Sri M.B. Rege, Master Tarkhad, and others were requesting Sai to protect them in future lives, Sai said that he was going to be reborn birth after birth. For instance, for the three more births necessary for Master to achieve liberation, he would be reborn and be with him. He made a similar promise to M. B. Rege and also to others. Kaka Dixit (H.S. Dixit) seems to have said, 'Baba said that he would appear suddenly as a boy of eight and show himself, that is, his powers and nature'. We have not till now discovered any boy of eight, who had Baba's wonderful nature and powers. Even if he should take birth somewhere, his *Apantaratma Rupa* is still there and is still helping. Therefore the question of our finding any person now who is the Avatar of Baba need not be further discussed. It is sufficient to say that those who are anxious to benefit by Sai Baba will be very wise if they confine themselves to the well-known history of Sai Baba; and if they adopt the usual and well-known methods for contacting Sai Baba of Shirdi, who is now no other than God himself, they would succeed, and they need not be panting to discover whether there is any Avatar of Sai Baba or any one who is entitled to call himself the successor to Sai Baba for the Shirdi Gadi. *God's seat we repeat is never vacant.* Sai Baba was and is God always being immersed in the God idea, and carrying out God's lilas when he was in the flesh. His Ritambhara Prajna or Antarjñana, as it was called, his control over men's minds and material objects at any distance, his power to appear and do anything anywhere, can only be called divine. These powers we read of in his lilas before 1918, and we read of the same also after 1918. Sri Sai Baba's

kindness in stirring up people's minds to contact him now seem to extend itself in various places in remarkable forms and ways which are not always understood by us, but which are to spread faith in Baba. What Sri Baba did at Coimbatore in 1943, at Ramachandrapuram in 1950-54, at Ahmedabad in 1953, and at Thotapalli Hills in 1954 and in so many other places, have been brought to public notice and have greatly increased the numbers of Sai bhaktas. These recent lilas (about which further details will be given in a later chapter) have strengthened people's faith in Baba and are bound soon to make Sai faith reach all the distant corners of this country, a faith that deals with Sai Baba as God and not as a human being holding a position that has to be filled up by a successor.

(End of Part II)

Preface to Part III

The task undertaken in this biography is to sketch how Baba's influence spread out like a tiny banyan seed into dimensions which fill up forests. The way in which this force, obviously a divine force, is being worked is mostly hidden and cannot be completely grasped by any one. But persons can have with some bhakti and effort a rough idea of the main lines of march. The most important way in which the influence of a divine spirit expands is the very magnetism it exerts. The magnetic Baba with his wonderful qualities and power to save his devotees from every harm, including the danger of death and to provide all things necessary for one's temporal and spiritual welfare, naturally attracts the various pieces of steel called devotees to Himself. In some cases, no doubt, the attraction is based upon rinanubandha, but whether due to that or not, the force is exerted and persons are pulled to the wonderful dynamo. Baba said, 'I draw my devotees to Me from thousands of miles even and they come to Me first under one pretext or another, i.e. for the purpose of getting one worldly gain or other, and after their needs are satisfied to some extent at least, they adhere to Me and their welfare here and hereafter is looked after'. Most bhaktas that we have noticed in Part II were drawn (Upasani Baba and Khaparde) for specific temporal gains, but they stuck on and became very good adherents of Baba. In the case of a few, it is not the temporal gain that attracts. It is something within, something unintelligible, just like love at first sight of a pure girl and a pure bachelor. There is something that attracts and, things being favourable, the love grows stronger and stronger, and what was once a thin silk line becomes as strong as a ship's cord. In the case of Mahlsapathy, we have already noticed that his attachment began with his great love for all holy ones and his noting that Baba was very high in his purity and lofty nature and was respected by even the locally residing saints like Devidas and Janakidas. So he began to worship Baba and the more he worshipped, the more he loved, Baba returns the love of his devotee ten-fold and a hundred-fold. If the devotee takes one step towards him, Baba takes ten steps towards him. If the devotee gives him one rupee, Baba

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gives him ten rupees in return, and what is more valuable than rupees or earthly goods is that Baba shields him with all his wonderful power and saves him from harm by using his *Prathibha* (omniscience) or *Antarjnana*, noting what dangers are present in each place and what dangers await a devotee at what hour. Thus the devotee perceives that the only God that he is going to see and get the benefit of is this living Sai and gets powerfully attached to him. Baba used to say to Mahlsapathy 'You go; I am with you. There are thieves (snakes) near your house. Take a lamp.' Mahalsapathy found that every letter of Baba's statement was truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Baba used and uses his wonderful *Prathibha* or *Ritambhara prajna* for the benefit of the devotees whom he drew and draws calling them his own children. Each one of these devotees gets magnetised by Baba's dynamo and in turn attracts others without any propaganda or preaching. Mahlsapathy got thoroughly ennobled, and fit for Sadgati. For he said at the time of his death, 'I am going to heaven', and he passed away in perfect peace and purity substantiating the truth and correctness of his statement. The example of Mahlsapathy must have influenced hundreds and thousands of persons who came to Baba, and saw Mahlsapathy and Baba, though Mahlsapathy was not a propagandist or a preacher. Similarly other lovers of Baba sacrificing their all to him, their avocations or life, their property, their soul, and their all to him and loving him with an ardour which knows no limits, have become powerful propagandists without their knowing that fact. People saw how they prospered under Baba's care, and flocked in numbers to Sai Baba in the flesh or to his Samadhi knowing that he still lives after his Samadhi and still guards and provides for all his bhaktas. Hence, in showing the development of the Sai movement, the most proper course would be not to give a short account of the chief lovers of Baba. The total number of lovers of Baba would be innumerable, and having enjoyed his protection, any ordinary human being must overflow with gratitude and love, and myriads were in that condition. But we should select here just a few whose contact was particularly noticeable and who therefore may be now regarded by any sensitive reader as being the magnet through whom the original Sai Baba

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dynamo is drawing him to itself. The chief of these lovers and the earliest is Bayyaji Bai, the wife of the Patel of Shirdi village. When Baba first visited the place, this Bayyaji Bai was unaccountably attracted to Baba's service. She found that Baba was pure and without knowing anything about his future siddhi development, went on attending to his wants and supplied him with food. Even when he was rambling away from the hamlet into jungles not minding the time for meal, this pious and loving Bayyaji Bai would run out in quest of him, look for him under tree after tree and after finding him, place his meal before him and wait patiently till he ate it. Baba in those early days was given to much of Adhyatma or introspective study and devotion. Earthly wants did not bother him. He would go on thinking and thinking. From his later statement we find that he was thinking of Allah or the "fakir". By this term he would denote his Guru and his god, for the two were blended into one for him. It is by that wonderful concentration, all powers developed in him. As is stated in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI, Chapter XV, "What power is impossible for him who perfectly concentrates on God and thereby merges in Him?" So, when Baba was neglecting his own body, this lady ran up and served him out of pure love and not with a view to obtain any material gain. That is the true test of love, namely, getting deeply interested in and attached to a person without caring for any benefit by way of return, but the law of justice, law of God, as represented by Baba also, is that self-sacrificing love, especially in serving persons absorbed in God, never goes for nothing. Srimad Bhagavata XI (17) 44 says—

Samuddharanti ye vipram seedantam matparayanam

Tan uddharishye na chirat apadbhyo nouriva arnavat.

This means (Krishna says) : 'Those who support fully a God-absorbed man in his troubles (physical), then I (Lord Krishna), will support and lift up from all dangers and calamities, just as a boat saves a man fallen into the ocean'. So Baba did support and lift up Bayyaji Bai and her family with wonderful consideration, sympathy, and love. For instance, her son Tatyā, about whom more will be mentioned later on, became rich by Baba's grace. All his troubles were averted. But it is not the anticipation of coming benefit that moved Bayyaji Bai. It was pure

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unadulterated love for the sake of love. This love descended from the mother to her son Tatyá Patel. The phenomenon appears to be most unaccountable, but Baba furnished the key for this unaccountable and powerful cord of love of Bayyaji Bai. Baba said, This is my sister in previous janmas, and she has always been supporting me.' Therefore, this unaccountable and powerful love was due to the fact that it is a continuation of unseen but powerful vasanas of previous births. The Bhagavad Gita says:-

1. *Purvabhyasena tenaiva Hriyate hyavasopisah.*

This means, "man is drawn by the tendencies of his previous lives even against or in spite of his own will".

2. *Tatra tarn buddhi samyogam labhate Pourvadehikam.*

This means, " The ideas and tendencies of one of birth linger in one in the next". Bayyaji Bai was drawn by her previous vasanas to Baba. In the case of the other lives that we are going to discuss hereafter, we may take it that mostly it is the unseen vasanas operating from the distant past in former lives that accounted for the love. Bayyaji Bai's deep love, as we said already, has been the seed of a whole forest of lovers springing therefrom. Bayyaji Bai followed the bent of her nature and served Baba and passed away. But as will be seen from the following account of her son that love was continued and developed through her son, who attracted the attention of and became the medium of love for numerous others.

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This image of Sai Baba was unexpectedly delivered at the residence of G.R. Dabholkar, author of Shri Sai Satcharit during Holi festival in 1917 in accordance with Dabholkar's dream.

LIFE OF SAI BABA

Volume – III

by

LIFE OF SAI BABA

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Publishers:

All India Sai Samaj (Regd)
Mylapore, Chennai-600 004
Tamilnadu, India.

Acknowledgement:

Shri K. Ramaswamy, Past President,
All India Sai Samaj (Regd), Chennai.

About HH Pujyasri B. V. Narasimha Swami Maharaj:

HH Pujyasri B. V. Narasimha Swami Maharaj came from an orthodox Brahmin family. He did his Law from Madras Law College and set up his legal practice at Salem, Tamilnadu. He soon rose to great heights in his profession and was in the forefront in the freedom struggle. While attending a Pithru Shraadh ceremony in his home, Swamiji suffered a rude shock when his two children drowned in the well outside. The terrible tragedy made Swamiji give up all family and worldly connections and he became a wandering traveller, bent on knowing the ultimate Truth in Life. His quest took him to the ashrams of various saints and sages, spending a few years with Sri Ramana Maharishi, Sri Meher Baba and finally to Sri Upasani Baba of Sakori in search of, as he termed it a precious 'Kohinoor' – the Supreme manifested in a saint who could satisfy his spiritual quest! Sri Narayana Maharaj whom Swamiji met in his travels near Poona, had assured him that he would get the 'grand jewel' that he was after. Prompted by Sri Upasani Baba one of the foremost disciples of Shri Sai Baba, Swamiji visited Shirdi and it was from the tomb that Supreme, in the form of Shri Sai Baba bestowed on him Grace and gave his Sakshatkar, Swamiji had found his grand jewel 'the Kohinoor'!

Thereafter Swamiji spent his life in writing, building temples and meeting people in the service of Sri Sai Baba. In 1953 he started writing the "Life of Sai Baba", the crest jewel of all his publications. "The Life of Sai Baba" is an immortal classic, an immense work of 1,000 pages in four volumes weaving a vast tapestry of detailed analytical and authentic Life of Sri Sai Baba.

BABA'S LOVERS

- 1. R. B. Purandhare**
- 2. Sri Santaram Balwant Nachne, Dahanukar**
- 3. Damodar Sawalram Rasane**
- 4. Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiva Tarkhad**
- 5. M. B. Rege**
- 6. Rao Bahadur S. B. Dhumal**
- 7. H. V. Sathe**
- 8. G.G. Narke**
- 9. Sri Naraya Ashram, Sanyasi of Wai**
- 10. Kusa Bhav**
- 11. Rao Saheb Yeshwant Janardhan Galwankar**
- 12. Sri Rao Bahadur Moreswar Pradhan**
- 13. Baba's contact with Muslims**
- 14. Chote Khan and others**

15. **Abdul**
16. **Abdul Rahim Rangari**
17. **Abdullah Jan**
18. **Adam Dalali**
19. **B. V. Dev**
20. **P. R. Avaste**
21. **Chakra Narain**

R. B. PURANDHARE

We have already dealt with this matter in part. Of the order possible among Sai's lovers as regards the order of chronology, and the order of merit, all the orders luckily coincide in the case of Bayyaji Bai, the first and the greatest lover of Baba. Tatyapa Patil comes second both chronologically and in point of merit, that is, the extent of love. The number of lovers of Baba after Tatyapa is too great to discover any chronological arrangement among them. On the other hand, we are obliged to pick up some cases in which there is a good account of the experiences of such a lover of Baba. For that reason, we might take up R. B. Purandhare as an example. Possibly there may be others who far exceeded him in love for Baba and who were drawn to Baba before him. In fact, Radhakrishna Ayi and Abdul Nivaskar seem to be brilliant gems of love that came earlier; but of none of them have we got such a good account as Purandhare. Purandhare in a long account of his experiences has given a very interesting and fairly full description of his contact with Baba. We cannot avoid however mixing up Tatyapa with Purandhare and others, because the line of parallelism and other common features run very much together in these cases.

The great question in the case of the lovers of Baba is, how can we possibly describe the extent of love and its intensity. Love is not a thing measured by a thermometer or by the quantity of good or sacrifices rendered, though all these do count. We may roughly begin a statement of how love works and then deal with Purandhare's case. When two persons are greatly attached to each other we find that no other expression would describe the situation than love. Friendship,

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admiration, gratitude, loyalty, faithfulness, regard, worship, all these blend together in many a case, as it did in Purandhare's case also. So, let us begin an account of how Purandhare's love began.

In the case of most people approaching Baba within the last decade of his life, they were impelled to go to Baba by hearing accounts of Baba. Das Ganu was mostly the source of this inspiration. Das Gnu, though himself not pre-eminent in his love for Baba, had the wonderful charm of eloquence and some amount of real bhakti. He was an expert in the Kirtankars' line, that is, in telling harikathas about saints and holy persons. He generally began with an account of the day's topic, say, Tukaram or Namdev, but he always kept Sai Baba's picture close to him and never failed to refer to Sri Sai Baba as the present day illustration of greatness of the bhakti of the ancient or mediaeval saints. He would say, 'Here is Tukaram's great love and greatness in surrendering to God and getting the most marvellous benefits. If you wish to know if there is any such person now in the flesh who can give you the same benefit, then I will tell you 'Here is this Sai Baba. He is present day representative of medieval saintship. What Ramdas was to Sivaji, that Sai Baba is to innumerable people who approach him in the proper spirit'. Then he would give an account of some of the marvellous lilas and dealings of Baba with his devotees. Thus, besides the fact that thousands attended his kirtan, his account and inspiration would pass on from one to another, and after his kirtan people, having learnt of Sai Baba, would rush to see him. It is rarely that one gets a chance to meet a Tukaram in the flesh, a Namdev in the flesh, and if one gets a chance, surely one does not wish to lose it. so, having heard of Sai Baba from Das Ganu and others. Purandhare's nature was fired with the ambition of contacting Sai Baba. Purandhare's own nature was very simple and highly emotional. He was a plain man and did not care to twist and turn phrases in describing things. When he found that Sai Baba was a powerful saint living in the flesh and was showering benefits like Ramdas. Akkalkote Maharaj and other Samarthas, he naturally wanted to take the earliest opportunity to go to Shirdi and that he did. In his case, going to Shirdi was not an easy matter. he was only a petty clerk on Rs. 35 per month. he had to support a family of four or five including his mother, his wife, his brother and a child. yet, the spark of enthusiasm in his heart did not find these to be difficulties. He fixed upon a certain day to leave for Shirdi, and if we see what he did, we will see exactly what love does. He was naturally to go with his wife and mother. But his young child was unwell and the mother thought that it was foolish to risk taking a little child with fever for such a great distance. Bombay to Shirdi. Yet, Purandhare would not brook a denial of his wishes. He must go and he

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would leave and take the child with him inspite of his mother's protest. Look at this! He is taking risks with his only child's health. And what for? To meet the great Sai. The burning enthusiasm of his love for Baba bore down all considerations of ordinary precautions or medial advice and they did go. His love was accompanied by intense faith. So, Baba justified his faith and his love in what followed. When the child was taken with an illness to Shirdi, it quickly regained health instead of suffering. this is a *chamatkar* of Baba and it is these *chamatkars* which first tell upon an emotional mind. Upasani Baba says,

*Aneka Ascruta Atarkysya Lila Vilasam
Samavishkrita Isana Bhasvat Prabhavam*

in his Sai Mahima stotra, composed in 1912. That is Sai Baba's divine or superhuman character was evidenced by innumerable and unheard of miraculous achievements and *chamatkars*. Yet he was

*Ahambhavahinam Prasannatmabhavanam
Namami Iswaram sadgurum sainatham.*

Purandhare found that his child's health far from being ruined by the journey was set right completely at Shirdi. This in itself was sufficient to constitute one of those *Aneka Ascruta Atarkysya Lila Vilasaih*. here is Baba's superhuman power. here is kindness towards those that flock to his feet. If supreme power and kindness are combined, what more is wanted to give us the idea of God's help? So, Purandhare was made firmer in his faith and deeper in his love of Sai Baba by this occurrence and this was the only one. At every step he had full faith in Baba's omniscience and omnipotence and he found that his faith was fully justified by the subsequent events. Baba knew exactly when Purandhare should start, when he should stay at a place like Nasik, a holy place of pilgrimage, which his mother wanted to visit, and how long he should stay there. When Purandhare acted upon Baba's directions, it seemed to several that he was running foolish risks, but everything that Baba said occurred exactly as he said it would. he was told to stay one day at Nasik and to proceed on the next day. When he went there, he found that cholera was attacking some members of his family, such as his brother, and he was advised to get away. But he remembered that Baba had said that he must stay one day at Nasik. So he did stay. on the next day with ill-health in the family, he found that he was perfectly safe in the following Baba's directions to the very letter. This confirms a man in the extent of reverence and faith that he has in Baba. Reverence and faith combined with thankfulness for the resulting good, form an excellent basis for the development of love. in

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this way, his love for Baba got more and more deep-rooted and his faith, being justified, was the means for so many others catching on to that faith. Baba's kindness towards him was remarkable even from the beginning. Why should Baba care so much for this petty clerk who went to Shirdi for the first time? That is the question, which any one would ask. And one would like to know the root of that love. The root of love is not always traceable, but in this particular case we have Baba's own statement to help us. When Purandhare's mother told Baba to look after him, Baba's reply was, "I have known him for generations. I have guarded him from his infancy in front and behind. I will not eat even a bit of food without him". That is, as much as to say that Baba remembered the love relations between Purandhare and himself in former lives.

Purvabhysena Tenaiva Hriyate hyavasopisab
Tatra tam buddhi samyogam Labhate Pourvadehikam

These two are extracts from the Bhagavat Gita constantly quoted to show that purva vasanas, that is, traits in the soul existing in previous births follow one in subsequent births also. In addition to the Bhagavat Gita chapter 16, Verse 10, Baba consciously expressed that love that existed between the two, but Purandhare felt the same love unconsciously and was being pulled to Baba. Baba added no doubt that he draws his devotee's even from thousands of miles away and his drawing is like a boy drawing a bird to whose foot one end of a string is attached while the other is held by him. The bird cannot choose but go to the boy when the boy pulls it. Baba's statement was that he similarly pulled persons who had former contact with him which is Rinanubhandha and Purandhare was expressly one of those greatly attached to him in a former life. that may explain how he run so many risks like taking a sick child to Shirdi from Bombay for the purpose of seeing Baba, with no ostensible gain to explain the risk taken.

having hinted at the origin of the love link between Baba and Purandhare we may proceed to sketch out how this seed of love in the latest janma manifested itself. Purandhare was always giving vent to every emotional feeling strongly. if he felt angry, he would at once burst out in a fit of anger and quarrel. if he felt love, h would be equally ready to express it. Baba had to warn him against his quick temper and thus improve him in respect of this first concern. Baba used his emotional nature for developing love. Conferring of benefits is the surest means of the development of love. Baba conferred benefits in a very peculiar, and often in a very mysterious way. The manner of

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benefits being conferred as well as the nature of the benefit being conferred, tended to equally develop the mysterious elements of love.

Purandhare was a poor clerk as we have already stated, and had no worldly financial ambitions. He was living as a tenant in some house and had to face a lot of trouble in consequence. Now we will take the first remarkable benefit Baba conferred on him. When we love a child we love to adorn it's body with fine clothes and ornaments etc., When Baba, with His wonderful powers loved Purandhare, He could not endure the idea of this good fellow being ill-treated by all those whom he had to contact in occupying a rented house. So, the first thing that struck Baba was that He should make this poor clerk own a bungalow of his own. The idea that a clerk on Rs. 35 monthly salary could purchase a plot of land and build a bungalow on it was so queer that Purandhare could not think of it. Yet, very early in his contact with Baba, Baba told him definitely, 'Bhav, you had better buy a plot of land and build a bungalow on it'. Purandhare naturally thought it was beyond practical politics, and he could not act upon it. Baba was impatient. When Purandhare went to Him again and again without building the house.

Baba got provoked and even threw stones at him. Baba told others, for instance, Bade Baba, to go and tell this R.B. Purandhare, whom He called 'Ram Bhav', 'Ask that man whether he thinks me to be a man or a beast? Why does he not act on my words?' When Bade Baba came and asked Purandhare and found out what Baba's advice was, he also thought that it was not a question of practical politics for this Rs.35 clerk to buy land and build a bungalow on it. Similarly, Baba complained to Nana Chandorkar and Kaka Dixit about this intransigent devotee and told Nana to ask that fellow whether he thought that Baba was a man or a beast. When Nana Chandorkar went to Purandhare and asked him what Baba referred to, Purandhare frankly told him the situation. Then Nana went back at once to Baba's feet and said, 'This matter is beyond his means; if you so desire, we will build a house for him and give it to him'. Baba's reply was most remarkable, he said, 'I do not want anybody else to pay for it'. There is a lot of money of this Ram Bhav in My Sirkar and I alone will enable him to build. Nana could not understand how this Sirkar was going to work, and there the matter seemed to end. But Baba kept on digging into Purandhare.

At last it occurred to Purandhare that he might get at least a site. There were plenty of sites available at Bandra. A site in a place far away from popular quarters would be fairly cheap. Anyhow even that price was unavailable. At once that friend instead of saying anything

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else came and placed the money before him so that he could at once take the plot. Purandhare asked whether he should execute a document for the money and what interest he should pay. That friend declined to have any document or any terms. He simply said, 'Go on; build, Let every other thing wait'. Purandhare then bought the land and secured the title deed for the land. So he had taken one step in the direction in which Baba wanted him to move. But it is one thing to have a site and a totally different thing to have a bungalow built on it. Those who have built bungalows know to their cost that actual building far exceeds the original estimate. Purandhare was faced with further difficulties. He did not build. But when he went up to Baba without building it, Baba got angry with him and found fault with him for everything and for nothing. The conduct of Baba seemed to be to others most unaccountable.

For instance, on the Ram Navami celebration of Baba's day, Purandhare and a friend of his were commissioned to regulate the huge crowds that were flowing towards Baba to take darshan. Purandhare did his best to reduce the force on the confluence towards Baba. But Baba got angry and said, 'You fellow, you did not give Me peace whether I am in Mosque or elsewhere. You allow these people to rush at Me and give Me no peace'. This was obviously an unreasonable remark, for Purandhare had done his very best. The crowds in those days were so huge that procession of the darshan seekers would extend for many furlongs from the mosque where Baba sat. It is not possible for one or two fellows to control such a huge crowd; Still Baba got angry and severely threatened him with punishment of all sorts. Baba said that He would even bury him in the Mosque at His own feet with His own hands. The way in which Purandhare put up with this apparently unreasonable treatment is evidence of the strong love that was growing in His heart.

Love endureth all things. Love does not blame. Love does not find fault. So he quietly endured without offering a word of explanation for all this treatment. Then Baba treated him in a different way. Having exhausted the threats and abuses, Baba inflicted on him, by His own mysterious means, a severe neuralgic headache, which Purandhare went on enduring, nights and days. Once Bade Baba came and asked Baba to give Purandhare some palliative, Baba simply said, 'That fellow would not listen to me'. Then Bade Baba said, 'He is working heart and soul in your service. So kindly give him some treatment'. No treatment given to Purandhare would give him relief. It was not Baba's idea to give him relief till he finished his building. So all the time he stayed at Shirdi, he suffered intense pain. He was asked to go back his

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home and carry on his work. Purandhare went home fully convinced that this headache inflicted by Baba would only cease, as Baba said, after he built the house. How is he to get the money?

It occurred to him that the office lent to the establishment some sums for building purposes for building a tenement. So he applied and got from his office a sum of Rs. 500 and got ready some materials like bricks, etc., for building the bungalow. He was too unwell to look to the building. So his brother went up and looked after the building work. Quick building is jerry building and is bound to have serious defects. The wada or bungalow that was put up in the course of a month by Purandhare's brother was built so hastily that in a short time, in a year or so, there were cracks on the walls. It must be remembered that the building was built on agricultural land without any settu or hard foundation. Evidently the hasty foundations laid for this wada were insufficient to keep the walls together and in perpendicular position. So cracks developed. Anyhow it was built rapidly in a month, and Purandhare with his orthodox ideas wanted to do Vastupuja himself on the building before occupying it. So he went up and did Vastupuja and strangely enough, only after he went and occupies this bungalow, his neuralgic headache ceased.

Here is a strange instance of Baba's Love forcing a man to get a bungalow when he could hardly afford it. There were other defects besides this jerry building. The site was a lonely site in the midst of a waste. There were no neighboring houses to give one safety of company. Purandhare was simply afraid of that, with young wife and child at home, things were not safe, especially when he went away to his office. Baba told him however, 'Don't you be afraid. I am there guarding your wife all the time'. This was found to be true, because, though Baba's form was not always seen, no danger befell this family living a solitary life in the midst of a waste.

Now let us examine this method of exhibiting love. When we have a person, we want to confer benefits. Baba loved Purandhare and was conferring a bungalow on him. But in what way? By first violent abuse, threats and finally by inflicting prolonged pain, which was hard to endure. anyone else other than Purandhare would have doubted whether the game was worth the candle, whether it was worthwhile getting a bungalow after enduring all this trouble and taking the burden of loans which he could only repay very slowly on account of his very low pay. yet Purandhare, being a sincere enthusiastic lover, never questioned Baba's kindness or omniscience or guardianship of himself and family and never complained to anybody. When he was in

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the worst pangs of head ache, he simply wrote to Radhakrishna Ayi, "Tell mother Baba that I am unable to endure this pain and that he must kill me and take me to his feet or cure me"" But what could poor Ayi do? Baba was adamant and had his own way and did succeed in making a petty clerk own a bungalow and that too in double quick time. This is one good instance of Baba's forcing benefit on those whom he loved and loves. Baba's conferring of benefit could be found in every direction.

This Purandhare had a lot of financial difficulties and official troubles. He knew so little of how to provide for every contingency. Baba anticipated everything and gave him mysterious warnings in dreams and visions, and enabled him to go through all ordeals without breaking under them. We will take one example. When he went back from Shirdi to his house in Bombay, his wife contracted cholera, and there were so many motions so as to thoroughly exhaust her. the doctor who came and examined her found the pulse feeble and the breath very slow. So he gave up hope and went away. But Purandhare was not the man to give up hope and faith. He knew his God was the Shirdi Sai and with the fullest faith, he went about and found Baba suddenly standing in front of the Maruti temple near his house. Baba told him. 'Don't be afraid; give her udhi and tirtam' and disappeared. Purandhare acted boldly on that advice. He had udhi with him, took up some tirtham and mixed up the two, administered that cold water to the patient. Some others got frightened and said that he should not do this as it would aggravate the disease. But Purandhare's faith in Baba was unshakable and he did give this mixture. With what result? In an hour's time, the sick lady had drunk up all the water and after a little time her breath began to revive strongly. Her body heat began to revive also. Her facial expression improved very much. When the doctor came thereafter, he said that he noticed a very remarkable change for the better and that there was much hope of the patient's recovery. He asked what was the medicine given to her. Purandhare's reply was 'Nothing but udhi and tirtham'.

Benefits conferred on Purandhare were innumerable and they varied in their character. All of them were founded upon Baba's wonderful, unseen guardianship and the exercise of superhuman powers of guarding his dear ward or devotee from all trouble. We should just give an instance of some of these other benefits and stop.

Purandhare was anxious always to be with his object of love. That is the characteristic of love. So, he tried to go to Shirdi as often as possible. Baba objected to that and told him that he need not go to

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Shirdi so often. Baba told him to work in company with H. S. Dixit, and the two generally went together. Dixit was at the top of the ladder, rich, influential, famous, highly learned and commanding respect from every one. Purandhare was the exact opposite of all this and yet Purandhare in his anxiety, would try to go along with Dixit every time the latter went. This of course exposed him to some risks on some occasions. Baba detained him at Shirdi far beyond the extent of his leave. On one such occasion, the Foreman of his office asked him for an explanation and threatened him. Purandhare's defiant reply was, 'Here is my resignation. Take it'. Purandhare was so sensitive. His superior Mr. Wilson knew all about his relations with Baba and asked him where he was overstaying his leave. Purandhare's reply was, 'With Baba'. Wilson knew at once that without Baba's permission neither Purandhare nor anybody else should leave Shirdi and so he tore up his resignation and told the Foreman that Purandhare was not his subordinate, much to the chagrin of that Foreman.

On one occasion, Purandhare was anxious to run to Shirdi. But during the night Baba appeared in a dream and told him, 'Beware, if you come I will hit you. Do not come. Why should you come so often? I am not away from you. I am with you. Do not play the fools.' He was wondering why Baba forbids his visit. But he obeyed the order. The next morning there was a strike among the labourers in his mill, and he discovered that Baba was right for, had he gone away, the superior officials would think that Purandhare was at the bottom of the strike and had got away to hide the fact. But as he remained at the station, he was not suspected and he was obviously innocent of any sympathy with the strikers. Instances of this sort in which Baba conveyed advice and warning are too numerous to be fully described. They all tended to confirm Purandhare's idea that his living God was this Shirdi Baba and he was perfectly safe in following his advice and directions.

A description of any two human beings who are more or less the same level is difficult enough but if of the two beings, one is a common place, ordinary, man-in-the-street and the other is a high, spiritual, moral and imaginative soul, the description of relations becomes extremely difficult. We can only describe what we understand. Sai Baba's nature was so peculiar, so weird, that any attempt to grasp his nature is bound to be hopeless. Sri Diwakar in his Foreword to Kaparde's diary says, 'From what is known of Sai Baba, he was a phenomenon. Many had very close contacts with him', but none could know him, much less explain him. More than a dozen years ago, when this author was studying Baba – a Satpurusha, one Dr. Jal came and told him, 'What? You are trying to understand a Satpurusha. That is

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impossible. Give it up?' There is certain amount of truth in these declarations, but we can never deal with any subject unless we know something of it, however infinitesimal and insignificant a part it may be. If we do not have even a rough idea of it, how can we talk of it or write of it? So, though Baba could be known, he is understood in a vague and very partial way, and that is part of the necessity of the case. This statement applies also to other great souls like Jesus Christ, Tennyson says of him,

Thou seemest human and divine,
The Highest Holiest Manhood Thou;
Our wills are ours we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

According to Emerson, humanity and divinity run into each other and can never be separated. But in point of practice they are far apart, poles apart and attempts to deal with them on the same level proves to be a wretched failure. All the same we have started the task of describing the love between an ordinary human being like Purandhare and a divine being like Sai Baba. So we must proceed further on with this task of trying at least to present some of the features of this love.

The features of love between ordinary human beings are fairly well-known. We find these features repeated in the inter-relation between a divine or semi-divine person and an ordinary human person. One of the best instances of love or friendship indistinguishable from the love described in English poetry is the instance of Tennyson's love of Arthur Hadlaw, which is the subject of the poem 'In Memorium'. There are some hints given. One interesting hint is that the two natures grow more and more alike and almost blend into one. The two friends or lovers nature grow more and more alike and blend into one. One very interesting passage is how the thoughts of both the friends ran simultaneously into the same groove or the same point. Says Tennyson,

When each by turn was guide to each
And fancy light from fancy caught,
And thought leapt forth to wed with thought,
Ere thought itself could with speech.

This is quite striking and this has been noticed as a feature of the relation of ordinary souls even with Mahatmas. When this author was living at Tiruvannamalai, he and Yogi Ramayya would come down from the hill to meet Ramana Maharishi in his ashram and not infrequently

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the thought that was stirring their mind would be found to be part of the talk at the Ashram. When Maharishi was asked for an explanation about it he simply said, "There are some peculiar psychological laws about the working of the human spirit. They may account for it. Instances of thought leaping forth to wed with thought are found in Purandhare's account of his own experiences with Baba. In about 1915, Sai Baba was seriously ill. he could not move about without being supported. He was suffering from severe exhaustion and his body underwent a great deal of suffering. Strangely enough, at that time, Purandhare came to the railway station thinking that he would start and go with his wife and mother to their village. But when he came to the station, his mind turned. he asked them to go to their place, and he himself wanted definitely to go to Shirdi, much to the chagrin of those ladies. Purandhare left Shirdi despite their protests, and what did he see there when he went to Shirdi? He found that Baba was in severe physical pain and apparently in serious danger. Purandhare says, 'At that time in 1916, Baba and Radhakrishna Ayi were both ill. After I reached Kopergaon the tongawalla, Hassan carried the news to me. I asked him to take me straightway to Shirdi and I reached the place at about 8.45 or 9 a.m. I could hear the heavy breathing of Shree as I approached his residence. I went near him and cried. All the visitors were seated. When I ascended the steps looking up to him, he said, "Bhav! Have you come? I feel exhausted. Do not leave me now. I have been expecting you for the last three or four days. I told Kaka also. Go and stay with Radhakrishna Ayi. Do not leave the place." I went there but she too was ill. Sree at that time had grown very weak having had no food. But otherwise his daily routine had not changed in any way. he had to walk supported by two or three persons. his bhiksha was being conducted as usual. one day when he was going to Lendi, I offered to carry him. I could not help weeping then. Sree told me not to cry for. "In two or four days, I will be well. Allamia had out me to pain, which I must endure. Do not cry on that account. Why should you? For two days we have to face good or bad events. We ought not to fear."

Here we see how the unity of spirit between Purandhare and Sai Baba plays. Firstly, when Baba thought that Purandhare should be sent for Shirdi and asked Kaka to write to him. Purandhare had already had the thought in his mind. Baba wanted him near on account of his health. but the love had worked in Purandhare's mind and inaccountably he wanted to start for Shirdi without knowing what was the particular necessity for his going. Here is thought leaping forth to wed with thought, 'ere thought itself could wed with speech. Again the unity of spirit between two intimate companions , friends or lovers, is seen in

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this. Baba on account of weakness and asthmatic trouble was breathing hard and undergoing pain. his weakness prevented him from walking erect and unsupported as usual, and Purandhare looking at both these facts cried and cried for he could not bear to see Baba in pain. This is a very high degree of love, and Baba had to reason with him and console him and make him desist from weeping.

Love does not merely show itself in strong fellow-feeling, but manifests itself by the sacrifices made. Purandhare was prepared to make any sacrifice and be with Baba to bask in his presence and he would put up with any treatment, however painful, from Baba which others would rebel against. On one occasion, when he took creepers to make alley on both sides of Baba's walk from his Masjid, in the chavadi, and Lendi, he got the creepers with great trouble. They were precious creepers, they were. But Baba did not care a brass button for alloys and flowers and all that. So when he took the creepers, Baba refused to give him permission to plant them. For three days the creepers withered not being cared for, Purandhare's heart was aching like anything. His sorrow at the idea of losing this enterprise of planting an alley and his sorrow at the withering or the death of the creepers was intense. Baba inspite of his vairagya and indifference to alleys and planting creepers could not be indifferent to the pain of this loving Purandhare. So, he told him finally not to have any fears and promised that even if the creepers were withering, he would make them thrive again with his wonderful mystic powers and finally granted permission after three days of withering. Strangely enough, the creepers were planted and inspite of the loss of time, the plants grew up.

Another very interesting manifestation of love is the taking of liberties. In the case of Purandhare, the taking of liberties was in the following case. Taty Patil's taking liberties is mentioned in a different place in H. S. Dixit's diary in a letter from Narke. But here we are dealing with Purandhare. Purandhare and his friends had, with great enthusiasm and trouble, secured for Baba's picture a silver palanquin with silver ornament tacked on to the top of the same, but, when these were brought by the loving and enthusiastic devotees, Baba, who hated all pomp and pageantry and rated them at their proper worth, refused to allow the palanquin to be brought into his mosque as Baba himself would not sit in a palki. He said, 'Let it remain outside, and so the whole night the palki remained outside without any watchman. During the night some thieves came and made away some of the silver horses. In the morning the much distraught devotees ran to Baba and complained about the theft. Baba simply said, 'Why did the thieves not

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take away the whole palanquin?' Baba had so much contempt for wealth. But the devotees would not give up their own notions as to the need for wealth and pomp to set off Sai Baba as a real Maharaja, a Prince with all sorts of appurtenance like silver palanquin. So, Radhakrishna Ayi and Purandhare resolved that the palanquin should be provided with a garage and they determined that the place to the next to the mosque on one side should be turned into a garage to safely lock up the palanquin. They could put up pillars on one side of that space and lean rafters thereon, but to make the rafters rest on the other side they had to put in support which should be inserted into the wall of the mosque to support the roof. No one would dare to do it, because it involved digging into the walls of the mosque, that is, boring holes, about four or five of them. It is a downright desecration to bore holes in a wall of a mosque or a garbagraham, which has only three walls and no Hindu would think of defiling a garbagraham by such an unholy act. No orthodox Muslim would put up with the idea of boring holes in mosque wall merely to support the adjoining garage rafters. But Purandhare had no alternative. He got up boldly and dug holes in the wall and inserted the pieces of wood. By that time Baba, who had gone out, returned and he was furious. He said, 'Purandhare. You want to break my mosque wall?' Purandhare bowed to him and explained that the wall would be safe that only three of four pieces of wood would be inserted. But Baba refused permission. Here comes the liberty taken by the spirit of love. Purandhare determined to continue his work for honouring Baba with a silver palanquin and a garage, and did not mind his orders. Baba was cursing and swearing, all to no purpose, Purandhare continued his work unmindful of his meal or that he was detaining his mother and wife from having their meal by reason of his absence. But Baba's heart was pained. He could not endure to see Purandhare toil away without caring for his food and without caring for his mother and wife who were starving. Baba at last gave in. His love overcomes his orthodox objections as regards desecrating the wall. He told the people that this rascal of a Purandhare was making himself and others suffer by keeping away from food and not listening to his words. Finally Baba said, "Purandhare, go and eat" But Purandhare would not. he said, "Baba, If I go away, you will undo all my work.' Then Baba had to promise that he would not undo the work done. It is only after that Purandhare got down and went to his quarters for a meal. Then Baba said, referring Purandhare, 'What is to be done? If a child passes motions on our thigh, do we kill the child or cut off the thigh? We have simply to put up with it.' This is a very apt description of the relation between Purandhare and Baba. Purandhare was the petted child who would take liberties of Baba and Baba did forgive his tortuous digging into

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the mosque wall for the sake of providing a wretched palanquin with a garage. The incident was insignificant. But it brings out the power of the love existing between Baba and Purandhare by showing the liberties the devotee takes and the extend of Baba's forgiveness, due to the strength of his love.

We may proceed from Purandhare's instance to deal with other instances of Baba's sacrifice. Sacrifice is the test of love. Purandhare would sacrifice anything to get and be with Baba. He would run official risks to be with Baba even without leave, for the risk of earthly good was nothing to him when compared with joyful company of Baba. Next let us take the sacrifice made by Baba. Baba's sacrifices are indescribable. Baba had immense powers. He knew everything everywhere. He knew what troubles were being undergone by devotees and what dangers awaited them in every place. It is no doubt a grand feat for one to be able to know what takes place with so many devotees at the same time. But to proceed next to guard each devotee and help each devotee at each place is a task that stuns the human mind. No human being can possibly be watching one at Poona one at Bombay, one at Bandra and hundreds of others in various places and providing the safety needed for them all. What was the safety granted by Baba? He assured people that he would even save them from death. He would save them from Government prosecution. He would save them from the danger of missing their trains and hardships on the way. For all these purposes, he would watch numerous devotees and various people and provide for their safety. To take one small instance, Abdul Rangari's carriage broke down on the road to railway station far away from Shirdi in the middle of the night, and Rangari, his wife and children were on the road absolutely helpless. But was he really helpless? Baba's superhuman eye and superhuman love were upon him. Baba saw the whole thing from his Shirdi residence with his own wonderful powers. He sent a jutkawalla on that road asking him to cry out, Thanawalla, Thanawalla, for a Thanawalla's cart had broken down and left him stranded on the road helpless at midnight. So, a tongawalla came shouting Thanawalla, Thanawalla, to the place where Rangari was, and told him of Baba's instruction. Rangari was wonder-struck at the extend of Baba's knowledge and kindness. So, he got into the cart sent so mysteriously and kindly by Baba, and went back to Baba and found Baba waiting for him.

Baba would watch people in far away places like Poona and Bombay. Nana Chandorkar, a fat stout gentleman, and Lele Sastri, his companion, were in a *tonga* coming from Poona, and on the road, the horse reared and upset the carriage. Both the corpulent men were

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tossed down. Baba at that time was in his mosque and he, putting his hands in front of his mouth, make a *sankham* sound, that is, a dolorous warning about the approach of death. He said, 'Nana is about to die. But will I let him die?' Then what happened was that Baba, by the use of his mysterious powers, saved both the corpulent gentlemen from any injury to life and limb. They picked themselves on the road, and they came later on to Baba to learn that Baba at that time when death and danger faced them had known that fact and averted both death and danger. The knowledge is wonderful. the exercise of power is wonderful. But yet more wonderful is to save his devotees

As Baba said, his nights were not intended for sleep. On the other hand with his divine eye of supervision, he was keeping watch over all his bhaktas in all their places and averting danger from them. Look at this vast unimaginable task of one person trying to save hundreds in hundred different places. The task is simply unimaginable. No human being could ever succeed in it. It is the divine Baba that could do it and that did it. His divine power enabled him to do it and his divine kindness made him forego sleep and all comforts for that purpose. the sacrifice of physiological well-being by giving up sleep night after night, was very serous, but Baba willingly consented to do it. Baba's body was human, though his soul was divine. Baba had to undergo all the physiological evils of protracted loss of sleep and loss of comforts. He told G. S. Khaparde, on the occasion of his first visit in 5-12-1910.

We reached Shirdi about 4 p.m. We put up in the Wada built for the convenience of the people by R. B. Sathe. Madhavrao Despande was very obliging and helped us and treated us like guests. There are in the Wada, Tatyasaheb Nulkar with his family. Bapusahib Jog, and Babasahib Sahasrabuddhe. We all went to see Sayin Maharaj soon after our arrival. he was in the Masjid. after salutation I and my son offered the fruits brought by us and gave some money at his request. the Sayin Saheb then said, that he used to eat only barely cake and take little water. he showed his food and pointed to a small sore, saying it was the string worm. That it had been extracted but the string had snapped inside and then it had reappeared again. he said he heard that it would not be well with him till he went to his native town. he said he kept it in view, but that was all. He cared more for his people than for his own life. He said he found no rest as people troubled him. It could not be helped. Then he told us to withdraw, which we did. Towards evening he passed by the Wada, and we went and saluted him. I and Madhavrao Despande went together. After we saluted, he said, 'Go to the Wada and sit quiet.' So, I and Madhavrao returned. We all sat talking. They have many miracles to relate.

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Baba really cared more for the welfare of his children than for the safety of his body. Baba however was both human and divine. His body underwent serious damage by reason of the sacrifices he made. Especially in a rude village where people had little imagination and less civilization, his comforts were cut down mercilessly. To make up for the loss of a whole night's sleep, he had the yogic power to recoup his energies by spending one hour in sleep after the noon-meal. But was he allowed to have that rest? Here is an instance.

Syamkarna, a horse, was presented to Baba's Sansthan, for the sansthan requires a horse. A rustic was sent to the village to fetch the horse. He returned and demanded his wages from Radhakrishna Ayi who referred him to Shama. Shama in turn said, 'Go and ask Baba', The rude idiot ran up to the mosque at the time when Baba was taking his rest after the noon meal and bawled out loudly saying, 'Give me my wages for bringing the horse'. Here comes the human element. Baba was losing the very little rest that he got by this rustic's idiocy. He got angry, took up a brickbat and flung it at the man. The stroke hit the man on the head and fetched blood. The man bawled out that he was being killed for asking his wages. There were policemen in the village of Shirdi and they would be only too ready to seize an opportunity to launch a complaint against Baba and screw out as much money as possible from him. H.S. Dixit was on the spot and scented the danger. He sent for the rustic and told him the absurd mistake he had committed in disturbing Baba's sleep and give him Rs. 200 wherewith he could buy a cart and a horse and become a carriage driver in stead of being a miserable cooly that he was then. The man jumped at the offer and the danger of prosecution was averted. We see here the human element. Baba himself noted that element his *gosttis*. referring to his human system he said, there are two parts of it. One is spirit and the other is flesh. The latter he called *matti*, which means clay. He said sometimes *matti* was up and anger broke out. This is exactly what happened in the above case. The human element. The human element could not be banished, and so Baba got angry and flung a brickbat. Luckily all is well that ends well, and this incident, far from damaging the man gave him a good fortune, namely, made him a cart driver instead of continuing his life as a cooly. But the point here is that Baba had his human side. Therefore, the extent of sacrifice he made on human side for pleasing and helping his devotees was so grand that the sacrifice made by Purandhare and others could never be compared to the infinite sacrifices made by Baba.

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There is above all another and a higher sacrifice which people do not know of – the sacrifice of a thorough Jnani in taking on the human constitution and carrying on work in the phenomenal world and entirely giving up the idea of resting in pure Atman without any care or sorrow, that is, securing Brahma Nishta or Santi. This is a very great sacrifice. No other sacrifice equals it. But people do not see it in the light of sacrifice. Baba on the other hand derived pleasure out of bonds of love. He had a mission to fulfill and therefore he took birth to help devotee after devotee in every matter, temporal and spiritual. This involves a definite resignation of all hopes of Shanti, Shanti, Shanti, and a definite signing of oneself to samsaric life. Nana Chandorkar told Baba that he wanted to be free from Samsara. But Baba retorted that it was an impossible feat and said, "So long as there is the body, there are the prarabdha and samsara with it. Baba added that he himself could not escape samsara. Look at the above description of samsara of Baba. When we are weighed down with the care of providing for one family of a handful of people, Baba's samsara or family consisted and consists of several thousands. Therefore, one can understand the extent and unimaginable magnitude of the sacrifice undergone by Baba. No doubt there is another side to the shield. Batruhari says, in describing Kala, Kala has put Mahavishnu into the enormous trouble of taking ten Avatars.

Vishnu Ena Dasavatara Gahane
Schitto Mahan Sankate

this means, You Kala, by whom Mahavishnu himself was thrown into the tortures of ten births. This is no doubt poetic flair. There is another and better view to be taken about Avatars. For an Avatar to take birth to carry out a mission, not as a result of one's unavoidable purva karma, but out of one's own grace, need not be considered a matter of sorrow at all. It is Iswara that is taking birth, and the Vedas say
Purnam Adah Purnam Idam
Purnat Purnam Udhachyate
Purnascya Purnamadaya
Purnameva Avaschishyate.

this means, The Infinite or Perfect is this the original. And the Infinite or Perfect is the manifestation. From the Perfect, Perfect is taken. In the result, Perfection can suffer no diminution. Iswara is perfect to his happiness and perfect in his power and qualities. So, when an Avatara is taken, still the Infinite, God remains Infinite enjoying Satchitananda. An Avadara is but a reflection or a part of the original God and would still maintain its Satchitananda or perfectly peaceful and blissful state.

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On the manifested side, troubles, tortures and Dasavatara are undergone. Baba was both human and divine and is treated as an Avatar by very large numbers. Baba maintained his Satchidananda in spite of the troubles of his physical body. Once he said, My Mourshad, Guru has taken me away from this body. You can put the whole of this body on fire and I will enjoy the Ganath, fun. That is, his conquest of the I-am-the-body idea was so perfect that like martyrs, whose bodies were burnt, he could still be in joy when the body was perishing. Therefore the sacrifices, great as they appear on Baba's part, might not from his point of view he considered a serious pain.

SRI SANTARAM BALWANT NACHNE, DAHANUKAR

We may give a short account of the contact of S. B. Nachne with Baba and his experiences as it is typical of Baba's complete protection given to a person of a very ordinary nature who had no high religious aim or achievement. This devotee gave out his experiences while he was yet in harness as a Taluk office Head Clerk in September 1936. He had originally in 1923, related part of his experience in Sai Lila Masik.

His contact with Baba started in 1909. His elder brother was then undergoing an operation very near in his throat in a hospital at Bombay. At Dahanu, Santaram Nachne and his family were full of anxiety about the result of the operation. A *sadhu* approached their house, and from outside asked, 'Will you give me a crumb or two of *roti*?' Then he was invited inside, and a regular course of dished was served. But in doing so, Santaram's sister-in-law deliberately omitted to give him *Bendi baji* lady's finger curry, thinking that it was too poor a stuff to serve a saintly guest. The *sadhu* himself said, 'I want Bendi baji', and then it was served to him. He then blessed them all, and said that the operation in the Bombay hospital was safely performed and that there was no danger. Later in the day, Santaram's friend, Mr. H.M. Pasne, told him, 'I hope the operation is safe by Sai Baba's grace'. That was the first time that Santaram heard of Baba's name. In the evening after that, Santaram's father returned from Bombay with the news that the operation was really success and that a *sadhu*, after

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the operation had been performed, appeared in the hospital, came near the patient, passed his hands over the operated part, and said, 'All will go on well'. The operation was quite successful, and his brother had recovered completely.

Later in that year his father attended Das Ganu's kirtan wherein Das Ganu gave a full account of Sai Baba, and described him as the Datta Avatara having wonderful powers and wonderful kindness. He also brought the picture of Sai Baba home, and with it Baba's puja began in the house.

In 1912, Santaram first visited Shirdi. Then he had appeared for a departmental examination, a revenue test and went to Shirdi with two friends. At the Kopergaon railway station, the station master heard of their proposed visit to Baba, and began to abuse Baba saying that undue honour was being given to a mere hypnotist, who was guiling people like so many wandering jugglers and thaumaturgists. This made the impressionable Santaram very unhappy. He was beginning to have his doubts about Baba. Anyhow he reached Shirdi. The first sight that he caught of Sai Baba was walking from Lendi to Mosque. On the way Santaram and his friends met Baba. Baba looked straight at Santaram, and said, 'What? Have you come away without taking leave from the Mamlatdar?' The reply was 'yes'. Baba said, 'Don't do so hereafter'. At once, the object of these remarks was evident. Baba revealed his Antarjnana of Santaram being a Mamlatdar's clerk and that he had come without permission and showed a motherly kindness towards his devotee who was wavering. The Antarjnana and the kindness showed the worthlessness of the Station Master's remarks. Evidently it was for that purpose that Baba had addresses those words to him. This was only the beginning of a series of similar experiences during his three days of stay at Shirdi. At the end of three days, Santaram was perfectly assured and confident that Baba was the Datta Avatara, and not a juggler or thaumaturgist. Baba took udhi from Santaram's hand and applied it to his forehead. This was a mark of favour.

One day Santaram had gone very early for the arati in the Masjid, without taking his meal as it was Ekadasi day. Baba was no respecter of mere forms. Baba asked Santaram, 'Have you had your meal?' He said, 'No, because it is Ekadasi to-day'. Baba said, 'Never mind, You go and eat.' His two friends were very orthodox, and, therefore, Baba did not ask them to take their food. Baba said, 'They are mad. You better go and eat.' Then Santaram went to the dining place at his Wada. The man in the Wada began grumble that on an Ekadasi day, and that too

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before arati was over, Santaram should ask for food. So Santaram quietly returned to Baba. Again Baba asked, 'Meals over?' Santaram said, 'No, Baba. I will take the meal after the arati.' Baba said, 'Go, arati will wait, and it will begin only after your meal is over'. Santaram went and told the man in the Wada what Baba had said. So, he had to be given the meal. This is very good proof of Baba's affection towards Santaram. Then, meals over, Santaram went back to Mosque for the arati. Maushi had brought bidas, which is rolled up betal and nut, and Baba took some and asks him to chew. On Ekadasi days, people do not chew betal. But as Baba asked him to chew, Santaram had to chew. When the arati was over, Baba asked dakshina and took four rupees from Santaram and sixteen from Vaidya. From his friend Date, Baba did not ask for any dakshina. Date had no thought of giving any dakshina to Baba. In fact Date had very little reverence for Baba and Baba distinctively read each man's heart.

During these three days, when H.S. Dixit, Jog and Dabolkar were present, Baba spoke, pointing to Santaram, and said, 'I went to this man's house for a meal, but he would not give me Bendi baji'. At once Santaram remembered the sadhu who came to him three years ago in 1909, and was wonderstruck, for the sadhu who was then in his house looked different from Sai Baba at the Mosque. But from Baba's remarks, Santaram understood that it was really Baba who came in that form to help the family and reassure them of the safety of the operation in the Bombay hospital. Santaram asked Baba what result of his departmental examination would be. Baba said, Allah Malik Hai and placed his palm on Santaram's head. Santaram passed the examination.

On the third day, Baba was in tantrums. He was in a tearing rage at the Mosque. Why was he angry, and with whom, nobody could make out. But Baba was jumping about the floor of the Mosque. His eyes were red. For 15 minutes, no one got into the Mosque. Every one had fled. Santaram and others all doubted whether Baba was mad after all. At last Baba cooled down, and then Santaram and his friends begged him for leave to go away. He gave them leave with udhi. Baba at that time gave another blessing to Santaram. Santaram badly wanted a transfer from mofussal Dahanu to metropolis Bombay. Baba of his own accord said, 'Come to Bombay for service'. This was either prophecy or control, and took six years for its fulfillment. In 1918, Santaram was transferred to Bandra, a suburban district of Bombay.

Santaram who had left the station without the Mamlatdar's permission was noticed by the Mamlatdar B. V. Dev. He merely gave him a

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warning and no punishment. After this, Santaram repeated his visits to Shirdi whenever he could. When he was leaving in 1913 to go to Shirdi, his friend H. M. Panse, met him and said that he had been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, but was let out on bail and that he was going to appeal. He wanted Santaram to tell Baba, 'Panse is in trouble and says he is innocent, and wants Baba's help.' When Santaram reached Shirdi, the early morning arati at the chavadi was going on. Baba was then in a very angry mood. Yet when he saw Santaram, and before any words had been spoken, he said, "Tell that fellow that he need not have any anxiety, and that he will be acquitted on appeal." And Panse was acquitted on appeal.

During S. B. Nachne's 1913 visit, Baba said, "We should not trust mad man", to a group in which Santaram was present. Santaram did not think that the remark applied to him. But next year, it was seen by Santaram to be a forewarning aimed to him. He was then posted at Dahanu as Treasury Master. He was at home doing Pooja to Baba's photo and other gods. Then one Radhakrishna Balwant Panse, whose mind was deranged, was standing at the door of the kitchen room, some distance away from the pooja room. He was thought to be harmless. But when the pooja went on, the man suddenly darted into the pooja room and grasped Santaram's neck with both his arms and tried to bite Santaram's throat saying, "I will drink your blood". Santaram was thunderstruck. But a thought entered him, evidently by Baba's Grace. Taking out the uddharani spoon he thrust it into the open mouth of the man and right into his throat. The mad man however bit Santaram's hand and fingers, which were in his mouth. The spoon got stuck up in the throat. Though the fingers were hurt, his life was saved. When, with the other hand Santaram tried to extricate the injured hand, his mother and others rushed and pulled off the mad man. Meanwhile, Santaram lost consciousness. After a time, he recovered. But the nails of the mad man had dug into the flesh of his neck and left injuries thereon. He had been nearly strangled to death, but luckily escaped death. The injuries on the fingers were healed. The same year when he went to Baba, Baba addressed Anna Chinchinikar, and pointing to Santaram, said, "Anna, if I had delayed one instant, this man would have indeed perished. The mad man seized with his hands even his throat. But I extricated him. What is to be done? Of I do not save my own children, who else will?" The words 'I extricated' in Baba's statement showed his extreme kindness and love towards devotees like Santaram who with full child-like confidence took refuge in him. Baba's statement, I extricated him, shows his command of all the siddhis. This extrication was first through Santaram's own idea of putting the uddharani into the mad man's

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mouth and next through the timely presence of his mother and others pulling off the mad man. So, here Baba's statement that he had acted through the Indriyas of Santaram and his mother. This is the siddhi called Prapti mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata as one of God's Ashta Mahasiddhis. Baba had any number of siddhis at his disposal. He himself had said, 'God has agents everywhere, they have vast powers. I have very great powers'. He used these powers to save his children.

This danger had happened in 1914, even though he had given a hint in 1913, when he said, 'We should not trust mad men', a hint that could not be understood then by Santaram of Dahanu. So Baba was clearly watching from Shirdi, his devotees at Dahanu, hundreds of miles away, because they were his trusting children, the children of Dwarakamayee or Masudi Ayi, hour to hour, day to day and year after year. This power of having his eye of vigilant supervision on all those who love Him, has been declared by him. So Santaram was more than ever convinced that Baba was a divine personage with divine powers and divine kindness which he exercised on behalf of everyone who placed his entire faith in him even though such persons may number many thousands living in thousands of places.

In 1915, another instance occurred to Baba's grace and protection. Santaram with H.M Panse and others were travelling in a bullock cart at night in a dense jungle. This was at the Ranshet pass, notorious for its being infested with tigers. It was a dark night. Suddenly the bulls of the cart took fright and were moving backwards. Luckily, they were not dragging the cart sideways, as it was a hill pass, with a steep slope on one side of a narrow road. had the bulls dragged the cart that side, it would have been all over with them. Then Panse pointed with his hand to something and Santaram saw the gleaming eyes of a tiger couching on the road. Panse wished to save the cart from being pushed into the ravine, and so wanted to get down and place big stones or sticks as a brake to the wheels. So, he asked Santaram to hold the reins of the bulls. As he held them he roared, 'Hail Sai Baba! Run Sai Baba to our help'. The others also begin to shout and the tiger got frightened at the volume of sound and ran away by the side of their cart. So, it was faith in Baba and the courage that Baba gave Santaram that saved the situation.

In 1915, after this incident, Santaram started for Shirdi. At the railway station, one V S Samant gave Santaram a coconut and two annas to buy sugar candy to be presented to Baba. When Santaram went to the Shirdi Masjid, he gave Baba the coconut, but forgot all about the two annas or the sugar candy. He asked Baba leave to go back. Baba said,

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"yes, you may go via Chitale, But why keep back a poor Brahmin's two annas?.' Santaram had frequent experiences like this of Sai Baba's eye of supervision and antarnana of everything that happened to his bhaktas everywhere. When Santaram gave the two annas, Baba said, 'Whatever you undertake to do, do it thoroughly. Else do not undertake to do it'. This is a very valuable instruction applicable to everyone and to all departments of life.

Some of Baba's utterances were clearly prophetic, like the warning about the mad man. Another instance of prophecy was when Santaram with Shankar Rao Vaidya had gone to Shirdi, and Baba had asked them for Rs. 16 as Dakshina first. When they said, "We have no money." Baba asked them for Rs. 32. Again they said, "No money". Baba again asked them for Rs. 64. Then Nachne said. "We are poor people. We can't afford to pay such large sums.." Then Baba asked, "Then collect and give." This proved to be a prophecy. Sometime later (1916) Baba fell ill. A big sapta was performed for his restoration to health and subscriptions were raised for mass feeding. Then Sankar Rao and Nachne collected subscriptions at the request of Dabolkar, they found the total sum collected and sent up to be Rs.64/-.

In 1915, Santaram had a set of calamities in his family. His wife gave birth to children who died in infancy. Then his wife went alone with Shama to pray to Baba for long-lived children. Then as usual, she took a coconut with her. She gave the coconut to Baba and Baba threw that coconut back into her *padar*. Baba's eyes were brimming with tears as he gave away the coconut. He made Santaram sit at his feet and massage his legs. During that time, Baba passed his hands over Santaram's back in a token of his blessing and Santaram felt happy , and expressed his thanks for being saved from the murderous mad man. Baba said, Allah Malik Hai meaning, "That is all the order of Allah" Then Santaram embraced Baba and Baba embraced him, showing the intimate love Santaram bore to Baba and Baba bore to him.

Baba once saved Santaram from drowning in 1916. At night, he had to return his house across a creek. There was no ferry boat there. So, he took a canoe with a boy to paddle. just as he was in the middle of the Creek, Santaram, a rather bulky man, moved aside just a bit within the canoe; but that made a big difference and the canoe capsized. He was deep in the waters. At once he thought Baba. The boy was a good swimmer, and he pointed to a rope which was above the water connecting a buoy with a ship at a distance, and asked Santaram to

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hold on to that rope. At once Santaram caught it and held on to it. Then the boy halloed to the ship and thus got men rescue Santaram.

The reason for tears in Baba's eye when giving the coconut to Santaram's wife was not understood at that time. But in 1919, after Baba passed away, a son was born as promised by Baba at the time when the coconut was gifted. This child was called Kalu Ram. Kalu Ram lived just for eight years, and his mother lived for only 2 years after his birth. So, both the deaths were obviously seen by Baba at the time of his gift.

Baba's powers, included *Traikalika Bhuddhih*, Srimad Bhagavata refers to this *traikalika Jnana*. Baba's *Jnana* may even be termed *Rithambhara prajna*. This distinction between past, present and future exists only to us, who are all very limited in our power of seeing and knowing. To us the present includes very little of the future but to *Satpurushas* like Baba it includes the whole of the future. This boy Kalu Ram was a wonderful genius. At the age of 3, he was always in the habit of repeating Ram Hari Ram. It was then that his mother expired. This was said to be the effect of *Mula Nakshatram* in which the boy was born. This boy stunned the imagination of all their acquaintances. Hegde, a neighbour, said, "The boy's knowledge of Krishna Lilas seems to be so good that the boy himself should have certainly been one of he playmates of Krishna in the *Dwapara Yuga*".

The boy himself occasionally said, "Krishna used to tease me, I caught hold of Hari's legs and pinched them. I looked up and then Hari upset the curd pot over my face. Then the lady of the house turned up." Hegde used to read Hari Vijaya and on some days the boy would mention the story that would be read in Hari Vijaya later on in the day.

One day, the boy was seated motionless in a corner. His eyeballs were upturned. He had a cloth over his head as a cowl, and when Santaram asked him why he was covering his head, he laughed and said, "That is our usual course of *sadhana*". Everything was suggestive of a high proficiency of *Yoga* about him. From a journal, he cut out the pranava Om and stuck it on the wall next to him. As regards the picture in His Master's Voice, Kalu Ram asked his father, "What is this?" The father said, "It is the advertisement of a gramophone". Kalu said, "No, it is a special message of Krishna." The father asked, "What is that message?" Kalu replied with a counter question. He asked, "What is the dog in the picture hearing?" Santaram said, "It is the music from the gramophone record." Kalu said, "No, the dog is hearing his master's voice. Look at the dog - he is intensely concentrated and

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intensely listening. We must be equally firm and concentrated and sit. See how I sit. You also should sit like that and listen. Then you will hear Baba's voice." Santaram asked, "How do you know Baba's voice? You were born after he passed away." The boy replied, " I know it, but I will not tell you."

Kalu then took to written japa of Ram, Hari Ram, in addition to oral japa. he did a huge mass of Ram, Hari Ram japa. In 1926, Gadgi Baba came to see the boy, because of his precocity. Kalu then had dropsy and low fever. He was only given Baba's udhi. The disease continued for a while. On *Kartik Suddha Ekadasi*, a day so piously celebrated by thousands of pilgrims at Pandharpur and other Vishnu sthalas, Kalu Ram approached his end. He called Santaram to his bedside and asked for Jnaneswari the family heirloom. it was produced at once. he opened it himself and picked up chapter XIII. *Kshetra Kshetragna vibhaga*. At that time Santaram was feeling heavy with the sadness of the approaching end – the bitterness of parting with Kalu Ram. But Kalu Ram cheered him up and said, "What is there to cry for? Read this. Read aloud for me. I am going today". Santaram's heart was sinking under a load of grief and he could not read. The boy kept the book in front of him and breathed his last. In this way it was a fitting departure on a *Karthik Ekadasi* day 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.

Sri Santaram's experience will make a special appeal to the reader, especially for two reasons. The first is that in point of spiritual preparation and spiritual effort, he was not at all above the ordinary run of men that we meet with everyday life. Secondly, his experiences cover many years after Baba's *Mahasamadhi* and during this period, the protection and help he and his people enjoyed were the same as before. That is, Sai Baba showed to him frequently even after his *Mahasamadhi* I 1918, that he was still there, always watching him and his people, always ready to help, and help in every direction not only for him and his family but for others also on whose behalf he earnestly put forward any prayer or effort. Step after step, he reader ought to note how his unquestioning faith and simple heart were responsible for Baba's gripping him completely as 'Mine'. Tat is how Baba treated this man as his Ankita or his own child. This Santaram had married three times, one after another, and had a large family of children. Therefore, the occasions on which trouble and danger arose in the family were numerous. instead of his being worried on that account, Baba's help enabled him to maintain placidity and confidence, which sweetened his

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life. His powerful faith in Baba enabled him to live a happy life and virtuous life on earth with the assurance that *Sadgati* would be given to him and to all his people. We shall take up a few accidents and dangers to which his children and family were exposed.

We will take first an incident that occurred in the year 1935 as regards fire. A two year child of Santaram, Ananda by name, was very active and very mischievous; he ran up against the stove on which milk was boiling. He dashed against the whole stove and vessel, and would have expected that his clothes would have caught fire from the stove and the skin scalded by the boiling milk. But neither happened. The milk vessel fell on one side. the stove flew on the other side. In between Ananda full of Anandam, that is, without any injury, sorrow or trouble. This is Baba's vigilant eye of supervision.

We will take another instance of fire. This was in 1926. Sai Haranath, his little child of nine months old, was along with the other children, playing upstairs. The mother, the only guardian or caretaker, who ought to have been present was down on the street. It was deepavali time. One of the older children lighted a squib or cracker and flung it. It fell upon Haranath. None of the children noticed it or considered it serious. Ordinarily the child, who wore two clothes, one under the waist and the other above waist close to the skin would have been burnt to death. But what happened?. In the street, suddenly a fakir appeared, who shouted to the lady. 'Go up. See what is there. Without knowing what it was, she ran up, just as soon as the incident occurred, and found both, neither cloth and the frock of Sai were burning. With her hands she boldly seized the burning the cloths and extinguished the flame. She found that the child's clothes on the upper portion and nether portion were mostly burnt out. yet what happened to the child? Wonder of wonders! Not a bit of scar or burn was on the child; she had come very early to the child's rescue. Now how could she come from the street just in time to extinguish the flame? Who could the fakir be? When she got down with a view to thank the fakir, the fakir had gone. This again is the watchful eye of supervision, 'on those that love Me and those that belong to them'.

There was another incident connected with the same child Sai, when he was two years old. He, like rest of the children, was active, healthy and vigorous. He was playing upstairs. At one end of the terrace, there was a broken wall – a portion of the wall, which ought to have been there, was recently knocked down for purposes of repair. Not noticing its absence, this Sai rushed up and fell down over the debris below. The father was very anxious, and he ran up to see whether the boy

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was alive or how far he was injured. But Sai was standing and laughing. He said, 'Baba held me up in his arms as I fell'. Can a two year old child imagine and tell a lie? Again, we have Baba's eye of supervision, just as he saved Santi Kirvandikar, a three year old child as she fell into a well at Shirdi before 1918.

Then once there was danger to the children from swallowing a poisonous thing. The children were rummaging up Santaram's drawers, and found what they thought was a box of peppermint. An older child, Kalu Ram, put one fancied lozenge in his mouth and handed over another to a younger child. But the taste of it was bitter and the small quantity he had tasted or swallowed made him uneasy. So, he went up to his mother, and the mother thought, looking into his outstretched tongue, which still had a bit of the lozenge on it, that it was a piece of *chunam*. Then she took it out. The children were then asked to show where the box of lozenge was, and they pointed to a box called Pharaoh's snakes as the box of lozenge. This is a deadly poison. It is a compound of magnesium, phosphorous etc., which when lit up, produces a long coil of ashes, which twists in the form of snakes. That is why it is styled, Pharaoh's snake. A doctor was then called in, and he gave then an enema. But that failed to act. then Santaram took up Baba's udhi and tirta and gave them to the child. The child had a good vomit and as a result was saved. the younger child had evidently not eaten or, at any rate, not eaten much, but even to that child udhi and tirta were given, and that child also had a good vomit and was saved.

On another occasion in 1932 Kalu gave a ring to a younger child. Instinctively the child put the ring in to mouth. the ring got stuck in the throat. doctors came and gave enema without any result. Then Santaram gave the child some udhi with tirta and then put his own finger deep into the mouth of the child. He felt where the ring was and pulled it out and thus saved the child.

In 1934 another child aged only three had pneumonia, measles and an abscess on the chest. The child was very weak and was getting weaker and weaker. The doctor was afraid to operate on account of the child's weakness. But Santaram applied antiphlogistine over the abscess and the abscess opened and became a wide open wound. Even the doctor was afraid to operate. so, Santaram prayed to Baba and put a bit of udhi into the wound. The deputy collector Sri. V.M. Jadhav, learning of this asked him whether he was sure of its being cured and, if so, within what time. He answers "n 24 hours" That night Baba appeared in Santaram's dream and said, "Why did you say 24 hours? Why not

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immediately?' Anyhow in 24 hours the wound was healed. Jadhav was convinced that Baba's udhi was a great blessing and took some udhi for his own son who had pneumonia. that saved his son's pneumonia in 24 hours. One see why in *Sai Sahasranamam*, it is said of Baba,

*Gopeem Sathra Yadha Krishnah
Thadha Nachne Kulavanayah*

Sai protected Santaram Nachne's family as Krishna protected the *gopis*

Santaram Nachne was not content with praying for his own children. he prayed for others too. In 1923, as he sat upstairs in his home at Andheri, he found a car being driven fast in his narrow lane. As the car approached, there was a little girl, who could not move away. At once scenting the danger, Santaram cried out, 'Baba save her'. Strangely enough, the car, which had just gone over the child, stopped. Then, when the brake was examined, it was found that it was not working, but somehow a stone had got into the gear and machine stopped. The child was immediately taken to hospital. the medical attendant was not hopeful of the child's survival. Then Santaram said, 'Baba, who had stopped the car miraculously would also save the child'. After 10 or 20 days, the child recovered from its injuries and was saved.

In 1926 on two other occasions Nachne helped his official friends with prayers and advice. A friend of his, a cashier, was dismissed for misappropriation and he was helpless. Nachne advised him to place his trust in Baba, go to Shirdi and pray to Baba for his help. That cashier thought that Sai Baba was a Mohammedan and, therefore, he should not go. Nachne then told him that only hope of his deriving any help was from Baba's grace. then that man got courage, went to Shirdi, prayed to Baba, and returned with a photo of Baba and began to worship it. He was allowed 8 days time to pay up the Rs. 3,000 which he had misappropriated. There the matter closed. There was neither dismissal nor prosecution.

Another person who came to him for his help in similar circumstances was Mr. V.C. Chitnis. He was dismissed from service. Nachne told him to cast his burden on Baba and to make an appeal to the Shirdi *Mandir*, this is, after Baba's passing away. that man went to Baba's *Samadhi Mandir* and prayed for help, and later he was reinstated in service.

These are all temporal matters, but Baba gave Nachne help in spiritual matters also. Let us take S. B. Nachne first. Nachne asked Baba to

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give *Anugraha* saying, "What *japa* shall I do?" He hoped that Baba would give him some *Mantra*. But Baba's reply was, "Go to Devpur, a village 20 miles away from Kopergaon and begin worshipping the stones there which your ancestors worshipped". What a wonderful knowledge Baba had unlike other thought-readers knowledge, which would only read the thoughts of those present. Nachne knew nothing about the stones at Devpur and his ancestors worshipping there. But he quoted Baba's words to his father, and learnt from his father that it was the family custom. Whenever any *Anugraha* or *upadesa* was wanted, a member of Nachne's family would go to Devpur and beg from their family Guru – the descendants of Baba Bagavat – the usual *upadesa*. A copy of *Jnaneswari* written with the hand was presented to some fifth ancestor of this Nachne by the Baba Bagavat of those days and that *Jnaneswari* is still kept as an heirloom in the family and that copy would be taken to the Guru at the time of *upadesa*. At that time they would worship the images, the stones at Devpur. Baba knew all this on account of his *Rithambara prajna* unlike our modern thought-readers who have to find out some connecting link to catch at the ideas, which they express. So, Baba respected the conservatism of the family, and accordingly Santaram Nachne's *Anugraha* was postponed till the usual traditional mode could be adopted. As for the various members of his family, Baba gave his blessings for spiritual progress in a marked degree. Santaram's mother died in 1926, a very happy death from the spiritual standpoint. She kept a photo of Baba up to the last moment in front of her. As the end is nearing, she asked Santaram to sit by her side and read the *Vishnu Sahasranama* aloud. Santaram did so and when she passed away, the last word she uttered were Ram, Ram. According to the Bhagavat Gita, this denotes *sadgati*, the attainment of a high spiritual state, *Yamyam vapi Smaran Bhavam*.

For his second wife, who passed away in 1929, he was anxious to do something to secure her *sadgati*. So, her bones had to be taken to Godavari in Nasik and there disposed of with proper ceremonies. His father being ill, remained at home along with his three year old grand-child. Santaram Nachne set off alone from Victoria Terminus with Rs. 80 in his pocket, without anyone to help him and without knowing what to do. At the V.T. station he found a fellow passenger who took enormous trouble to enquire about everything and to give him direction about everything. That passenger noted that Nachne had no bed and so told him that the night would be chill. He even sent for a blanket and a bed-sheet and gave them to Nachne. When asked how he could get them so quickly, he said that he was a peon in the Bombay Arts School nearby, and that his name was Ganpat Shankar,

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and he was also going to Nasik. That Ganpat Shankar took charge of him and his money and asked him to sleep. Ganpat Shankar locked up his money in a big trunk, which he carried, and woke him up before they reached Nasik Road station. He went on making payments for the bus, priests, etcetra. He attended to Nachne and to all his ceremonies. He accompanied to Ramkund, where the pinda had to be taken and helped him with directions as to how to keep his wife's bones in his hand in a particular hollow where the current of the Godavari water would gradually wash it off. He accompanied him also to the chief temples at Nasik and left him saying, "We will meet again." When Santaram Nachne returned to Andheri and went to the School of Arts and enquired, he discovered that there was no such person as Ganpat Shankar working as a peon in the Bombay Arts School. So, the whole thing was again proof of Baba's anxious care for those who love him.

Baba once appeared in Santaram's mother's dreams and helped her to a decision about marriages. Santaram and his father got Sai bhakti through Das Ganu, but Santaram's own statement of experiences has induced many people to go to Baba. Santaram Nachne has rendered valuable service to Baba in every respect. Above all, the reader would be glad to note that it is open to him to get into the same position of protected child of Baba – an *Ankita* and enjoy all the benefits that Santaram enjoyed.

Santaram Nachne's love for Baba was so great that he could not endure to see that Baba had trouble of any sort. Once when he was massaging Baba's feet, a powerful, well-built lady, Mausi by name, wanted to relieve Baba of some pains which he had in the abdomen. So, she took hot bricks and applied them over Baba's belly and took them off after pressing. Fearing that the pressure of her own powerful hands might cause pain to Baba, Nachne felt sorely distressed and cried out, "Hallo, hallo, Save Baba. Do not be so cruel. Let go, let go." Baba got angry and asked Nachne to "Clear off" because he was interfering with the service rendered by Maushi, with equal love like Nachne's.

DAMODAR SAWALRAM RASANE

Damodar Rasane was a *Kasar* and one of the earliest of Ahmednagar citizen to learn about Sai Baba. He received the benefit of issue in a most remarkable and unexpected manner and was thereby to be the means of broadcasting Sai's fame in all directions through Das Ganu's chapters. He was a very humble man and began as a poor bangle seller but all his transactions yielded good profit and he soon grew rich. He had everything to make life happy, but had issue. Seeing that his first wife could not bear a child, he married a second time. But even the second wife could not bear him a child. Astrological curiosity made him explore into his horoscope and he found that in the *Putra sthanam*, a *papi* was situated, namely, *Kethu*, and there was no *Guru* influence to overcome that evil. Therefore, the local astrologers, who were consulted, declared that issue for him was impossible in this life.

This reminds one strongly of the preface *Mahatmya* to the Srimad Bhagavata where in a similar manner a great *yati* or seer was consulted by a childless Brahmin about the absence of issue and the seer declared that the Brahmin would have no issue in this life and for seven more births. But the Brahmin said that he would kill himself unless the seer by his powers granted him an issue. Then that seer stated, "Well, I will give you this fruit. Let this fruit be eaten by your wife and let her observe religious vows for a year. And if she eats it, she will have a son." Then, the pious consultant took the mango to his wife and told her what the seer said. That lady was a termagant of a

very vicious disposition and never hesitated to cross her husband's will even in serious matters. She said, "If I get pregnant, there will be much discomfort, and if the child falls athwart the womb, am I suffer the pains and serious risks involved or is the seer or my husband going to suffer?" So she determined not to eat the fruit.

She had a sister to whom she narrated the facts. The sister was poor and cantankerous lady was rich. So, she told the poor sister, "You are pregnant. Give your child to me and I will say that it is born of my womb, and he will have all my wealth to enjoy and you and he will be here." That poor sister agreed. As for the fruit, she throw it before the cow, and the cow ate it up. As Mantra cannot be without their effect, the cow calved and brought forth a human child with ears like that of a cow but the rest of the body resembling a human being. That child was in the house. But it was the sister's child of the termagant that was thought by the Brahmin to be the result of his wife's eating the fruit. Then the sister's child proved to be a thorough villain and he broke the heart of the Brahmin who had asked for issue and even of his mother. Then they both died. The boy became a criminal and died. When he became a *Brahma Rakshas*, that is, an evil Spirit, the *Gokarna* cow-eared boy brother of his gave him relief by making him listen to Saptaha of the Bhagavata. This story contained in the sacred Bhagavata *Mahatmya* shows how planetary influence debarring a person from having issue is considered ultimate, but in Damodar Rasane's case, he was more fortunate.

He had heard of Sai Baba and went up to meet him. Sai Baba had kept apart 8 mangoes to be given to him from a basket of mangoes that were sent to Baba. The children were the recipients of the rest of the mangoes and some children wanted more. When Baba said, "There is nothing," the children pointed to the eight mangoes. Baba said, "They are for Damia." But the children said, "Damia is not here." "I know that. He is on the way. He is coming," said Baba. Then, when Baba went out, some of these petted children of Baba stole away four mangoes, and when Rasane came, there were only four mangoes remaining. As soon as he came, Baba gave him those four mangoes. "Eat and die. People are clamouring for mangoes." Eat and die – Damodar was perturbed by hearing the inauspicious word die, and Mahlsapathy noting his perplexity told him that it was a blessing to die at the feet of Baba. Baba was enjoying the humour all the time, as the word die, which he had used, did not refer to the physical death but only to the spiritual death, which is the same as *Bhramh* or *Pramada* coming upon one who gets deeper and deeper in *samsaric* life with the birth of a child after child and the death of several of them.

Pramada a Marityuraham bravimi

That is, It is the intoxication of the world that makes us forget the Real Life; that I call death said Sanatkumara – *Sanat Sujatiya*.

Baba came to the rescue and said, "Damia do not eat these fruits yourself. Give them to your wife". Damia wanted to know to which wife were the fruits to be given. Baba said, "The second wife." Baba also said, "She will have eight children. The first and second would be boys. Name the first Daulat Shah and the second Thana Shah." Taking up his note book immediately, Damia wrote down the names. Then the fruits were taken and given to his second wife, and, unlike the heroine of the Bhagavata *Mahatmya*, she did eat the four fruits. She begot, as stated by Baba, exactly eight children, one after another, their sexes being in the order given by Baba. It took fifteen years for all the children to be born. Therefore, it was clear that the planetary influence in Damia's case was not quite as deadly as that in the Bhagavata case. Perhaps there is an astrological explanation also. There, in the written horoscope, at Damia's birth there was no *Guru balam* to overcome the *papi's* influence. But the All-knowing and All-powerful Guru of Damia was Baba, and his *balam* was there in 1897, and his Baba's *veekshanyam* could overcome all the adverse influence of all the planets put together. As Sri Thyagaraja says,

Griha Balam Emi?

Sri Ramanugaraga Balame Balamu.

It may be noted that the eight mangoes representing eight children that Baba set apart for Damia, four were stolen away. Corresponding to that loss, of the eight children that were born to Damia, four were filched away by Yama. The remaining four are living now (1956) healthy, strong and flourishing. The first named Daulat Shah is now known as Nana Saheb Rasane, and is a trustee of the Sai Sansthan. Daulat means prosperity and fame. With the wealth already acquired by Damia, the children started or carried on a successful business, and they are keeping up the name of Damia for wealth and generosity. In addition to the above, Nana Saheb, the eldest son was helped by Baba in his spiritual development. He is now carrying on Sai propaganda, spreading the Sai faith by lectures, etc., and is fully deserving of the name, Daulat Shah. When Daulat Shah was five years old, and when he first began writing the letters *Hari* on the slate, Baba held his hand and helped him to write. After that he was, taken to a school at Shirdi. At his marriage also, Baba helped him. When there were several girls

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offered for this rich man's son, Baba was requested by Damia to select the one, which he considered proper out of four horoscopes. Then Baba selected a poor girl's horoscope; and that was the girl that Rasane married, and that was a happy marriage. It took place at Pandharpur and Damia went to Baba to invite him to Pandharpur. Baba replied "I am with you. Do not fear. Wherever you think of me, there I am with you." Still Damia pressed him to attend. Then Baba said, "Without God's permission, nothing can be done by me. I will send Shama to attend the marriage as my deputy." And Shama attended the marriage.

The manner, in which Damia got children by his wife consuming mangoes, naturally reminds one of the way in which the Ayodhya king Dasaratha got his children. Dasaratha was also childless, and after consulting Vasishta, his *Kula Guru*, he was advised by the Guru, to perform an *Asvamedha Yaga* and *Puthra Kameshti Yaga*. In the latter *yaga*, conducted by Vasishta, a divine person *Rishyasringa* came out of the fire with a vessel full of nectarine, *payasam* and that was offered to Dasaratha with the direction that his wives should drink the same and thereby have issue. Dasaratha distributed it amongst his wives and, in consequence of it, had four sons. In the case of Damia, he was not rich enough to conduct an *Asvamedha Yaga*, nor were there any rishis to conduct a *Puthra Kameshti Yaga*, and yet he got his four children just like Dasaratha. Sai Baba represented in his own personality and in the mangoes that he gave, the *Asvamedha Yaga*, *Puthra Kameshti Yaga*, Vasishta, *Rishyasringa* and divine nectar. So, the childless devotees of Sai Baba look upon him as a never failing giver of the boon of children, and others who are afflicted by being in the bad books of the planets look to him for getting rid of their other evils. Above all, the words of Baba as to issue proved strictly true. There was not a single mistake about them. Our astrologers, as Baba himself has said, make declarations about future and only half of them come true. In the case of Baba, there was no such thing as missing. This may be described in various ways by the learned – *Satyavak*, *Satyasankalpa*. Some may call it *Vaksiddhi*. Others may call it *Trikala jnana*. Some others may refer to it, as *Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhi*. Still others may call it, *Isatvam*. These names are found in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras in the Srimad Bhagavata, and in the Chandogya Upanishad. Some others may say, it is merely pre-cognition, that is knowledge of the future. But whether the future is fixed enough for one to have knowledge of is a moot question, and the difficulty of its being unfixed is overcome by people putting forward an alternative explanation of Baba's faculty, calling it either knowledge of the future or control of the future.

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Rishinam Punar Adhyanam
Vacham Artho Anudhavati

This means, In the case of ancient rishis, events follow their words, that is, where they declare a thing is, there that thing comes about by their will power – Satyavak Satyasankalpa.

Therefore, Damia's having derived a blessing of this very rare sort was the means by which Baba's fame for the grant of issue and other similar blessings even in the face of adverse planetary influences got widely published in the town of Ahmednagar and in the neighbourhood. This was around 1895 to 1897. Damia wishing to show his gratitude undertook to pay the expenses of a grand ceremony of 'The standards procession' on every Ramanavami Day. Two very tall standards were nicely decorated and carried from the Mosque through the streets of Shirdi on that day every year and finally brought back to be planted at Baba's Masjid to remain there as a mark of the residence of the weird saint. Damia, not content with this service, was always ready to undertake further trouble and expense for Baba in other matters. At the time of the reconstruction of the Masjid, he made his contribution as also on other similar occasions. But the best contribution that Damia made was his becoming an Ankita or child of Baba, whom Baba looked after wherever he was and wherever he thought of Baba. Baba told him, "I am with you wherever you are and whenever you think of me." This was said when Damia was afraid that Baba would leave his body and would no longer be helping him personally with his presence. Baba's assurance, Damia says in his statement in 1936 has been, perfectly true. Baba is with him and frequently appears before him. When he is not personally present, Damia casts chits before Baba, and the chits always give the answers of Baba. He says in the innumerable cases that he consulted Baba on chits, not even on one occasion was Baba's direction found to be wrong. But we may first mention the sort of assurance that Baba gave him before *Mahasamadhi*.

Baba was relied upon by Damia as his great asset, the one shield against all sorrow and trouble, the one supreme protector who would guard him against every evil. So, whenever he was in trouble, he thought of Baba. On one occasion, his wife's *nath*, nose ornament, usually considered to represent the *Mangalya*, was stolen by an old-time servant. The matter was reported to the police. They came and seized the thief and after making a search, arrested him. Damia felt hurt in every way, firstly by the loss of the *Mangalya* ornament and

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next the fact that the thief was a man whom he had trusted for thirty years. That such a servant should turn a traitor was a shock to him. So, he at once went to Shirdi and Baba, noting how upset he was, told Shama to give him a good fine feast. Then he was given a coating of sandal paste and Baba assured him he was with him, and restored his courage, self-possession and equanimity. On other occasions also, he always appealed to Baba and Baba came to his aid. Damia had implicit reverence for and faith in Baba and obeyed his directions. Although he was very orthodox in his ways, he invited Baba for a meal on an important occasion at Shirdi. Baba declined to go and then Damia asked him, "Send at least Bala Patel", who was Baba's constant attendant, though a *Harijan*. Baba said, "I will send him. But do not cry *Dhut, Dhut* at him and keep him far away from your own place of eating." Damia agreed and, in spite of his orthodoxy, spread a plate for Bala next to himself. This was a great achievement in those days at the beginning of 20th century.

Damia has said that his mind was always dwelling on Baba, and he saw him at his own house at Ahmednagar. sometimes, he says, Baba abused him and even beat him fiercely. But he adds, he knew that, as with Akkalkote Maharaj, blows and abuses have an auspicious ending. So, he always found that blows and abuse were not matters for regret.

On religious matters, he had very little occasion to seek Baba's assistance. It was chiefly temporal blessings that he got. For instance, when his son Nana had only one son, Damia prayed to Baba at his Samadhi for a second grandson and a second grandson was born. Being almost wholly occupied with worldly affairs, his consultations with Baba were only on business and domestic matters. On one occasion, a Bombay cotton broker told him that he had a good lot of Rs. 50,000 or Rs. 60,000 with him, and he could safely speculate in cotton and earn lakhs of rupees and that too very quickly. At once Damia wrote to Shama to ask Baba for permission to launch on this speculation. When letter came to Baba, Baba said, "Damia wants to catch at the sky. His head is wrong. He is trying to think of lakhs. I write to him that his present position is not bad, and ask him not to think of lakhs". after the letter came, Damia with great regret dropped the idea of cotton speculation, but not finally. He thought he would go directly to meet Baba, and then induce Baba to give the permission by offering a share in the profits to Baba. so he went to Shirdi and when massaging Baba's legs, was thinking of his plan. Baba at once said, "Damia, I am not in anything." That is, Baba was not going to be a partner in any speculation or similar affair. Baba did not want money at all and, if he wanted, speculation was not necessary for him.

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Prakamyā is one of the *siddhis* forming part of one's divine nature. Baba said, "I am God". He also said, "I have vast powers." Baba could command large amounts at will. But he had no necessity for wealth.

Again on another occasion, Damia found people trading in grain. So, he wanted Baba's permission for himself to trade in grain. Baba said, "No." He was wondering why. He had friends who advised him that grain prices were rising, and if the grains were stored up the yield of profit would be cent per cent or more. But Baba said, "Arre, you will be buying at five *seers* per rupee and selling seven *seers* per rupee. For a month or two, the prices were rising still, Baba's prophecy seemed to be false. But when *Asvina* came, the monsoon rains were abundant and everywhere the crops were excellent, and so prices fell and the grain hoarders suffered a loss. Damia discovered that Baba had saved him from this calamity.

Damia had occasional curiosity which prompted him put questions. First he wanted to know if when so many were crowding around Baba whether they all got any benefit from him. This was a mental question. Baba at once replied, "Look at the mango tree in blossom. if all flowers turn fruit, what a splendid crop it would be? But do they? Most fall off by the wind. Very few remain." The second question was, that, if Baba should pass away, how helpless Damia would be. This also a mental question. To this Baba answered, "I will be with you whenever you think of Me and wherever you think of Me." This was mentioned before 1918 and is fulfilled even after 1918. Damia says, "Even after his *Mahasamadhi*, He is still with me. He is still guiding me, as per his statement made in 1936." So, he is one of the Ankita children of Baba, whom Baba guided, corrected and helped.

Mrs. TARABAI SADASIVA TARKHAD

Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiva Tarkhad of Poona, is also one of those devotees of Baba who derived very peculiar and very great advantages, mostly in temporal matters, but partly in spiritual matters also and therefore her experiences with Baba's name was through her brother-in-law Sri. R. Tarkhad of Bombay, who was a Director of a mill there. He had been to Baba, and had a very high impression of Baba's power and nature. When he visited his brother's house, he spoke of Baba in terms of high praise, which naturally roused Mrs. Sadasiva Tarkhad's attention for a special reason. Her little child Nalini Tarkhad had taken ill suddenly at the age of 15 months, and she was perplexed as to what to do. Hearing of Baba's fame, she said, 'if Baba is the wonderful Saint that my brother in law stated he is, then he should make the child recover, and if he makes the child recover, the whole family with the child will go to Shirdi and pay their respects to Baba in person.' Very shortly after the vow was made, the child did recover, and so, she, her husband and the child went up to Shirdi. The lady had already a fairly good grounding of religious experience by contact with other Saints and her first impressions of Baba are all the more valuable on that account. She found the most prominent feature about Baba was his eyes. She says,

'There was such power and penetration in the 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

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one's body. A few words, a gesture would reveal to one that Sai Baba knew all about the past and the present and even the future and 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 Sahajasthithi or what you like. But the overpowering personality was there, and, in his presence no doubts, no fears, no questionings had any place and one resigned oneself and found that was the only course, the safest and the best course'.

From her first contact, she went on getting experiences of his power, his All-knowing and All-pervasive personality, and all his protecting care shielding her wherever she went at any time whatsoever. She had become Baba's Ankita, by complete surrender with full faith in him. For the benefit of strangers, she was kind enough to give some instances of Baba's Antaryamitva that she could vouch far from personal experiences or from that of some intimate friends. Shirdi was notorious for being infested with snakes and is so even now after lighting arrangements are made. When she went there first, there was no street lighting and no village committee was working. She was walking about at night in the street. But suddenly it struck her that she should stop. There was no sight, no sound, nor object visible to account for her stopping. But somehow she felt she must and in a very short time, a light was brought. Then she saw that if she had taken another single step it would have been over a serpent that was lying there, quiet. But how she managed to stop then, and why the light came, were never explained to her. It was all Baba's grace, his protection and his ever watchful eye over his children. She says that, like this, 'He saved her life again and again on several occasion, both before and after his Mahasamadhi.

One very interesting instance of Baba's Antaryamitva that she gives was in respect of a leper, who came to Baba to take his darsan. The poor man's disease was very far advanced, and he had very little strength. he was stinking all over. It was with great difficulty that he could slowly get up the three steps of the Mosque, and then like every visitor he had to go to the dhuni to pick up the ashes and then give it to Sai Baba, placing his head on Baba's feet. This lady being fairly near, found that his prolonged presence and the intense stench he gave out, was very difficult to bear. At last he moved off, and then she felt relief and said within herself, 'Thank god, He is off.' Sai Baba at once looked at her, sending her a piercing glance. Of course he knew her thought. he ordered the leper to be brought back. The man came.

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Slowly he clambered up, full of his stench and bowed again. He was carrying a parcel in his hand – a very dirty parcel. Baba took it up and asked 'What is this.' and opened it. It had pedas. Baba picked up a piece and gave one piece to the lady and put a bit into his own mouth. Baba said to the lady 'eat'. There was no option but to obey and she had to eat it. Then the man was sent back with the rest of the pedas. This is what he wished, that is, that Sai Baba should accept a part of the peda, and return the rest as prasad. Baba satisfied him, though that man had not the courage first when he arrived there, to present the dirty packet to Baba. Baba used the occasion to teach her valuable lessons in humanity, fraternity, sympathy, endurance and trust in Baba's supreme wisdom, which knows when there is danger and when there is none. She did not contract leprosy of course. She declares that whenever they had difficulties to get over, they had simply to stay or stand in Baba's presence, without the necessity to utter a single word. Baba knew at once everything in the minds of his children, and would do the needful himself. She gives one instance.

They had taken their servant with them, who was suffering from pain in the waist. as there was no hospitals at Shirdi, her husband went up and stood before Baba. At once Baba said, 'My whole leg is paining. The pain is Great'. Someone suggested, 'Why not do something to relieve the pain.' 'Yes' said Baba 'if green leaves are heated and applied over it, the pain will go away.' 'What leaves, Baba?' the asked. Baba said, ' The green leaves near Lendi.' 'Is it korphad?' somebody asked, 'Yes' said Baba, and added, if that is brought, split into two, warmed over the fire and applied, it will do. Her husband knew at once that it was Baba's prescription for their servant and he took up korphad, warmed it over the fire, and applied it to his servant's waist. That man cured.

Baba's saving her from the snake was not the only instance in which she found that Baba was present, invisibly keeping a watch over her and other children in all places. She had other instances also proving the same. As regards her physical health – her eyes were giving her great trouble. She went and sat before Baba. the eyes were paining and water was flowing freely from them. Baba looked at her. Then the eyes ceased to pain and water ceased to flow. But tears were trickling down from Baba's own eyes. The accurate diagnosis of diseases take doctors much time and efforts, and to discover appropriate remedy takes more time and more efforts. In the case of Baba, the diagnosis, the remedy and everything was instantaneous. A deep-seated organic disease abruptly and suddenly got cured; and the power of drawing disease from her to himself by pure will power, was something

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marvellous and something uncommon. Few would care even if they have the power to draw disease to themselves.

Baba has declared that he is inside every creature and every object to control all voluntary and involuntary movements. Therefore his declaration, 'I am not at Shirdi' while he was there, should be interpreted as referring to his Antaryami nature. he was not confined to the 3 ½ cubits height of body. We cannot get over the idea that we are the body. But he was ever free from such narrow ideas and attachments. One important difference between Sai Baba and several other saints she had seen, is mentioned by her. Some other saints used to get into the Samadhi or trance condition, and then they would forget their body. They would utter things in the trance state revealing supranormal knowledge or power. but in the case of Sai Baba, he never had to go into trance to achieve anything or reach any higher position. Every moment he was exercising a double consciousness, namely, the Ego called Sai Baba and the Antaryami of all, superseding all egos and resting in the Paramatma. He was at the same time exercising and manifesting the powers and features of both states of consciousness. Some other saints with much trouble would read other man's minds' for a time, and then lapse into their original condition. But with Sai Baba, his knowledge of other people's minds was not a matter of effort. He was in the All-knowing state always. Baba was not without worldly wisdom. he would higggle with cloth sellers and beat down the price of a yard of cloth from 8 annas to 5 annas. People would then suppose what a greedy man Sai Baba was. But when it came to payment, he might pay Rs.40 instead of Rs.15 for the cloth he took, and then people would think that he was a mad man. But he had his own reasons first for the higgling and next for the liberal payment.

His power and nature, being fully understood by her and other similar devotees, made her regard Shirdi as a veritable paradise, a real Bhooloka Vaikuntam. She says,

'Directly as we went there, we felt safe, that nothing could harm us. when I went sat in his presence, I always forgot my pain-nay, the body itself, with all it's 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 for us. We could never think of his having limitations. Now that he has passed away, I feel what a terrible loss it is, as I can know longer pass hours together in blissful unconsciousness time and affairs at his feet. We feel we have lost our soul; our bodies alone are left to us now.'

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The lady qualifies her statement next by saying 'Baba has not all together vanished, he is still living now and gives ample proof of his powers and protecting care in many matters off and on, though the impressions about these, because of his body being invisible, are not so great as those that the devotees enjoyed when they sat in his presence at Shirdi.' She gives instance of Baba's miraculous protection and help, even when he was not physically present – before and even long after his Mahasamadhi in 1918.

One instance is this. it was probably in 1915, that she had for over one month a splitting neuralgic headache. A number of remedies were tried, all to no purpose. She felt she must die, and that would be the relief she thought. Anyhow, she thought, 'Why not go and die at Shirdi at Baba's Feet? That would be a privilege.' With that view she started off with her husband and came to Kopergaon from Panchgani where they were staying for the summer. At Kopergaon, they have to cross the Godavari river. Then it struck her, 'Anyway death is to come upon me soon. So, why not have the Punya, merit, of a Godavari bath before death?' So she boldly took a bath in the Godavari – in that cold water. Ordinarily that would intensify the headache and accelerate death. But on this occasion, when she came out of the water, the neuralgic headache ceased and thereafter ceased for ever. This is surely Baba's miracle.

The other instance she cites was in 1927, nine years after Baba's Mahasamadhi. With the rest of the family, she set off to Shirdi. She was in the family way, but anyhow she boldly went for the pilgrimage. After her arrival at Shirdi, the foetus die in the womb. Her own features were turning blue and her blood was getting poison. There was neither midwife nor doctor there. Though some medicines from Ahmednagar were brought, they proved of no avail. Then Mr. Sadasiva Tarkhad went to Sakori and asked Upasani for help. Upasani's reply was 'you have got the best doctor and best nurse over there at Shirdi; why do you come to me?' What happened further she did not personally know, because she became unconscious. Her husband says that in her unconscious condition, she went on speaking and giving directions as to what should be done and the directions she gave were followed in addition to the application of udhi and thirtha of Baba. Then the foetus was expelled along with other matter. For weeks she remain unconscious and at last recovered full consciousness and health. This is nothing but Baba's kind care for his child.

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Baba's care and help were also extended to her husband. For sometime, he was the manager of a mill. Then his services were terminated, and he had to remain for a considerable time without any job. He went to Shirdi in the hope that Baba would help him to get a job. But soon after he reached Shirdi, Baba instead of providing him with a job, told him, 'Tatya Patil and others are going to attend a cinema at Ahmednagar. You better go with them and thence go home to Pune.' He felt mortified that, without getting a job, he was asked to attend amusements. Anyhow Baba's order had to be obeyed. He went and attended the cinema and after leaving Nagar, he went to Pune. But what a surprise 'Baba, he thought, had sent him to Pune simply for nothing. But on the other hand at Pune at the mill, a labour strike had broken out. The authorities concerned were anxious to recall him as he was a very capable manager of labour, and they had wired for him to Bombay and other places. Meanwhile Baba knowing of the wire and the situation, had sent him just in time to get his job. So, Baba, appearing to be doing harm, really was conferring a blessing by his seemingly unkind orders.

At times Baba's help to her and to the family appeared to be unkind, but it was really beneficial. In 1915, she and her husband went up to Shirdi. Baba told her to go and put up with Ramakrishna Ayi for accommodation. That lady gave it on the strict condition that Mrs. Tarkhad should carry out all the menial labour that might be ordered by Ramakrishni, who was a Brahmin widow and the latter had a very sharp tongue and would rebuke her for shortcomings. So, Mrs. Tarkhad found that Baba had imposed a very painful position on them, but what was their recompense? She found that Ramakrishni Ayi was possessed of powers of clairvoyance and thought reading. Some message would come for Mr. Tarkhad. At once Ramakrishni, or Ayi as she was called, would read off the reply from Tarabai's mind and send a reply. In other matters also when Baba sent unusual orders, Ayi would have the things ready. Then Ayi related the history of Mrs. Tarkhad's past life. Above all, Ayi lived only for Baba's service. She was very deeply devoted to Baba and rendered very great service to the Sansthan. It was therefore an education in service that she got by staying with her. Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiva Tarkhad noted several facts about Baba, which would be valued by our readers. Therefore, her statement on these matters may be quoted here.

'Baba in the mornings would sit near his dhuni and wave his arms and fingers about, making gestures which conveys no meaning to the onlookers and saying Haq which means 'God'. Baba's methods of imparting spiritual benefit were hardly noticeable. He would speak of

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god only rarely and that with feeling. His religious practise could hardly be discovered by any one. But Baba's purity, strength, regularity and self-denial were prominent. He would always go and beg his food even during His illness. He would take the begged food and eat only a little of it. the rest would be given away or taken away. Baba's talk would be about *Vanis, Telis*, and they looked like meaningless jargon. But it was intentionally so. Baba's words would be understood only by these whom he intended to enlighten.

*Jayamani Jaisa Bhav,
Taya Taysa Anubhav*

says the *arati* song. That is, You get an experience of Baba in accordance with what you think of him. Baba's stoic indifference to comforts was most impressive. He did not care for any comforts, not even for his residence. The Mosque, which was a worthless, rumbling, old and dilapidated building, and though it needed repairs, he put up with it. He did not want it to be repaired, and when others tried to repair it, he obstructed their efforts. It was only at night when he went to the chavadi on alternate days, that the reconstruction of the mosque could be pushed through. In one night they had to put up the whole flooring.

Baba had no particular marga, as the yoga marga etcetera. But if any person came to grief in his yoga marga, he could give relief. One yoga sadhaka had bleeding piles and came to Baba and got relief at Baba's hands. His liberality and generosity were remarkable. He would daily get dakshina in three figures; one hundred to three hundreds. He scattered the whole thing away. Bhajan parties and fakirs were liberally supplied when they came up, and they were always coming up. His self control and equanimity were equally remarkable. he had no particular preference of one dish over another, though some people thought he liked mangoes or sira or even country beans. He was accessible at all hours of the day and night to people. He himself said, My durbar is always open at all hours. All his actions were open and above board. there was nothing done in secrecy. He had nothing shameful to conceal and no fear from scrutiny. his most marked feature was perfect calm and total freedom from care and anxiety. He had no interests to serve or protect, no institutions to support, no acquisitions to safeguard and no private property to feel anxious about. With a very large daily income, he left only Rs.16 at the moment of his passing away from his body. He was perfectly just and impartial. He was not obsequious to the rich and highly placed nor supercilious and contemptuous to the lowly. Revenue Commissioners and collectors and lower officials came in large numbers, and D.Os.,

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D.C.s., and Mamlatdars poured in. Also there came the ragamuffins in the street, paupers and beggars *ad nauseam*. He treated them all with perfect equality. Baba's personality was far greater than of any other saint that this devotee had seen.

M.B. REGE

Sri M. B Rege gave out his experiences to B. V. N. swami in June 1936, and confirmed or added to them by subsequent talks occasionally. A chapter about him has a special value because, as ex-Judge of the Indore High Court, his words would command great credit. As a person of great education and as one who has been deriving immense benefits from Sai's contact, an account of his life and experiences has special importance.

First and foremost, his view of Sai Baba must be mentioned. He 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 had no limitations. Of course, when he was with us, there was the fleshy tabernacle. That was brought to our notice prominently at times. But mostly his infinite aspect was what remained before me. I thought of him as a mental or spiritual image in which the finite and infinite 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. Sri Rege's special qualification and reason for getting such great benefit from Baba was the way in which he developed his religious side from the beginning. *Durga* of Goa was the family Goddess, and he was keen on her worship from infancy. He would pray that she should keep him ever happy. Later, that is, in his eight year, he had *Upanayanam*, *Gayatri* and *Sandhya* and he observed these strictly. He was led then from *Durga* to Narayana or Vishnu. the Ravi Varma picture of Dhuruva Narayana made him a very deep impression on him. He meditated on that picture. He, however

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found that when meditating on Vishnu in that picture, Dhuruva's figure constantly intruded and disturbed his concentration. So, he cut out Dhuruva's figure and began to pray that Vishnu should place him in the position of Dhuruva, which he had cut out – that is, he wanted *laya* at the feet of God. Along with his devotional meditation, he was practising, as a boy, both *Asana* and *Pranayama*, and could pass one or two hours sitting in *Padmasana* or *Siddhasana*, and for over 15 minutes a single picture or idea used to occupy in his mind. All this he did without a Guru. Breath control also he succeeded in. Later he could regulate or even stop his heart beat. This concentration on Vishnu and prayers had its effect in his 21st year, when his practice and prayer bore fruit.

One night in 1910, he had three successive trance visions or dreams. In the first, he found himself in the lying down posture, that is, in bed and noticed a change. The body lay separate from him and he stood out and looking on the body. So, he was not the body and in front of him the gracious Vishnu Narayana figure was standing. This suggested that by the grace of Vishnu to whom he prayed, the first essential step in one's spiritual progress, namely, getting over the delusion that we are the body, Dehatma Buddhi had started. An hour later, he had the next experience. Again, his body lay on the bed, and he was still standing outside it. Vishnu Narayana also was standing in front of him. But this time, there was another figure standing next to Vishnu Narayana and Sri Vishnu pointing to that figure told him, 'This Sai Baba of Shirdi is your man; you must resort to him.' This was the introduction of the first great step in all progress, namely, the securing of a Guru. Strangely enough, by God's grace he was getting over the Dehatma Buddhi, but at the same time to make it ripen and lead him to the fullest success, the Guru was pointed out to him, the Guru who was to seize him for life. And here the second vision ended. The third started an hour or so later. Here the first feeling he had was that he was travelling somewhere, evidently in the air. He came to a village and asked some one what that village was. He learnt that it was Shirdi. Then, he asked, 'If it is Shirdi, is there a Sai Baba here?'. He was told, 'Yes; go and see'. He was taken to the Mosque, and there he saw Sai Baba sitting with legs outstretched. In the vision, at once he approached and reverently placed his head on Baba's feet. But Baba got up and said, 'Do you take my darshan? I am your debtor; I must take your darshan'. And Baba placed his head on Rege's feet. These visions ended. They produced a powerful impression.

Sai Baba began to grow up in his soul. He felt a strong impulse to go to Shirdi. But he was still a student. After some time, he did succeed in

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going to Shirdi, Rege went and prostrated, placing his head on Baba's feet. Baba said, 'What! Do you worship a man?' At once, the rebuff struck Rege, and struck him keenly. He retreated and went to the mandap and sat there. How long he sat, he did not know. He was simply stunned. No doubt he had, as a student, caught the modern and stoic idea that a man should not be worshipped. He was puzzled. His dream told him Baba was to accept him and be his Guru. But there he was getting a rebuff. It is true that his idea on the subject of man worship had not become quite clear and crystallized. But what was he to do? He was determined, as he had come to Shirdi to see whether Baba would accept him or not. so, he sat on dazed till all the crowd dispersed. Suddenly he opened his eyes and saw that Baba was alone at the Mosque and there was no one with him.

That was in the afternoon. The rule is, in the afternoons Baba is alone, and nobody should disturb him. though the rule was that nobody should approach Baba during that time, he still thought that this was his only chance. if Baba should strike him, he would not care. So, he approached Baba gradually. Baba saw him approaching and beckoned him to come to him. So, he went up, and again placed his head upon Baba's feet. Baba embraced him at once, made him sit close to him and then said, 'You are my child. When strangers are in the company, we keep the children off.' Then he understood why he had not been accepted till then. The words, 'You are my child' showed that he was really this Guru's Ankita sishya. So, the vision was true. Vishnu had granted him his destined Guru, Sai Baba, and Rege should stick to that Guru for ever.

Baba told him to go and be with Ramakrishni, also known as Ayi who was a real mother to him. She loved him as if he was her own son. Baba sent her one roti to her as prasad, and he sent two rotis on the days when Rege was at Shirdi. This Ayi had dedicated her love and all to Baba. She lived only for Sai Baba, and her delight was to do everything he wanted or what was needed for his sansthan. So, she had plenty of work to get done for Baba, and people like Rege, Purandhare and others were constantly given this *Dasya Seva* by her, for Baba. But Seva was not the only item or step for his religious improvement. Being fairly advanced, Ayi had developed certain powers in addition to her bhakti. Her concentration had evidently produced results. her concentration was helped very much by her command of music. She had a good voice and could play the sitar. Rege also had a good voice and was versed in music. They would compare notes and they agreed that, for their spiritual progress, secrecy about their efforts was necessary. So, they would compare notes and made

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resolutions and kept them secret. In accordance with Kabir's motto, '*Jinne Kamaya Unne Chupaya*' what one has gained, he conceals, they both agreed that songs and hymns were very good for increasing *bhava*. Yet for actual *manolaya*, they attracted too much attention of the outside public and, therefore did not suit them. So, they determined that the proper step for *manolaya*, was *Japa*. And what *Japa* should they make? She said that many used the name of Ram, Vittal and that so far as she was concerned Sai was her God. So, Sai was quite sufficient for her. Rege naturally adopted the same. so, they went on making Sai *nama* japa and, luckily for Rege, Baba asked him soon afterwards what he had been doing in the morning. He answered *Japa*.

Baba: Japa of what name?

Rege: of my God.

Baba: What is your God?

Rege: You know it.

Baba: That is all right.

So, Sai Nama Japa was approved from the very beginning by Sai Baba also. Japa is a *sadhana*. What is the *sadhya* or goal then? For this again, they gained light from Baba. The goal was patent from everything that Baba said and did. The goal was that through *laya* to reach God, especially in the form of the loving Guru-God; and intense and passionate love was alike the *sadhana* and *sadhya*. For love at its perfection is Bliss and Bliss is God. Baba's wonderful love stamped its impress upon both Ayi and him. Their *sadhya* and *sadhana* were love.

About *sadhana*, Baba gave him a hint. Religious books are generally regarded as very important *sadhana* for the beginner. On *Guru Poornima* day, the devotees usually go to Baba, and place a book in his hands, so that they might get it back with his *Ashirvada* and that they might study it with profit and benefit. On one *Guru Poornima* day, all had taken books. Rege was there. He had not taken any book. Then Baba looking at him and said, "These people want to find God, that is Brahma in these books. There is however *Bhramh*, that is, worldly confusion or delusion in these books. You are all right. Do not read books. But keep me in your heart and if you unify or harmonise head and heart, that is enough'.

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Of course, study of books is not ruled out. on the other hand, religious study is very useful and Baba recommended Eknath's Bhagavata, Bhavarta Ramayana and Jnaneswari. He recommended these to Kaka Dixit, B.V. Dev, Chandorkar and others. He also made Chandorkar read the Bhagavad Gita. but on the whole the usual tendency to over emphasize the need of books was discountenanced by Baba. The Guru is the only sadhana of the pupil in Baba's school, and the Guru's knowledge and power sink into the *sisya* by the intensity of faith and love of the *sisya*. For that purpose, to promote faith and love, Baba gave ample and almost perpetual proof of his omniscience, omnipresence and other divine qualities. So, Rege was getting constant proof of these qualities and love from Baba.

Ramakrishna Ayi was anxious to direct society important people to Baba's feet, and wanted to get P.R. Avaste, a retired Judge of Gwalior, to Baba's feet. so, Mr. Rege tried to bring him over to Shirdi. Avaste had heard about Baba, but there were obstacles which prevented him from going to Shirdi. Baba, on the silent prayer of Rege, helped Avaste to get over those obstacles. The way in which those difficulties were overcome, being very interesting, may be set out here. The first objection Avaste had to go to Shirdi was that he had already another Guru, a lady with a remarkable personality and powers, and going to see Baba would be Gurudroha towards her. Then Mr. Rege told him that Sai Baba was the same spirit as the spirit in all Gurus and, therefore, in that lady also, and he might therefore go to Shirdi and feel that the lady was in Baba.

He agreed to go during Christmas of 1914. But there was a great obstacle, Avaste was very slow and allowed arrears of work to accumulate. so, he received orders that he should not avail himself of Christmas holidays unless the arrears were cleared off. Avaste then sat up and, in the first few days of the holidays, cleared off the work much to his own surprise. This was the evidence of Baba's help. When they started, there was another and very unexpected obstacle. It was war time in 1914 and trains were commandeered. Going from Indore to Manmad, they had to pass Mhow, a Cantonment station. At that station, their train was commandeered. all passengers were asked to get down, and they also had to get down. the trip seemed to come to nothing. But Rege always had Baba in his heart. What happened? Just as they were about to get down, the Commanding officer came up and asked them to stay on, as their particular compartment was not going to be taken by the military, because it was too small and unnecessary.

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Obviously, it was Baba's work and Baba avowed it when they reached Shirdi. then when they were in the train, Rege went on all night with his chantings and bhajans, calling on Baba. When they reached Shirdi, Baba asked Rege, 'Who is this *Pissat*, the crazy man with you?' This proved to be a prophecy. Again Baba went on referring to Rege saying, 'Look at him. He will not be content to come alone. He insists on others being brought.' This again had reference to Rege's desire not to start until and unless Avaste also started with him. Again Baba said, 'They wanted to put my children out of the train. But I told the Commanding Officer, they are my children, let them come to me.' This indicated how they were exceptionally allowed to travel by that train. Lastly, Baba said, 'He gave me no sleep, last night. All night, Baba, Baba, was the cry around my bedside.

These four references showed that Baba was watching his children and using all his powers to influence all minds to favour their pious endeavours to be with him and profit thereby. Yet Avaste could not get over the idea that in having come to Shirdi, there was *droha* towards his lady Guru. To solve the difficulty, Rege sent up four flowers of *Mogra*, tied together with a string to Baba asking him to untie the knots. Baba smelt the flowers and sent them back saying that they should be untied at the *Shala*, that is, at *Ayi's* residence. Again at the midday *naivedya*, Avaste concealed a ball of rice under the *sthali* he carried, and said to himself, if Baba accepts this ball as a *pinda*, then he would feel sure that his deceased lady Guru was in Baba. When Avaste went up, he stumbled and picked up some portion of the ball and went near Baba. Baba put out his hands and said, 'Give it to me, I shall accept it and send it to the place you wish.' Avaste got excited and said, 'Hallo, My Guru is dead, and this person is living.' And he got flurried. His mind lost its balance. He began to see Baba all round and behaved like a mad man, thinking that Baba was trying to kill him and practising magic against him. About midnight he was saying, 'What? Have you got into the clutches of a wicked magician who is trying to ruin and kill me?' Rege could not bear any more. He went up, stood near the Mosque and mentally prayed to Baba for relief. Next morning, when he went to bow to Baba, the latter said, 'Take this man Avaste out of the gates of Shirdi'. When that was done, Avaste become normal again and lost his *pissat* qualities.

Baba always wanted to see that his devotees were not subject to *Raga-Dweshha*. As Rege sat near Baba at the mosque once, bunches of red plantains were brought by some one. Rege was fond of them, and he thought that he was going to have a good time of it. Baba, of course knew that passed in his heart. So, when the fruits came, Baba

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took up one fruit, peeled it off gave the pulp to others, and the skin was thrown to Rege with the word *Khav* – for him to eat, as it was the red skin that attracted him. The same thing was done a second time and third time. All the three skins were quietly swallowed up by Rege on account of his powerful bhakti to his Guru. At last, Baba took up one plantain and turning to him, said, 'Have I given you nothing?' Then, after peeling off the skin of one plantain, he bit off a portion and said it was nice. He presented it to the mouth of Rege for him to bite off. Rege bit off a portion and Baba bit off the next portion; so that, between the two, that fruit was finished. So, Baba gave Rege a very well remembered and impressive lesson on greed in the matter of eating.

Baba's identity with him was the matter on which Rege was most keen in 1912, probably on Guru Poornima day, when he went to Shirdi, he carried no garland. All the other went and garlanded Baba. Noting the absence of a garland in his own hand, Rege felt mortified. Baba at once knew his hear, and lifted up a bundle of garlands in his hands, and told Rege, 'All these are yours.'

Rege, on account of his great love for Baba, did not mind spending Rs. 85/- on the purchase of a beautiful *muslin*, which when folded could be contained in one's hand. On a Ramanavami Day in 1916, all of Baba's devotees presented a piece of cloth each to Baba and got it back. But Rege, with his muslin inside his shirt, bowed to Baba, and stealthily thrust it under Baba's gaddi so that no one would notice it. he came back. When all the other clothes were presented and returned, Baba got up, and said, 'The *Gaddi* must be dusted. Remove it.' The muslin was there under it. Baba said, 'Whose is this? I am not going to return it. This is mine.' Baba took it up, looked at Rege, spread out the *muslin*, put it over his shoulders, and asked Rege, 'Do I not look nice in this!' That was just what Rege wanted him to do, namely, to keep it – as there was no difference between Rege and Baba. his identity with the Guru was established in this practical way.

In another way also Baba granted this identity. This was in about 1916. Rege had gone to Shirdi and was staying with Ayi. when Baba was alone, he sent for him, and said, 'The key of my treasury is now placed in your hands. Ask anything you want, Rs. 5, Rs. 100 or what you like. I will give it to you.' This was a temptation, but Rege declined to ask for anything. Sai Baba knew what was necessary, good or useful for Rege and it was for Baba to decide what to give or what to withhold, and not for Rege to ask. So, Rege would not ask. Then Baba held him by the chin and coaxed him to ask for something, because he

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was anxious to give. Then Rege said, 'Is it agreed, Baba, that you grant anything I ask for?'. 'Yes', Baba answered. Rege said, 'Then Baba I want this. In this and in any future birth that may befall me, you should never part from me. You should always be with me'. Baba was full of joy and petting him said 'Yes, I shall be with you, inside you and outside you, whatever you may be or do' Rege felt then and feels even now, Baba is always with him. Baba also shows his form visibly to him occasionally to reassure him and guide him.

This statement that Baba is always with Rege, and Rege always with Baba, came from Sai Baba in a very forceful way again in 1916. on one occasion Baba showed his deep concern for M.B. Rege's comfort and happiness. It was about a child that was the first child that Rege had. when in 1914 a child was still in the womb, both Rege and his wife went to Baba for darshan. then Baba cryptically said, 'You have got one of my gifts with you.' When the child was born, it was taken to Baba. Baba then caressed it, and asked Rege, 'Is the child yours or mine?' 'Yours Baba,' replied Rege. Then Baba said, 'Keep him with you as a charge from me.' One might wonder, with what object this was said. Baba fully knew what the future of that child was to be and how it was to leave Rege and cause him much pain, being his very first child. A year and half after that, the child got pneumonia, and the doctors were saying that the danger was over. But just then it started sinking. Rege took the child to the prayer room in his house and prayed to Baba. 'The child is yours, Baba. So, please take it and give it rest in you. But having given it its worldly existence, I undertake all its *karma*', said Rege. Then Rege put his palm on the head of the child. There was a smile on its face, a last gasp and the crown of the head was drawn in with a hiss, just the way in which the yogis lives would depart, namely, through the crown of the head. To confirm his idea that the child had sadgati, he had an experience, a couple of months later, when he went to Shirdi. as he was in Baba's presence, the latter asked some one, 'Who is this man? where does he live?' pointing to Rege. They said, 'This is Rege and he lives at Indore.' 'No,' said Baba, 'You are wrong. he is always here and I am with him.' Next Baba asked , 'Has he any children?' The person present said, 'No Baba; his child has just now died.' Baba retorted, 'Died? No, no. I will tell you what happened. The child was mine, and this man agreed to keep it. One day he said, 'You keep him with you, and I will take up his karma.' So, I took the child and kept it here, pointing to his heart'. Baba added, 'He shall be here eternally'. Eternal with Guru – God means undoubted sadgati. That is how Baba tried to fore-warn Rege from the beginning about this loss of his first child and how he consoled him by giving the child sadgati. This being a memorable

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event is referred to in Sai Sahasranama in the following words: *Rege Sisoh Tathandasya Sada Sadgati Dayakah.*

As for worldly matters, naturally in the position of a judge, he did not have much trouble, though on account of his increasing family burdens, he had demands and burdens. But Rege never troubled Baba with prayers for worldly gain or support, for instance, as in matters of promotion. He had his income from property and insurance. He was quite content with the provision for the present and the future. If need arose, somehow money was coming in, and Rege had nothing to complain of.

Baba's kindness and provision for Rege's welfare had no limit. Rege says that it is not possible to give out all his experiences, but about Baba's method of communication, he gives a classification. There are three forms. The first is in the active waking stage. When the sishya is in difficulties or Baba wants his sishya to take a particular course, the sishya gets an inspiration as to what course should be adopted and the feeling that it is Baba's inspiration. that is quite enough and it is verified by the events in his own case. When he was at Ayi's house, he would feel that Baba called him, and would go up to the Mosque and find that Baba was actually waiting for him there. So, the inspiration really came from Baba. Baba would give him some songs to sing or some tunes, because both Baba and Rege knew music.

The second relate to the sleeping or trance state. Baba would appear in dreams or trances. This would be called Sakshatkara and is considered most impressive and unmistakable. Of course Rege had Baba's Sakshatkaras. In the third method, Baba directed his sishya to go to some other person, who did not even know why the sishya was sent, but who nevertheless benefitted the sishya in accordance with Baba's internal and unperceived guidance. Sometimes the person to whom Baba sends a devotee is totally unfit to give any reply, for instance, the rustic girl to whom Das Ganu was sent for interpreting the Isa Upanishad. Mr. Rege tells of how he was sent to several persons in the year 1912. He had taken Rs. 100 with him in his pocket to Shirdi. Baba asked for dakshina of Rs. 40/= first, again Rs. 40/= and again the balance Rs. 20/=. then once again, he asked dakshina, and when Rege said he had no more left, Baba said, "Go and get it". "From whom?" asked Rege. The answer was "From Shama", a woefully poor man. When Rege went to Shama and told him that Baba wanted dakshina to be taken from him, Shama replied, "You do not understand Baba." Baba smiled and said, "Go and ask Kaka". So, he went to H. S. Dixit. Dixit said he had no cash and that Baba's direction

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must be understood as a lesson that Rege should not feel being poor or begging for money or asking for anything else, to be a humiliation, "Do not feel it to be infra dig to do anything for the Master" he said. Dixit said that Rege should never esteem himself to be above begging. So, Rege went back and reported to Baba. Again Baba smiled and said, "Go to Nana". Rege went to N. G. Chandorkar at the Khandoba's temple where he was reading religious books with the learned Upasani Sastri. Chandorkar then sketched out plans and schemes and showed how he himself arranged to bring a lump sum, left one half of it at Kopergaon, went on giving dakshina after dakshina, and at the opportune moment sent for his reserve in Kopergaon. Chandorkar in his worldly wisdom said, "You must act like that". Rege reported this to Baba. Baba sent for Nana Chandorkar and first asked for Rs. 40, again for Re. 40, and again for the balance of Rs. 20. Immediately he asked for another Rs. 20 before the Kopergaon reserve would come. Thus Nana was taught a lesson that it was a presumption on his part to support that he was the great Providence supplying the needs of Baba, which was impression he had. So, Baba showed how differently demands for dakshina were interpreted by different devotees. Rege concludes that the object of the whole proceeding was to teach lessons to him and to Chandorkar. Baba really cared nothing at all for money or for presents and wanted only love, deep, intense, passionate and whole-hearted love.

Then Rege mentions Baba's religious views and how he was perfectly impartial and conservative, asking all people to keep their own religions and not to interfere with others religions. in that connection, he mentioned how in 1916, a Rohilla had come and was loudly reciting the Koran at night. He was very pious and had high regard for the attainments of Baba and treated him as Paigambar, that is, as a prophet. he showed Baba great reverence. Yet, he objected to Baba's heterodox doctrines and practices, for instance, allowing the din of the arati with its music in the mosque, allowing himself to be worshipped as God, and his partaking of food offered to idols who were devils in the Rohilla's view. Baba laughed. So, the Rohilla was extremely perplexed. But he was swayed by texts which declared that heterodoxy, even in the highest, should be punished with death. He resolved suddenly that Baba should be killed in spite of his being a Paigambar. One day he walked behind Sai Baba carrying a huge club and had raised it with a view to end Baba and his heterodoxy together. Suddenly Baba turned back and fixed him with a glance and touched his left wrist. At once the Rohilla cowered and sank like a lump of lead. He was not able to lift up either himself or the club. This man later left Shirdi for good. Baba would not allow the Hindus to interfere with his

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loud recitals of Koran at night disturbing the sleep of all people around. Baba would not allow interference with the Rohilla in his religious practice nor would he allow the Rohilla to interfere with the Hindus' religious practice. Baba discountenanced intolerance in every class and in every person. To Baba, Vittal and Allah were one and all saints were the same.

When Avaste felt that there was *Gurudroha* in going from one saint to another. Baba held just the opposite view. Baba declared that he was in the other saints, and the other saints declared that they were in Baba and asked their devotees to go to Baba. For instance, Akkalkote Maharaj in about 1876 asked his devotees to go to Baba. Baba referring to a number of saints showed his reverence to or oneness with them. He referred to Madhavanath Maharaj of Devgam as his brother. Also he referred to Silanath Maharaj of Dewas as his brother. He referred to Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur also in a similar manner. On account of such reference, Rege viewed them as the same soul, and they all showed, one after another, after Baba's *Mahasamadhi*, that he, as Baba's child was quite welcome to them. he had similar experience even in the case of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, when he went to Dakshineswar. In 1923, Rege met Madhavanath Maharaj and, at very first meeting, the Maharaj told Rege, 'You are a Sai Baba man'. He further narrated the exact words that passed between Rege and Baba at the first interview in the Masjid. Madhavanath added, 'I was then present', which must of course be as Sai Baba or in the invisible spirit form.

In 1923, Rege went to Nagpur to take a darshan of Tajuddin Baba. His darshan was a very difficult matter, because Tajuddin lived in the harem of a Hindu Raja. Large crowds were waiting in a garden to take his darshan. Rege also was in the crowd. But as he had to take a train at 4 p.m. that day, he determined to wait only till 3 p.m. After waiting for long, just when it was a few minutes to 3, a man came up and said to Rege that Tajuddin Baba wanted him. He had his darshan for ten minutes and his blessings, and then returned. Then probably about that time, Silanath Maharaj was camping somewhere, Mr. Rege went up there and paid his respects. Because he was only in camp, Rege suggested that he might go to Rege's house. Immediately, the Maharaj agreed and came to Rege's house, and went straight to where Baba's photo was and bowed before Baba. Maharaj would not take sweets or fruits, but only wanted tea. He took some tea, and what remained of it he offered to Rege who gladly took it.

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A similar experience of identity of other saints with Baba, Rege had when he visited Sri Kesavanandaji of Saikheda and Sri Baba Jan of Poona. The moment each one of them saw him, the saint said, 'This is Baba's child'. Lastly about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mr. Rege mentions his experience. It was in 1928 he went to Dakshineswar and wanted to go round and see all things connected with the Paramahansa. he wanted his guide to show him Ramlala with which Ramakrishna played. The guide pointed to a huge figure and said it was Ramlala. Rege protested that it could not be. But the guide said, 'I am the local man and you are a stranger. I know better.' Just at this juncture, a pujari of the temple turned up and said that he had a dream overnight that a deccani bhakta was coming and that he should show him all round. He took Rege to the real Ramlala and showed him all round. he also took him to the Holy of Holiness of Kali and said that Rege could touch the image and worship the image of Kali and Ramlala just as he liked. So, by Baba's grace, Rege had good darshan and all round and everywhere he felt that Sai Baba was the same as the other saints that he saw.

Now the most important benefit one can have from knowing Mr. Rege's life and experience is the benefit the reader himself can have from Baba. Rege says,

"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."

RAO BAHADUR S. B. DHUMAL

S. B. Dhumal may be cited as one of the most ardent bhaktas of Sai Baba, who surrendered himself entirely to Baba with the fullest confidence. He acted in very important matters, official and professional, with full trust in Baba for the success of his efforts. He was a mofussil Pleader, practicing at Nasik and was in fairly prosperous circumstances when he first heard about Sai Baba in 1907, this is, at the age of 34. Even at his very first visit, he was greatly impressed with Baba. His outstanding service to the Sai Sansthan and the Sai-minded public was that he introduced Sriman Gopal Rao Buty, a millionaire of Nagpur to Baba. As soon as he took Buty to Baba, Buty also becomes a devoted follower of Baba. The best remembered and the most memorable service of Buty to the cause of Baba is that he erected a huge stone building called after his name, Buty Wada, and devoted it entirely for the Mahasamadhi shrine of Baba. Baba's Samadhi shrine is in the centre of that house, and all outlaying parts are used as accession thereto. This building must have cost a lakh of rupees.

From 1907 onwards S. B. Dhumal paid repeated visits to Baba and got into contact with him in every conceivable matter. When asked about his experiences, he said, "It is difficult for me to sort out in what matter I am having experiences. Every act of mine, every event in my life, is moulded and directed by Him." He says the one memorable statement of Baba which is the basis of his contact – was Baba's telling him, "At every step of yours, I am taking care of you". Baba added, "If I did not, what will become of you, God knows". The occasion for that statement was very interesting. S. B. Dhumal was sleeping in his own

quarters at Shirdi and in the morning, when he went to see Baba, the later remarked, "*Bhav*, the whole of last night I had no sleep." Dhumal asked, "Why so Baba?" Baba said, "I was thinking and thinking of you all night." S. B. Dhumal was for one thing a young man, full-blooded, with a good practice with plenty of funds and, was a widower without children. Therefore, the thoughts of a person in such a position would run riot and easily lead him astray so as to injure both body and soul. Baba had to look after his thoughts and control them. So, Baba said, "If I do not do so, God knows what will happen to you". Dhumal had certain physical ailments, which also rendered a bachelor's life very necessary and important from the point of view of his welfare. After his wife's death in 1909, his father-in-law, Rao Bahadur Kinkhede, wanted him to marry again and noting that unless Baba gave permission, Dhumal would never agree, he went to Baba. As he approached Baba, Baba's eyes sparkled with anger showing how determined Baba was to repel the idea of marriage. So, he came back and reported that Baba was distinctly against any marriage for S. B. Dhumal.

Baba's love for Dhumal was very great and covered both his temporal and spiritual welfare. Numerous instances throughout his life bear out this proposition. In point of fact, his contact with Baba was right through all the hours of the day and night and all the days of the year. Dhumal says, "There is no incident or event in my life which I do not connect with Baba, however trivial it may appear to be. I firmly believe that everything in my life is swayed by Baba." Dhumal adds that he does not care whether the outside world believes it or not. However, noting that B. V. N. Swami was not a disbeliever, he narrated to him many instances of his life, showing how Baba dealt with him and also gave some hints which may be useful for an earnest reader in trying to get more out of Baba. The best way of understanding Baba is to experience him oneself, he says. "Where is Baba gone? He is still alive and active." This, S. B. Dhumal said in October 1936 and added, "Baba is more active, if that were possible, than he was before *Mahasamadhi*." Anyone in downright earnest can get in touch with him today and at once. But if one will not do that, but wants only second-hand, third-hand or fifth-hand experience, one will get poor stuff. He said, "Experiences get their significance and full force only when uttered in one's mother tongue and face to face and not when put into English and transmitted to the reader through cold print. With this preface, he began narrating some very interesting instances of faith in Baba, being a living and very fruitful faith for the success of his life, chiefly temporal. Chiefly temporal is emphasized here, for many readers are in Dhumal's condition, that is, they are 95 per cent

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worldly; and hardly 5 per cent of their time and attention is for things beyond – except of course when using such a divine personality like Sai Baba as a means for achieving all that they want. That, of course, is based upon love, regard and deep attachment. Dhumal had such love, regard and deep attachment to Baba. Baba's purpose and object were to develop that attachment – for the Guru is the only sadhana and becomes a powerful sadhana when the attachment and faith in him are at their height. That is Nishta. To develop Nishta it was that Baba revealed to him what a deep interest he had in Dhumal, and how he was watching him all the night at the sacrifice of his own health and comfort. S. B. Dhumal says, "At this declaration, I was overpowered by a sudden gush of love, gratitude and surprise, feeling 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." Dhumal found that Baba could and did foresee things far ahead and took every step required to avert the evil and promote the good that was coming to him. There were numerous instances to show this. Only a few of them will be given:

Even from Nasik, Dhumal would write to Shama at Shirdi, in order to be in touch with Baba, as Shama would read all letters to Baba and communicate his replies. But very often, even during Baba's life in the flesh and in every case after Baba's *Mahasamadhi*. Dhumal addressed his queries to Baba mentally or by placing chits prayerfully that is, casting lots before Baba's portrait and invariably the answer he got showed Dhumal what was the correct and safe course to follow. Invariably Dhumal followed that advice. Though persons with commonsense, medical opinion, and prudence objected, still Dhumal followed Baba's advice and invariably discovered that he had followed the right path, the safest and wisest. Dhumal takes up his health first. At Nasik, his ancestral place, plague broke out once. Dead rats were found in the house. Dhumal wrote to Shirdi for permission before he would move out and left the house as soon as the reply was received that he could vacate. Being always under Baba's protection, he felt perfectly safe in remaining till the reply came, as Baba has said, "At every step I am guiding you". So, with fullest knowledge of Baba's powers and love and with implicit reliance on the truth of Baba's words, he remained boldly in the midst of plague until and unless Baba ordered him out. Baba knew everything that was happening every moment and everywhere. Whether it is at Nasik or at any other place,

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Baba would never allow any harm to befall Dhumal, as he had placed this child-like trust and entire reliance on Baba. In the 29 years of such reliance, that is, from 1907 to 1936, there was not a single instance where Baba's protection failed or the trust was found misplaced. When he got Baba's reply that he could move to a bungalow at Nasik, he moved. In the very same night that he occupied the bungalow, a dead rat was found. At once, Dhumal wrote to Baba whether he should move away. The answer was in the negative and he did not move. The health authorities and neighbours had contempt for him for violating the rules of prudence. But what was the result? The result always justified his implicit faith in following the guidance of Baba. He continued to stay in the bungalow. Later dead rats were found in his servants quarters, in the house of the neighbourhood and in the very bungalow from which alone all the water had to be drawn for cooking. Then, at once Dhumal wrote to Baba for permission to move and, being sure that the reply would arrive, he started packing up things and carrying them off to go to his house in Bazaar street. When he was there trying to unlock the front door, the postman handed over a letter from Shirdi which ran as follows: Why should we give up our residence? At once, he turned back and went to the bungalow and boldly lived there, taking care to avoid only the infected water of the well where the dead rat had been found. He got all his water from Godavari. No harm came to him by his occupation of the bungalow that Baba had made him stay in, while all round there were 14 to 15 deaths due to plague per day at Nasik.

Baba's help to him and to his family included certain spiritual affairs also. He lost his wife in 1909 and was going on doing *Masik Shraaddha* for her at Nasik. Baba communicated through Shama's letter, "You do your *Masik* here at Shirdi, and I will give your wife *sadgati*." So, Dhumal went to Shirdi and performed *Masik* there. Baba only asked for Rs. 15 as *dakshina* and Dhumal gave it. As Baba assured him that his wife got *sadgati*, Dhumal believed it and every Sai bhakta believes it because Sai Rama has said in Rama's words,

*Anritam Noktapurvam me
Nachha Vakshye Kadachana.*

this means, Untruth I have never uttered before. Nor will I utter at any time. Baba said, "Sitting in this *Masjid* no words of untruth are uttered by Me. Is this a place for uttering lies?" asked Baba. Also in the case of Upasani Maharaj's wife who died in January 1912, it will be remembered that Baba had said that her spirit had come to Him. That means, Baba had given her *satgati*, because Baba is God.

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However, Dhumal sought and obtained Baba's help frequently, mostly for temporal and professional matters. Several of them are interesting and so they may be set forth here. About his own profession, the Public Prosecutorship at Nasik was offered to him when he was quite prosperous. Dhumal wrote to Shama to consult Baba. The reply came from Baba saying, "Why accept the new? The old is quite good." So, he did not accept it. His practice was flourishing and he was not a loser by not accepting the Public Prosecutorship. He appealed to Baba in professional matters also and followed the directions of Baba in such matters. There was a case of grievous hurt in which three brothers were convicted. An opponent of theirs had a bone broken and the injured man had been attended to by a medical man who was not a qualified or certified doctor, being kept in his private nursing home for over 20 days. When Dhumal went up with his appeal memo and bail application, the Sessions Judge, a senior European Officer remarked, "The case looks strong. I am not going to allow bail." At once Dhumal thought of Baba and turned to the Judge. He told the Judge, "The evidence of a bone having been broken is that of an unqualified person, a quack and the prosecution evidence is interested and unreliable. The appellants are all agriculturists and the only workers in their homes. If they are all in jail, their farms would perish." At once the Judge allowed bail. When the case came up for argument, the Public Prosecutor wanted S. B. Dhumal not to argue on merits but to simply ask for clemency, in which case he would not oppose. But S. B. Dhumal made up his mind to argue on merits, and finally wound up by asking for a reduction of the sentence. The Judge said, "For reduction of sentence, so much time need not have been taken." When Public Prosecutor argued, the Judge asked how the grievous hurt could be made, as the opinion about the breakage of the bone was that of a quack and not that of a qualified doctor. The Public Prosecutor replied, "The injured man had been in the hospital for about 20 days". The Judge sharply answered, "You can argue that before a Third Class Magistrate and not before me." The Public Prosecutor collapsed with that remark and did not argue any further. The appellants were acquitted.

Another professional matter was still more interesting. Baba's servant Reghu and five others were convicted and imprisoned on a charge of outraging the modesty of a *Marwadi* woman and Raghu was crying out in jail at Ahmednagar. Baba appeared to him and said. 'I will see you freed'. Next day Tatyia Patil brought the appeal papers to Baba after shown having them to some senior lawyers, who found that the conviction was based upon six eye witnesses. They considered it

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hopeless. Tatya took the papers to Bhav, Bhav means S. B. Dhumal at Nasik. When Tatya brought papers, Dhumal looked them up and told him, "there are so many seniors above me. Why don't you take to Ahmednagar". But Tatya replied, 'Baba said that you should present the appeal', and that settled the course. At once Dhumal drew up an appeal memo and went to the District Magistrate of Ahmednagar at his bungalow. The District Magistrate asked him, 'What is it about?' Then Dhumal mentioned that it was a conviction for outraging a Marwadi woman's modesty on the testimony of six eye witnesses. The Magistrate remarked, 'It seems a very strong case'. At once Baba's modus operandi was seen. Dhumal said, 'Why six eye witnesses, Your Honour? You can get sixty eye witnesses in a fraction ridden village like Shirdi'. the Magistrate said, 'Do you think so?' Dhumal replied, 'Think! Why, I am more than sure of it.' When the words were being uttered through the mouth of Dhumal, the mind of Magistrate was being operated upon, and so he said, 'If so, I acquit all your appellants'. The Magistrate had not called for the papers from the lower court, nor read the judgement nor appeal memo, but simply said, 'Hand over the appeal memo to me and tell me the facts you are relying upon'. Dhumal practically dictated the appellate court judgement. The magistrate, a senior European officer simply wrote it out, and at once acquitted the appellants. The Magistrate then asked Dhumal, 'Is Sai Baba of yours a Hindu or Muslim?', showing that all the while it was Sai Baba who was operating on his mind. Dhumal answered, 'Neither the one nor the other. He is above both'. What does he teach was the next question of the Magistrate. Dhumal was up to the occasion. He said, 'You must go to him yourself to know that'. 'Can I go?' asked the Magistrate. Dhumal replied, 'Yes, you can certainly go'. The Magistrate had an idea of going to Shirdi some time later, but subsequently dropped the matter. So it was only for the nonce he felt interested in Shirdi. Meanwhile, Dhumal without any surety was taken Raghu and other five with him to Shirdi. That was the time when poor Dixit's daughter died there and people were going to attend the cremation. Baba called some of them and said, 'Don't go, I will show you some chamatkar'. Shortly thereafter the appellants arrived. Then the people learnt how the senior District Magistrate acquitted the appellants straightway without hearing the other side or without sending for the papers and realised that this was the chamatkar. This is *Manasthambam*. Baba had gripped the mind of District Magistrate and made him deal out summary justice for the weird and great saint's servants.

In respect of Dhumal's further progress in life, Baba looked after him after his *Mahasamadhi* quite as well as he did before. Dhumal was the

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first nominated President of the Nasik District Board from 1917-25. As President he had to sign papers, thousands in number, without using facsimile. This took many hours of the day and that reduced his practice as well as the income tax he had to pay. But he got the Sanad of Rao Bahadur in recognition of his service. This was in 1927. But one of the peculiar happenings during the time when he was the District Board President is worthy of notice. Each night, a peon would stand with papers, and after his signing each one, the peon would blot each paper, so that the next one might be ready for signature. One day when these papers were with him, some visitor, for whom he had very high regard, came and talked on till midnight. So, the signatures had to be postponed. Early morning he had to run away for a case and returned only at night. Then, he called for the papers of the previous day and that day. The Head Clerk came and asked him, 'Why did you send for the papers of the previous day?'. Dhumal said that he had not signed them. Then the head Clerk showed, to the astonishment of Dhumal, that all the previous day's papers bore his signatures. Dhumal wondered at the miracle done by Baba.

We shall give another instance, Sri Gopal Rao Buty of Nagpur, a mill owner, was anxious to help Dhumal and wanted to send him to England. He said that he would provide for the expenses of Dhumal's journey and the support of Dhumal's family during his absence in England. All these had been settled between them, and when Shama went to ask Baba whether Bhav, that is Dhumal, was to be sent to Bilayat, Baba asked, "What for?" Shama said, "To study for the Bar." Baba said, "No." His *Hayat* and *Vilayat* are not in *Bilayat* but in this country". Therefore, Dhumal did not go to England, but his practice was not the worst for it.

It was in 1912 that he underwent an operation under chloroform. It was risky but before the chloroform began to operate he saw Baba seated on a chair near his head and he took courage. Baba is there to look after me, he thought. The operation was a perfect success.

In some private matters such as when he attended to the health of his brother's wife at Poona, Baba decided for him in a most mysterious way. he started from Nasik to go to Poona, where the sick lady was, with Rs. 80 in his pocket to cover expenses of the journey and contingent expenditure. But as Shirdi being en route, he stopped there. Baba took from him, as dakshina, all the eighty Rupees and kept him for three days with him. Then, when he asked for leave, Baba said, "We will see." After the third day, a telegram came from Poona saying that the lady had died. It is only after this that Baba gave him

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leave to go. It was clear that Baba could foresee the end of the lady and the uselessness of Dhumal's visit. Anyhow, that was the year in which Baba passed away and Dhumal had the precious opportunity of spending three days with him.

After Baba passed away, Dhumal accepted the Revenue Membership of the Dewar State, and was also the Karbari of Sarguna State from 1932-33. When he was in the Sarguna State, the Chief of the State visited him and walked into his room, where he was dining at a table. Dhumal then apologised for his inability to leave the table and accord proper reception, but the Chief had walked into the next room from where Dhumal sat, Saw Baba's portrait hanging on the wall, came back to the room, and announced at once, "Your pay is increased by Rs. 50." Dhumal had never asked for it. This grant within a fortnight of his appointment, and without any effort on his part, must have been only by Baba's influence.

Mantiche Chitta Lekurache Hita

that is, the child's welfare is the mother's care.

Dhumal was casting chits after Baba's Mahasamadhi to ascertain Baba's orders. When Baba was in the flesh, he had got a coloured painted picture of Baba, and as he was passing by *Dwarakamayee* carrying the picture, Baba asked him, "What is it?" Dhumal said, "You are here." Baba asked for it, took it, kept it for a while, gazed at it in the front and at the back, and returned it to him saying "Keep it". This was the very thing, which he was anxious to get – a portrait of Baba for worship, blessed by having been in his hands. That is the very picture in which Baba is standing in a pensive or meditative mood, indicative of his words, "Bhav, I had no sleep all night due to thinking of you." Baba gave him many coins, each time taking dakshina of Rs. 2/- and returning it, saying,

Japoon Teva Konala Devunnako Kars Karun Nako

that is, Preserve these carefully. Do not give it to anyone nor spend it. He gave him Rs. 2, then Rs. 20 on one occasion, Rs. 50 on another occasion, and Rs. 30 on some other occasion. By these gifts, he had a total sum of Rs. 69. These Dhumal treated as charmed coins that carry luck with them or, as they call them, Mascots. Baba asked Buty for dakshina of Rs. 20. Buty gave it. Then Baba asked him again for Rs. 20 dakshina, and latter Rs. 20 he gave to Dhumal. On one occasion he got Rs. 30 from Buty and took the money. The he shook the coins in

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both his hands and divided them roughly into each hand one part in each hand, and gave one part to Dhumal. Each had exactly Rs. 15. Baba not only gave but also took.

Datati Prathigrinnathi,

that is, giving and receiving are signs of life. Baba acts sometimes,

*Yesya Anugraham Ichyami
Tasye Sarvam Harami Aham*

Baba sometimes took away by asking for dakshina the entire contents of Dhumal's pockets, leaving him penniless. But Dhumal neither regretted it nor had fear, for it was Baba who gave him and Baba who took and He never failed to provide. His reasons for taking dakshina are clear. When Dhumal had gone to Ahmednagar to Reghu's appeal, the parties paid him Rs. 300. When Dhumal came before Baba, Baba asked him for dakshina over and over again till his Rs. 300 was completely paid out because, the whole thing was due to Baba's *chamatkar*, and so, he must not receive or, at any rate, retain any fee given for that.

Kaka Saheb H. S. Dixit has communicated some of his experiences to Dhumal, and Dhumal mentions how Baba helped Dixit even after His Mahasamadhi. The incident is about Rs. 30,000 given to Dixit. This showed Dixit's absolute reliance on Baba as his supporter. Rs. 30,000 is a very big sum, and Dixit's resources had all been whittled down to zero and he could not easily get such a large sum from any one. It was only Baba's supreme power of control over minds that could produce the sum of Rs. 30,000, which was brought to his office table just in time to pay off his creditors.

Another incident mentioned by Dixit is the provision for Dixit's younger brother Sadasiva for the position of bank officer for the Cutch State on Rs. 1,000 a month, when there was absolutely no hope of Sadasiva earning a pie. But Dixit had cast chits before Baba, about whether to keep Sadasiva at Bombay or not and Baba's answer on the chit was, 'Keep him at Bombay'. But at Bombay, Sadasiva could not practice. Instead of practice, he got this post at the bank.

Throughout his life, Dhumal benefited greatly in temporal affairs and he held a high position at Nasik. Consequently he was on the Sai Sansthan Committee and acted as its trustee up to his death. so, Dhumal's life is an excellent instance of Baba's giving full temporal and

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spiritual support to all those that place implicit reliance on him. Baba's spiritual help in his case was to provide sadgati for his wife, and fairly good end for himself because Baba had kept him pure and full of Nishta or faith in the Guru.

H. V. SATHE

Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe was a Deputy Collector and a Settlement Officer in the Bombay Presidency. He was long remembered for his first great service to Baba's faith by building the first chatram or chavadi so to speak at Shirdi. He put it up in the year 1905-06. Baba's fame had already spread abroad considerably and people having to visit Baba could not get accommodation in the very few hovels and houses there, and had often to stay under trees. So, Sathe's wada served as a great comfort and help to people in their Shirdi pilgrimage to see Baba. His second great service was the beginning of congregational worship by Baba's followers, as he had provided the first *pujari* who conducted the congregational worship of all. That *pujari's* name was Meghashyam known as Megha. Hence, we shall try to describe Sathe's contact with Baba, how it began, how it developed and what important information Sathe gave others in respect of help from Baba.

The most noticeable feature about Sathe was that at the age of fifty he married again after the loss of his wife. He had lost his wife some four or five years earlier, and she had left him only daughters and no sons. Every Hindu feels that unless he has a son, his spiritual position is unsafe. Sathe was anxious therefore to have a son, but there was no guarantee that the second wife would get any sons and not more daughters. So, he declared to his importunate friends who asked him to marry that if any great saint should advice him, he would do so. In 1904, he was Deputy Collector at Ahmednagar. He went down to Kopergaon, where Mr. Bharva was the *mamlatdar* and Mr. Bharva told

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him that Sai Baba living at Shirdi within Kopergaon taluk was a very great saint. So, both of them went in 1904 to see Sai Baba at the Mosque. After seeing Baba, H. V. Sathe came out without putting him any question. But Mr. Bharva told Baba, "Saheb has no son", then Baba replied, "*Shadi Karega to Allah Bachcha Dega*", that is, if he married, God will give him a son. As he stood in front of the Mosque, these words were heard by H. V. Sathe. Then, the question was about the bride. There was also the question of confirmation of Baba's view. Sathe was orthodox and considered it necessary to get an able astrologer. There was one who had arrived at Poona to read his horoscope and find out whether Baba's statement was corroborated by a reading of the horoscope. When the astrologer looked into his horoscope, he declared that Sathe was to have male progeny only after his fiftieth year, that is, after 1905. So, Sathe was confirmed in the idea of marriage. Ganesh Damodar Kelkar had a daughter for marriage and he wrote to Sathe, when he was at Ahmednagar, asking him whether there was any bridegroom to suit his daughter. Thinking this was a feeler Sathe sent the reply, 'There is no bridegroom here, but if you are thinking of me, carefully consider all the pros and cons and let me have your views'. So, Ganesh Damodar Kelkar offered his girl and after the girl was taken to Baba at the instance of Sathe, Baba put *kumkum* on her forehead and said, Send the girl to Ahmedabad. So, in 1906 H. V. Sathe married Dada Kelkar's daughter. But the first two children were girls. Dada Kelkar went to Baba saying, "When are we to have a grandson". Baba's reply was, "I am requesting Allah. He will comply with my request." So, in 1912 a grandson was born, hale and healthy and now represents the family at Poona. This marriage and providing a son was considered the principle service of Baba to Sathe. About Sathe's own service to Baba, he wanted to put up a house or wada at Shirdi where his father-in-law Dada Kelkar should live and where other pilgrims could lodge when they visited Shirdi. When he was thinking so, Baba told him, "Pull down the village wall and build". Sathe thought that he was asked to erect a wall around the whole village, and that would involve an immense cost at which he was frightened. But soon he found that Baba's proposal was that a small site near the crumbling remnants of the village wall should be taken up by him, and that he should put up a building including the village wall. And this was done. Baba also pointed out that his building would include the gode neem tree, where Baba's *Guru's* tomb is situated. So, Sathe bought the land and used the remnants of the village wall to put up a wada enclosing and surrounding the margosa tree. Baba told him that close to the tree, was his *Guru's* tomb, and so in putting up a wall for wada, a niche was to be provided over that *Guru's* tomb and in the niche Baba's *Guru* was to be worshipped. Baba

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gave the name of his *Guru*, and Sathe thought it ended with a Shah or Sa. But elsewhere the information is given that Baba said that his *Guru* was Kabir. Some people think that this may be Kabir's tomb. Kabir of course did not live and die at Shirdi but only at Benaras. But it is well known that his Hindu and Mohammedan followers had a dispute as to the disposal of his remains, and when they lifted up the cloth covering it, they discovered that it had turned into leaves and flowers. These leaves and flowers were taken to a number of places where tombs were erected over them, and it is believed by some that under the said margosa tree some of the leaves representing Kabir's body might have been buried. Sathe himself went and resided at Shirdi for some time. Baba's *arati* and *puja* had begun about the beginning of century, with the *arati* song modeled on the lines of the Pandharpur *puja* and approved by Nana Saheb Chandorkar. When Bapugir Ramgir Gosavi took some udhi to Jamner for Minatai's delivery he took the *arati* song for Chandorkar's approval around 1900 or 1904. There was no special celebration of *Guru Poornima*, and each person worshipped separately with that arati song. There was no congregational worship. As for *Guru Poonima* Baba told Dada Kelkar on a *Guru Poornima* day, Don't you know that this is a Guru Poornima Day? Come with your worship materials and do your *Guru Pooja*. So, from that day, every year Gurupooja is being conducted by all devotees at Shirdi. And still, at other times, it was individual *puja* alone. It developed into congregational puja when H. V. Sathe sent a Brahmin named Megha to Shirdi. Megha was a very peculiar orthodox Brahmin. He did not even know his *Gayathri*. But he did not wish to go near Muslim or have anything to do with the worship of Muslims. Sathe found him living at Viramgaon when he was the Deputy Collector there. He found Megha always repeating *Namas-Sivaya*. So, finding that he was sufficiently pious, Sathe taught him Sandhya and Gayathri and sent him to Broach to worship Siva there. After he did Siva worship at Broach, Sathe sent him to Shirdi telling him that Siva was in flesh and blood at Shirdi in the form of Sai Baba and gave him the necessary money. But at the Broach railway station, Megha learnt that Sai Baba was a Muslim and he was horrified. What? Have I to go and bow to a Muslim and pray? He thought. He requested Sathe not to send him to Shirdi. But Sathe insisted and gave him a letter to Dada Kelkar who, he said, would introduce him to Baba and make him understand Baba. But when Megha went to the Shirdi Mosque, Baba got angry and would not allow him to get into the Mosque. Baba said, "Kick out that rascal" and asked, "What a fool is this Saheb to send this man here?" Megha then went away to Triambak and worshipped Gangadareswarar for a year and half. He suffered there from severe pains in his abdomen. During that time he got faith in Baba and came back to Shirdi. Dada Kelkar

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interceded on his behalf and Baba allowed him to stay at Shirdi and worship him at the Mosque.

Baba's work on Megha was purely internal. Baba did not give any oral instruction at all. But by that internal change. Megha became the most remarkable bhakta of Sai Baba, whom he considered really as Siva. Megha, being a hardy man, would go to Godavari daily, which is locally called Ganga (5 miles away from Shirdi en route to Kopergaon station), bring Ganga water and pour it on the head of Siva, Siva being Sai Baba. Sri R. B. Purandhare, an *Ankita* of Baba, mentions here one *chamatkar* of Baba. In his anxiety to pour Ganga water on Baba, Megha had brought a whole pot. Baba told him, "Arre, the head it the chief thing," *sarvasya gatrasya sirah pradhanam*, "so put a few drops on the head and that will suffice". But the impetuosity of Megha's bhakti made him take up the whole pot and turn it upside down over the head of Baba. Strangely, not a drop of water fell on the body of Baba. The whole pot of water had fallen on the head without touching Baba's body. So, just as Siva had tied up Ganga in his own tuft, Baba also used his head for retaining and throwing away the water so as not to touch his body or cloths. Megha was treated by Baba very kindly and Baba suited himself to Megha's taste. As he specialized in Siva worship, Baba gave him a *Pindi* or lingam as we call it, that is, an elongated round stone which is worshipped as Siva, when placed in the hollow of another stone, which is called *yonis*. Somebody had brought a pindi to Baba, and Baba presented it to Megha and asked him to go on with its worship. This was installed in *Sathe wada*, and Megha worshipped the Siva linga there. Just immediately before this pindi came, Baba appeared in Megha's sleep and told him, "Draw up a *Trisul*" that is, Siva's Trident. Megha wondered how Baba's voice could be heard inside the wada. So, he went to the Mosque and asked Baba whether he gave the order. Baba said he did, and when asked how he could get entrance into the wada when door was bolted. Baba declared, "Bolted doors do not bar access to Me". Megha was also given a huge picture of Baba by H. S. Dixit to be placed by the side of his pindi so that he could worship the Siva linga together with Sai Baba's picture. Baba noting his peculiar idiosyncrasy to worship all the gods in the temples of the village, that is, Devi, Sani, Siva, Maruti and Khandoba, told him, "After worshipping all these, come and worship Me". Megha did so regularly. Megha was impressed with Baba's omnipresence, by his directions on some occasions. One day when he went to Khandoba's, Upasani Maharaj, who lived there, had bolted the door from within, and he could not enter into the temple and worship Khandoba. So he returned to Baba. Khandoba's temple is very long way off from Baba's Mosque and is not visible from there. When Megha

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went to worship Baba on that day, Baba told him, "You have not yet done worship at Khandoba's. If you go there now you will find the door open. Do the puja of Khandoba and then come here. Megha then went to Khandoba and saw the door open as stated by Baba. After doing that *puja*, he went to Sai Baba for *puja*.

Megha died in 1912 at Shirdi. Baba's appreciation was shown by his coming to the corpse and placing his hands over it saying, "This was a true devotee of mine". Baba bore the expenses of the funeral dinner and Kaka Saheb Dixit carried out his order.

About Sathe's other benefits from contact with Sai Baba, we may first mention that by Baba's direction and guidance, he had success in some of his official efforts. He had applied for pension, and the pension granted in the first instance was less by Rs. 50 than what it ought to have been. Then Sathe sent up petition to the Government protesting against the reduction. Baba asked Dhumal, who came to him for Rs. 50 *dakshina*. Dhumal pleaded that he did not have the money. Then Baba told him "Go to Saheb and ask for it." Dhumal went and asked, and Sathe was very glad at the demand for that was an indication to him that his petition then pending with government was successful. He gave the *dakshina*, and as he learnt subsequently it was on that very day the order on his petition was passed, for the grant of the extra Rs. 50 pension.

As for Sathe's religious position, there was nothing special in his attainment or attention to religious or spiritual matters, and he did not go to Baba for religious development. But Baba of his own kindness wanted to correct his errors and train him alright. For instance, on one occasion when he was at Shirdi, his thoughts got loose and he went to visit the house of a lady who had a very doubtful reputation. Before going there, he paid his respects to Baba. Baba asked him, "Have you been to *Sala*?" (meaning that lady's residence) Then Sathe answered, "You have made me Deputy Collector. Would I have become that unless I went to school?" Baba, finding that he mistook his meaning, kept quiet. Later in the day, he visited that lady. There behind a close door or partly closed door, he was carrying on a conversation which would soon have hurled him into spiritual ruin. But suddenly the door was flung open, and at the threshold stood Baba, who waved his arms and made gestures to Sathe telling him, "What? You have come all the way to your *Guru* and you are descending to hell." Well, at once, like a thief caught in the act, Sathe repented. Baba disappeared and Sathe left that *Sala* and never visited her again. Thus, his purity was saved by Baba.

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On another occasion, he had similar help. He had purchased a land near about Shirdi and wanted to go and see it. He had ordered a cart, and his wife promised to go with him to see the land. But unfortunately his agnatic cousin, Babu, had lived there and died recently. Dada Kelkar thinking that if Baba's widow should come to know about the purchase of the land, there might be claims and trouble and so told his daughter who was Sathe's wife not to go and see the land. So, the lady when asked to get into the cart declined. Sathe was full of wrath. He pulled out the stick from the cart man, and was going to belabour his wife when lo! Megha came rushing in and told him, "Baba wants you". Down came the stick and he went to Baba. Baba told him, "What has happened? Your land is there. Why should you go and see it? He found that Baba was keeping a watch over him, whether he was in the act of cruelty to his wife or in danger of immoral relations with some woman. But Baba did not carry his spiritual instruction in the case of Sathe very far, because though he was fairly orthodox and moral, was hardly competent to take any serious steps in the purely spiritual line. He was very worldly-minded and what he was thinking of most was his position with the Government and later his financial position.

From the very beginning, Sathe's appreciation of Baba was somewhat defective. When Baba said that he was going to have a son if married, he wanted confirmation from a famous astrologer about the correctness of Baba's prediction. Then again on other matters also, he was not sufficiently attentive to Baba's wishes. On one occasion, for instance, he held a feast for which he invited everybody except his father-in-law with whom he had differences. When he went to invite Baba, Baba wished to rebuke him for harbouring such feelings of hatred. Baba said when he came in 'Fetch a stick', Sathe stood quiet. Baba did not actually mean to club him and changed his mood and said, "Never mind, I will come". But, of course, Baba did not go. Sathe did not change his feelings towards his father-in-law for a considerable time. One another occasion, Sathe went to intercede in a *marwadi's* affairs. Factious spirit was rife at Shirdi. Baba did not like that this high officer of the Government should interfere in such matters. Baba expressed his displeasure at that also.

Baba pulled down Sathe's ideas of vanity and pomp on one occasion. When the wada was being built, the laying of the foundation stone was the first question. But Sathe who went there accidentally wanted formally to lay the foundation stone himself. Baba told him, "This is the time for the foundation stone to be laid". Then Sathe took up a

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hatchet and proceeded to lay the foundation stone. Baba stopped him and asked, "Why do you go there? What have you to do with all this? The masons and workmen will do it?"

Baba's help to Sathe was mainly on the worldly plane, though Baba gave him repeated inklings of his *antarjnana*. But unfortunately Sathe had not even a fraction of the faith which Chandorkar, Dixit, and others had. On one occasion the Collector and several Settlement Officers were to meet him at some railway station. So, Sathe wanted to go from Shirdi. But Baba told him not to start. But still he wanted to go, his official ideas of punctuality standing in the way of appreciating and obeying Baba. he could not understand the reason for Baba's stopping him. Then Baba told Kelkar, "Lock him up for three days and then let him go." For three days he could not quit Shirdi and then when he went, he discovered that Baba somehow knew that the Settlement Officers and others had cancelled their programme and there was no meeting at all that day.

In religious matters more than in others, faith is wanted, and Sathe thought he should go to others for *upadesa*. For instance when others were going to Sakori to Upasani Baba for *upadesa*, he also considered why he should not go there to get *upadesa*. There was also a lady called Attabai of Sangola. There was *Ganapat* Upasaka. There was the *yogi* of Moregaon named Vinayak Patak Maharaj. these offered to give *upadesa* to Sathe. Sathe consulted Baba about Upasani Maharaj in person through Dada Kelkar in the latter two cases. Baba dissuaded him. Baba wanted him to concentrate, *Ananyachinta*, and have firm, exclusive faith in Himself, as he could look after every interest of his, temporal and spiritual. Unfortunately, Sathe could not rise to the full height of *Ananyachinta*. Like Upasani Maharaj, Sathe also got mixed up with local clashes. There were a number of people at Shirdi who were dead against him as they were against Upasani Maharaj, the chief of them being Nana Wali, a religious ascetic, who was a bully and a terror to most people there. The reason for Sathe's unpopularity was mostly in connection with his starting a Dakshina Bhiksha Sansthan. In December 1915, he had a call from Baba, and at Baba's bidding, he formed a society of which he himself was the president. It ran a journal called Sainath Prabha. The object of the society was to collect or recover a part of the money distributed by Baba daily and with it run the Shirdi Sai *Sansthan*. But this attempt to control receipts from Baba made Sathe unpopular. Nana Wali thought that he would be doing a good service to Baba and to the village by getting rid of this unpopular man Sathe. Some of the leading villagers on account of their bitterness against him held him responsible for the loss to the

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Sansthan by theft of some articles like silver horses from the palanquin and troubled him in other similar trivial matters. In January 1918, even lawyer's notices were served on him. Baba advised him to be patient and give a suitable reply. Baba said that he would protect him and that no proceedings would be taken against him. Really no proceedings were taken against him. However, the villagers still continued to regard this reserved and high placed Sathe with dislike and on one occasion Nana Wali took up a huge axe and stood at the entrance to the Mosque probably with a view to attack Sathe when he entered the Mosque. Dada Kelkar sent word to Sathe that this bully was standing with a big axe ready to hew him down if he should go to the Mosque. H. V. Sathe beat a hasty retreat from Shirdi and never visited it again.

Baba's kind interest in Sathe's family affair included his financial dealings. When Sathe retired, his financial circumstances decline, and he had to sell a jewel of his wife. Baba told Dada Kelkar then "Why does the fool of a Saheb sell my daughter's jewel?"

Regarding Babu, that is, the nephew of Dada Kelkar, Baba treated him as his pet. Baba would not attend to his official duties as the work of an Assistance. Babu was a measurer under Sathe's Assistant Limaye. Limaye could not check him and when Baba was told of Babu's services, he said, "Blast the Government service. Let him serve me." So, Babu constantly attended on Baba and would get to eat the choicest delicacies which were always available with Baba. In 1910, however, Babu's death was approaching. He had been eating mangoes too freely and died in 1910. Some time later, Baba said in the presence of Mrs. Pradhan, "This lady is going to be my Babu's mother." In a year after that, she became pregnant and the child then born was named Babu Pradhan.

H. V. Sathe was once asked how he continued to believe in Baba, even though Baba could not save him from the mischief of Nana Wali. Sathe replied, "Just as the Minister of the Peshwa was murdered right in front of Vittal at Pandharpur. That did not however prevent people from believing in Vittal even though Vittal did not save him, similarly his own faith in Sai Baba was unaffected by Nana Wali's threats.

There was a book written in English, namely, *Sai Katha Karandaka*, in which 10 or 12 stories about Baba were written by H. V. Sathe and printed and published. These are mistaken by some to be historical and to be real facts. But Sathe mentions in his statement in 1936 that these were fictions. Baba had given one fact in the course of his talk,

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and the entire story was built upon the basis of that single fact narrated by Baba. This *Sai Karandaka* was never shown to Baba and never got his approval. Similarly about the journal *Sai Prabha* that he ran, he left it entirely to Mr. Narayana Sundar Rao, who was the editor and the soul of it. The Nom-de-plume Ramgir in that journal represents only Narayana Sundar Rao.

Baba said in 1917 that Tilak was coming and accordingly on 19-5-1917 Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak visited him at Shirdi.

Another instance of Baba's All-knowing character was when Baba declared at Shirdi "My Gajanan is gone." At once people wrote to Sheogaon and learnt that just on the very day when Baba mentioned it, the saint Gajanan of Sheogaon expired.

G. G. NARKE

Amongst the highly placed and notable devotees who had direct contact with Sai Baba and performed worthy service for the Sai Sansthan, prominent mention has to be made of G. G. Narke, M.A. (Cal)., M.Sc., (Manch) Professor of Geology and Chemistry in the College of Engineering, Poona. He was perhaps the one man with the largest number of degrees who served as trustee of the Sansthan, and perhaps the most respected for his learning. he gave his statement to Sri. B. V. N. Swami on four days and the chief interest in his statement in his study of Baba and his research. The *Vidya Vasana*, characteristic of the man, gleams through his statement, and it is responsible for the position he occupied amongst the devotees and servants of Baba. Persons far inferior to him in education have been the highest in Sai bhakti and in their intense love to Baba, which stamped them as the *Ankita* or acknowledged children of Baba. Narke also had remarkable benefits from his contact with Baba, and had numerous opportunities to stay at Shirdi and get into close contact with Baba. But somehow the intellectual screen did not allow him to get into sufficiently close contact with Baba like the Ankitas. The reason for his going to Baba was first his wife, father-in-law and mother wanted him to go there. His father-in-law was Mr. Buty of Nagpur. G. G. Narke's learning included some religious studies also. he used to read Jnaneswari, and other books dealing with the greatness of Satpurusha, and he had heard that Sai Baba was such a *Satpurusha*, a *Samartha* Satpurusha will be more correct. He went out to England in 1909 as a State scholar of the Government of India and returned in August 1912.

When his wife, mother and father-in-law asked him to go to Shirdi to see Sai Baba, he first wanted to assure himself if Baba wanted him

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and so wrote back that he would go if Baba wanted him. So, in April 1913, he went up to see Sai Baba. His mother was greatly liked by Baba and as the son of his mother, he was naturally welcome. So, Shama alias Madhava Rao Deshpande introduced him to Baba. Baba then said to Shama, 'You introduce him to me! I have known him for thirty *pidis*. That was the initial surprise for Narke. His first impression of Baba was derived by looking at Baba's eyes. Baba's eyes were piercing. His glance pierced Narke through and through. Long after Baba passed away, in 1930 when Narke gave his statement, he said, 'I still have the indelible impression of Baba sitting in the *chavadi* with piercing eyes'.

Narke joined the current of devotees and did his portion of service to Baba and attended *artis* etceteras. But at one of the earliest *artis*, Baba was in a towering passion. He was fuming, cursing and threatening' whom and what for, nobody could say. And the idea occurred to Narke, 'Is Baba mad?'. that was during the *arti*, and after the *arti* was over, he went home and returned to Baba in the afternoon to massage Baba's feet and legs. Baba stroking his head said, 'Arre Narke, I am not mad'. The passing thought which he had in the morning when he was one in the crowd, was still known to Baba. So, he concluded that nothing was concealed from Baba. 'He is my *Antaryami*, inner Soul of my soul' he said. He then attempted to study Baba, and accumulated experience after experience demonstrating Baba's *Anataryamitva*. When Baba spoke, he spoke as one seated in Narke's heart knowing all his thoughts and his wishes. Narke said 'This is God within'. So, Baba must be God, he thought, but still as a scientific minded professor, he wanted to test him further. Whenever he tested him the conviction was brought home again to him that Baba was All-knowing and All-seeing, and All-powerful, that is, able to mould all things to his will. the professor gave out of the hundreds of instances that he knew, only a few in his statements, which proved beyond doubt that the past, present and future were open before Baba though the future appears unfixed and liable to be changed by human will. So, first let us see proof about Narke himself.

Baba, speaking in 1913, said that Buty the professor's father-in-law, would built a *Dagdiwada*, a stone edifice at Shirdi, and that the professor would be in charge of it. It was only in 1915-16, that is, two or three years later, that Buty began to build it. It was after 1920 that there was a *Sansthan* with trustees and Narke became one of the trustees in charge of the tomb in that very *Dagdiwada* owned by his father-in-law. Another instance, still more interesting to him, occurred this way. His mother, was very anxious about his employment, and

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noted with concern that since he did not have any employment, he was tossing from town to town for petty sums on mining and prospecting jobs which were advertised in the press in various places – even in Burma and Balaghat. He once stayed at Shirdi for 13 months without any employment. He got disgusted and thought that he ought to turn himself into a fakir. In 1914, when Baba was distributing kapnis to fakirs, he was hoping that Baba would give him a kapni. but Baba did not give him one. A little later, Baba beckoned him and placing his hand with kindness on his head, stroked it and said, 'Do not blame me for not giving you a kapni. That fakir (God) has not permitted me to give you one.' His mother and others were asking Baba what was to become of this Narke, seeing how unsettled his course of life was and how far he had to travel to earn small sums. His mother prayed to Baba to give him good employment nearer home or even near Shirdi. Baba answered, 'I will settle him at Poona'. Whenever there was any job advertised in the press, Narke would go to Baba and ask him, 'Shall I go to this place – Calcutta or Burma – for the job?' Baba would say, 'Go to Calcutta and Poona, Go to Burma and Poona', adding Poona after each. But there was no scope for his employment at Poona for some years. In 1917, an announcement was made that the Engineering College at Poona wanted a Geology Professor. Narke went up to Baba and asked him whether he should apply. Baba said, 'Yes'. So, Narke went to Poona to the people concerned. It was a very difficult and uphill task, because there were so many applicants and they were supported by very influential people. But for Narke there was no influential backing. Baba enquired of some people at Shirdi at that time, 'Where has Narke gone?' and they said that he had gone to Poona to try for the job. Allah will bless, was the remark of Baba and that was the backing Narke got. Baba also asked whether Narke had any children, and the person there said, 'None. The children born died after a very short life'. Baba again said, 'Allah will bless'. Both these blessings came true. In 1918, he secured the appointment of Professor of Geology and Mining in Poona and the children born to him subsequently are all alive. There are four of those children even now (1956). How Baba could foresee the future event is the moot problem for metaphysicians and philosophers and would puzzle every professor. The future must be fixed if it is to be foreseen. In that case there is no free will for any of the people who produce the results predicted. So, on the horns of this dilemma, learned people were impaled, and Narke, being no exception to the rule, was however, lucky enough to get actual experience of Baba's statements regarding the future turning out to be true. He had to conclude that Baba's nature was obviously divine and omnipotent, able to control the future in such a way as still to make people who are exercising their

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'free wills' to work up to the end that is fixed, Baba's nature was very puzzling and when Narke was studying Baba's nature, Baba complimented him, calling him a Hushiar or a clever man. Baba never stifled legitimate enquiry. Everything he said or did was full of significance and the professor declared, that he could mostly understand them.

We will now give the result of this professor's study of Baba, and then show the other side of the shield. The professor noted that Baba was living and operating in other worlds also, besides this world, and that he was working in an invisible body too. His words were highly cryptic, symbolical, allegorical, and not plain. But one carefully noting them could make out what Baba meant. Baba would often refer to '*Paica*', 'Oh, Brahmins earn much *paica* by their ways' he would say. He did not mean *dakshinas*. He meant '*Punya, Apurva* or merit acquired by careful observance of duties of a Brahmin. Baba was also often misunderstood, when he talked in his mysterious ways. For instance in 1914 or thereabouts, a Harda gentleman, rich and old came with a lady to Shirdi. He was suffering from tuberculosis. For one month he improved at Shirdi. But later on he grew worse and worse, and the end seemed to be nearing. One day, ladies of his house told Narke that he was in a critical condition, and that he should go and ask Baba for udhi. When he went, Baba said, 'The man would be better by quitting the earth, what can the udhi do? Any how, take the udhi and give it as it is wanted'. So, Narke gave the udhi, but did not report the conversation. The Harda gentleman's condition grew worse, and Shama, arriving later, informed Baba that death was imminent. Just about the time of death, Baba remarked, 'How can he die? In the morning he will come back to life' This was taken by the relatives of the sick man to mean that he would not die or that he would revive. So, they placed lamps all round the corpse and waited till noon the next day. But life was not restored. His funeral ceremonies followed. The Harda gentleman's relations thought Baba had given them false hopes, and for three years they did not return to Shirdi. one day, one of those relations saw Baba in a dream with the deceased man's head over his own. Baba disclosed the lungs in a rotten state, and said, 'From the torture of all this, I saved him'. Thereafter the relations renewed their visits to Shirdi. Then the meaning of Baba's words became apparent. How can he die, referred not to this life but the survival of human personality, which takes up new forms of life.

Baba used to sleep either at *Masjid* or at *chavadi*, and while sitting in front of the duni, he would often say to what distant places he went overnight and what he had done. People sleeping by his side and

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seeing his body by their side all night would wonder how he could have travelled when his body was there. But Baba did travel with the invisible body to distant places and there rendered actual service.

Baba used to often describe scenes in the other worlds. For instance, when a Shirdi *marwadi's* boy died, people returning from his funeral heard Baba say, 'He must be nearing the river now, just crossing it.' The professor G G Narke says this could have reference only to *Vaitarani* which dead souls have to cross.

Then Baba's reference to past lives often puzzled people. But those who had faith appreciated these recitals. Narke himself had full faith in Baba told him the facts of four of his previous lives. He said this in the presence of others. But others could not understand that these referred to Narke. Baba had the peculiar art of giving information to particular individuals in the midst of a group in a way that those concerned alone could understand and not others. Thus at one sitting, by a few acts and words, he benefited numerous people.

As Sai Baba could traverse other realm than this earth and could control what took place everywhere and, because he could see the past and the future alike quite clearly, his nature could be clearly inferred. He was not a body-bound soul. Baba himself brought this out by asking the question. 'Where are you? Where am I? Where is this world?' Pointing to his own body, he once said, 'This is my house. I am not here. My Mourshad Guru has taken me away. That is, his Dehatmabuddhi was completely swept off by that Guru. The professor, very clever in his logic, concluded 'Sai Baba is alive. He is where he was then. Even then he was where he is now.' These highly learned statements carry much truth with them.

Baba's references revealed to Narke that the function performed by Baba was very peculiar. Baba stated that he controlled the destinies of departed souls. So, that was an important function of his. As Sai Baba never spoke untruth, not merely babbled meaningless words, the professor concluded that He was a Divinely gifted person whose function was to regulate the fate of departed souls, that is, those who had been in contact with him.

As for Baba's declaration about his *Guru*, Professor Narke heard Baba say, *Maja Guru Brahman ahe*, that is, My *Guru* is a Brahmin. Having said so much about his *Guru*, professor Narke carefully noted that Baba did not say that he had any *sishya* to continue his line. On the other hand, Sai Baba said, 'I would tremble to come into the presence

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of my *Guru*.' There was no one prepared to serve Sai Baba in that way at Shirdi. Once Sai Baba asked, it seems, 'Who dares to call himself my disciple? Who can serve me adequately and satisfactorily?' But apart from a disciple to continue the line, Baba helped in various ways and in various degrees. He encouraged them, protected them, and gave them instructions occasionally. Narke was studying Baba's methods of teaching and improving devotees. Baba gave our moral tales and a few occasional directions. But these were exceptional. But the traditional method of Baba was not oral. His traditional method was first the negative portion, that is, the *Guru* did not give to his chosen disciple any *Guru mantra*. Usually a *Guru* whispers a *mantra* into the ear of the *sisya*, and he seems to be almost biting the ear when he is whispering. So, Baba said, '*Me Kanala Dasnara Guru Navhe*.' That is, 'I am not the *Guru* that bites the ear. He did not regard *japa* and meditation as sufficient for the *sisya*. These produce in the *sadhaka Abhimana* or *Ahamkara*. Unless and until *Ahamkara* is completely wiped out the *Guru* is unable to pour all his influence into the *sisya*. In Baba's school, the *Guru* does not teach. He radiates or pours influence. That influence is poured in and absorbed in full by the soul which has completely surrendered itself and blotted 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. Baba, therefore, would tell some devotees, 'Be by me and keep quiet and I will do the rest,' that is, 'secretly or invisibly.' Of course faith in him – absolute faith – is a pre-requisite. One who was merely seeing him and staying by him for a while got faith. Baba gave experiences to each devotee, of his vast powers of looking into his heart, into the distance regions of space and time, past or future and these infused faith. One need not swallow a thing 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 be and whatever he may do, gave him an ineradicable basis for his further temporal and spiritual 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. The professor concludes that the duty of a devotee under Baba is only to keep himself fit for the *Guru's* grace. That is, he should be chaste, pure, simple and virtuous and he should look trustfully and sincerely to the beloved master to operate on him secretly, and to raise him to various experiences, higher and higher in range, till he is taken at last to the distance goal. 'But one step is enough for me', is the proper attitude now, He need not take the trouble to decide complicated metaphysical and philosophical problems

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about the ultimate destiny. He is ill-prepared to solve them now. The *Guru* will lift him and endow him with higher powers, vaster knowledge and increasing realisation of truth. And the end is safe in the *Guru's* hands.

These above conclusions, as the professor says, are not from any single lecture or address by Baba, but are gathered from the various hints, his dealings with many people and his occasional words.

The professor was a keen observer of what Sai Baba said and did, and, therefore, even his inferences of Baba's methods and intentions are of some use. Talking about the orthodox method of *Sadhana Chatushtaya* that is *viveka*, *vairagya*, *samadhishatka* and *mumkshutva*, Narke says, taking the first two, there is something to note as to what *viveka* and *vairagya* are. Mere talk of *viveka* and *vairagya* without the power of knowing what should be experienced or enjoyed and what should be renounced, is childish and leads to self-delusion and deluding others. It is bookish wisdom and not real, and cannot stand the strain of actual life. Mere talking of *viveka* and *vairagya* without being filled with them will only prove a man a hypocrite. Here, he says, is the advantage of knowing Baba. When Baba said, 'I am in the dog, pig and cat', he actually felt himself inside the dog, pig and cat and could say what they felt and what treatment they got. But others say the same, because such statements are found in the Gita and they believe them to be true. But, as there is no feeling or realisation behind their words, such statements would tend to hypocrisy. as for Baba's nature, this intellectually advanced professor began to consider both the material and the spiritual side of Baba, but stressed mostly the material. He was insisting on the material, because other devotees were insisting on the spiritual and forgot the material. So, he told them, 'Though Baba is God from the devotees' point of view, yet he is 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 his friends, the devotees at Shirdi, did not agree with him or, at any rate, relish his view. They were relying on the puranas and Ithihasas. They were talking of 56 crores of islanders in *Dwaraka* at Sri Krishna's time. The professor disputed the statistical accuracy of the population and said, 'We are thirty three crores in the whole of India now and India is so over populated that we have to tread on each other's heels.' and would not accept that estimate of 56 crores. As he was disputing so many propositions in the puranas, they asked him if he would abide by Baba's decision on the matter, and he said, 'Yes'. Then they all went to Baba. Madhavrao

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Deshpande and other devotees asked Baba, 'Are the *puranas* true?' Baba said, 'Yes'.

Madhavrao : 'What about Rama and Krishna?'

Sai Baba : 'They were great souls, because they were Avatars.'

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

Sai Baba : 'What he says is true.' (Here the Professor was very glad that Baba confirmed his views of the material side of Baba). 'But I am your father, and you should not speak like that, You have to get your benefit and everything from me.'

The professor says, 'Baba thus admitted his limitations'. 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 etcetra, of the devotees'. On the basis of the devotees view, Sai Baba did not declare Antinomianism, that is setting himself up as above law. On the other hand Sai Baba 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. Here obviously, the professor is contrasting the behaviour of Sai Baba with the behaviour of Upasani Baba who, at Sakori, 3 miles further off, declared himself to be above all law, and occasionally disobeyed them, and who was an *Avadhuta*, that is, without any covering, and was freely moving with large number of women folk.

But in the above, the professor failed to note that Baba was pointing out a very important truth. Things have a material and spiritual side. There are images, *Gurus*, *Avatars*, etcetra and they have a spiritual side as well as a material one. If any person is earnest in attempting to benefit by contact with these, he would commit a terrible mistake if he would advert to the material side only, the side of limitations. If he wanted real benefit, he would have to forget completely the material side or portion, and the limitation that go with the material, and think only of the divine in the image, in the *Guru* and in the *Avatar*, and that is what Baba meant by saying, 'You have to get your benefit and everything from me, as I am your father'. Baba is the father of all devotees, only if viewed as God. If viewed as man, he had no children, and so could not be the father of all his devotees. But if viewed as

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God, he is necessarily the father of all, possessed of parental kindness. When the fatherhood is recognised by the devotees, and they wish to get the benefits of being his children, the Guru-God Baba gives them that benefit, returns their love, and his eye of kindly supervision is over all those that love him. That love is destroyed by adverting to the material side. This all truth, the intellectually developed professor was apt to ignore.

About two generations back, there was a Professor of Geology, an Englishman, in the Presidency College, Chennai. He went out on his study of geology and anthropology in the mofussil with his usual small mallet in hand and came to a hamlet where there were a number of pottery works in the shape of horses in front of a temple. To study their composition, the professor knocked off the nose of one of the horses. The villagers were aghast, but soon gathered in a crowd and hunted the professor out who run for his life. Similarly, if one should go to the sacred shrine of Tirupati and look at Srinivasa's image, which fills so many devotees with the holiest of feelings, thankfulness for blessings already received and with hope for the grant of further relief prayed for; and if one should take up one's mallet and chip off a portion of sacred image, he might discover the actual composition of the material-whether it is of the Tertiary age, or whether it is a drop rock. But from the point of common-sense anyone would declare that the geological test and appraisal of the sacred image is absurd and may prove ruinous to any man who attempts it. The sastras repeatedly declare that in the case of images, saints, etcetra, the physical aspect should not be considered. In them, matter and spirit are intertwined and closely combined, as in the living body, and when a holy person is approached, it is a sad lack of wisdom for one to be thinking of the material body and its short-comings. Baba himself expressed this view on a famous occasion. In 1910 or 1911, his fame was widespread in the Bombay State. The wife of the Revenue Commissioner, Mr. Curtis, wanted to go to Baba with a view to get his blessing for an issue as she was barren, and the Revenue Commissioner accompanied her. The Collector, the Deputy Collector and a host of people were coming to Shirdi, and the chief of them, Sir George Seymour Curtis, was without faith and was only desirous of 'doing' Baba, that is, seeing him so as to be able to say that he had been to Shirdi and had the opportunity of seeing the much talked of fakir. Knowing his mentality, long before the crowd could be seen, Baba was saying at the *Dwarakamayee*, 'Rascal! Coming to see me! What have I got? I am a naked fakir with human organs'. People could not make out whom Baba was referring to. But soon the full official procession headed by Mrs. and Mr. Curtis, and followed by the Collector, the Assistant Commissioner, and others

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passed in front of the *Dwarakamayee*. Then they went on to the *chavadi* and from there wished to send word to Baba. That was however impossible as no one would convey orders to Baba. Then Baba himself passed in front of the *chavadi*, and Mrs. Curtis wished to have a talk. Baba said, 'Wait for half an hour'. But Baba returned within ten minutes, and she again said she wished to have a talk. Baba said, 'Wait for one hour'. The officers were impatient. Mr. Curtis had done Baba and done Shirdi and they went off. Of course Mrs. Curtis's object, namely, to get a child by Baba's blessings, was not achieved.

Professor Narke gives an excellent analysis of the four margas, namely, *Yoga*, *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, and points out how *yoga* and *karma* margas were not those prescribed by Baba, nor even the *Jnana marga*, that is, if it is taken as consisting in an intellectual effort to understand the Upanishads and Brahma Sutras or a study of the Self. That was not Baba's method or aim. Baba renounced all attachments after being a master of everything that this world and other worlds have to offer, by reason of his wonderful siddhis and power. Therefore, his *vairagya* was real *vairagya* and Baba's continued and perpetual activity to serve the public was *Nishkama karma*. But, as for the *margas*, the professor points out that *bhakti marga* was the main plank of Baba as of other saints. Now what are its features, and what is its goal? First, *Guru bhakti*, and next serving and loving the Guru and God are its chief features. Baba stressed the importance of devotion to one's Guru and treating him as God in, through, and as, the Guru, and identifying the Guru with god, that forms Baba's *bhakti marga*. The professor's analysis is fairly right, though he was not very successful in following Baba as God for his own purpose. Intellectualism is admirable in certain respects, but, for the purpose of actual life, the habit of viewing everything from the intellectual standpoint weakens one's power to adopt Baba's method of identifying the Guru with god and plunging boldly with full faith in every world of his into the course that Baba may point out. What Dixit and others with greater faith could do was not possible for a highly trained intellectual. The professor notes that Baba, whom everybody considered to be a Mohammedan had such great reverence for Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, as the professor himself was not able to feel or exhibit. But the professor was an orthodox Hindu in many respects of the intellectual type. He was studying *Yoga Vasishtha*, a highly philosophical work, which many find very difficult, if not possible, to understand. About his study of *Yoga Vasishtha*, Baba had sometime to say, There are portions even in *Yoga Vasishtha* which would enable once to get into intimate contact with God and be absorbed in him. When the professor was reading a passage apparently of the above sort, Baba told him to

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give him Rs. 15 *dakshina*. The professor pleaded his impecuniosity saying, 'Baba, you know I have no money. Why do you ask me for Rs. 15 *dakshina*?' Baba said, 'Yes, I know it. But you are reading an excellent book now. Get me Rs. 15 *dakshina* from that'. The professor knew that he should study that special portion of *Yoga Vasishtha* which refers to 15 elements of which one's personality is made up, and present them to Baba in his own heart, as his *Antaryami*. that is, he should get *laya* in Baba. But this was only an intellectual perception. The professor was sufficiently orthodox to carry on, (or to get carried on) the usual worship of sacred images of *Avatars* at his own house. But this does not lead one very far in achieving the goal of *laya*.

Baba gave this professor sufficient opportunities to get a proper appreciation of himself. In 1916, when plague was rife at Shirdi, the usual prasada or naivedya of *halwa* had not been brought to the *Dwarakamayee*. The Baba asked Narke to go and get the sweetmeat from the *Halwayi's* shop. So, Narke went and told the wife of the sweetmeat merchant of Baba's order. She then pointed to the corpse of her husband, who had died of plague, and that Narke might take the sweetmeat from the almirah. He took it, but he was trembling all the time, for fear he might catch the infection and others eating it might catch the infection if that was given as prasada. But as he approached Baba, Baba said, 'You think you will live if you are away from 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'. The halwa was given as Baba's prasada, and no one caught plague.

So, Narke realised the wonderful knowledge Baba had over sources of danger, and the way he controlled danger from plague, and guided people aright, a knowledge which ordinary human beings did not possess. Baba was obviously superhuman, that is, Divine. Baba knew where cholera was at Shirdi and how it could be controlled. He had lepers about him who massaged his legs. He could evidently keep off and control leprosy infection. Udhi was usually put into the mouth of sick people, and the leper by the side of Baba sometimes took the udhi from the fire and distributed it, and all accepted it from the hands of the leper. Yet no harm resulted. So, Narke had ample opportunities to see and learn about Baba's divine knowledge and divine control. But he never attained even a fraction of that intense faith and self-forgetfulness and that intense love which characterised the Ankita children of Baba like H.S. Dixit, Purandhare, and others.

SRI NARAYAN ASHRAM, SANNYASI OF WAI

We shall now take up two cases of Baba's use of his mystic power to give bliss or productive power to his devotees namely, Narayan Ashram and Kusa Bhav. The life of this devotee Narayan Ashram from Satara district is interesting from the view point of Baba's method for spiritual improvement. In 1910, he was Mr. Toser in the Customs Department, and he continued to be in that department till 1926, when he retired on pension. In 1910, however, he had the advantage of listening to Das Ganu Maharaj's *kirtan*. As usual, whatever was his subject, the *Kirtankar* dilated upon Sai Baba's glories and qualities, and Sai Baba's picture was always at the meeting. Having derived a very good impression of Baba's saintliness, Mr. Toser, at the close of the *kirtan*, went and asked Das Ganu whether Sai Baba was living, and was told that he was at Shirdi. Within five days of this information, Mr. Toser hurried up to Shirdi and fell at the feet of Sai Baba. His attachment was so powerful that in six months he paid nine visits to Shirdi. He went in later years also, but the first visits were the most memorable. The impression derived from Das Ganu's *kirtan* was greatly strengthened and vivified by his frequent visits. Until 1918, Mr. Toser was entirely under Baba's influence. Afterwards, he passed into the charge of Vasudevananda Saraswathi of Gurudeswara on the banks of the Narmada near Nanded in Gujarat. Vasudevananda Saraswathi had in fact attained *Mahasamadhi* even in 1915. But he was in spiritual contact with Baba and Sri Narayan Ashram believed that Baba had left him in the charge of Vasudevananda Saraswathi from 1918. In 1931, Narayan Ashram went to Veda Rama Swamy of Kasi, Tarakamath, Durgaghat, and obtained *Sannyasa Diksha* from

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him. Internal changes are hardly matters for publication, but Swami was kind enough just to offer a few hints so that readers may know more about Sai Baba. He begins by saying:

Sai Baba had different ways of dealing with different people. He was the centre and to each man he darted a separate radius. Most people who approached Baba cared for material things only and hardly any came to him for the highest spiritual benefit of *Atma Nishta*.

Hari Sitaram Dixit, Chandorkar and Dabolkar, 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 two of Eknath's works, as he was but a beginner in the religious field and had to chiefly develop his *bhakti*. 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 Mosque. As even at the *wada*, one is under Baba's direct influence.

Baba's methods of teaching varied. He would simply touch with his palm the head of a devotee and that would have one kind of influence. Sometimes He pressed his hand heavily on the head of a devotee as though he was crushing out some of the lower impulses. On occasions, he would pat on the devotee's back or would pass his palm over his head. Each had its own effect affecting the sensation and feeling of the subject. Apart from touch, he effected an invisible operation on the devotee, whereby he could bring about a great change in him, and of that Mr. Toser had an experience. Baba conveyed to him graciously, without using any words or even touching him, the feeling that differences between various souls, or for that matter, all differences were unreal, and the one real thing was the Divinity which underlies all. This was in 1913 or 1918 perhaps. This truth was not uttered in words by Baba before Narayan Ashram. It seems to have been uttered in presence of R. B. Purandhare to somebody. Sri Narayan did not mention these experiences of his either to Mr. Dixit or to Dabolkar, though Mr. Dixit was writing experiences of devotees in his *Sai Lila Masik*, and Dabolkar was adding to his *Sai Sat Charitra* out of such material. Neither of them asked him for his experience. Baba spoke to Narayan Ashram only a few words, and they were direct and plain words. He did not talk to him in parables. When numerous people flocked to Baba, he would employ parables. So far as Mr. Toser could find out, Baba was trying to push people who came to him just a few steps above their level. As for further steps, further guides and further influences would come in later as matter of course. There was nothing

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wrong in going from one saint to another saint, especially if the first Guru had attained Mahasamadhi.

Mr. Toser himself notices that other saints were talked of by Baba or they talked of him as brothers, and that they belonged to the same group so to speak. Thus, one Daji Maharaj, a saintly *Grihasta Brahmin*, who lived at Dangar Takidi, near Nanded in the Nizam's State, was referred to by Baba as his brother. That Maharaj passed away only in 1934. he was practising *Gayatri Puruscharanam*. in 1914, that Maharaj once said at Dangar Takidi, "Yesterday Sai Baba Came here in the form of Maruti and there was a great rumbling noise at his arrival". Mr. Toser and his father being Maruti worshippers, had got a temple built for Maruti in 1918 at Ville Parle, in Hanuman street and named the God, 'Sai Hanuman' remembering the fact that Sai was Hanuman. The very day this temple was consecrated at Ville Parle. Baba gave, it seems, Rs. 25 to a *Brahmin* called Vaze and made him perform Satyanarayana puja at Shirdi. People connect these two events as cause and effect. Sri Narayan Ashram says, "Sai Baba never spoke to me or so far as I remember to anyone else about the desirability of *Sannyasa*." But I myself had that feeling and became a *sannyasi*. The *Guru*, Sri Narayan Ashram says, "is a medium, a means to realize your ownself. He gives you the initial push and then you have to exert yourself, and go higher and higher to your height. Sai Baba thus was a medium responsible for a considerable and momentous advance in my spiritual history." Before we went to Baba, one Vinayak Bhat Shandale, whom he met in 1900, and who made him read *Yoga Vasishta* with zest, as a Guru or medium for him. So, Mr. Toser had a number of stepping stones, but the most interesting fact about him is that Sai Baba gave him the impression that he recognised no differences and that in fact no differences did exist and he filled him with prolonged bliss alike when Mr. Toser was with Baba at the Mosque and also when Mr. Toser went to his quarters, in, Sathe *wada*. "Even at the *wada*," he says, "one is under Baba's direct influence."

This grant of internal bliss and that for long stretches and for numerous days gives an indication of Baba's own internal bliss. It is for this purpose that Narayan Ashram's experience is valuable to us, that is, he shows us Baba is *Satchitananda*.

Sri Narayan Ashram's wife and mother are living in the same house with himself, but he is observing the rules of *Sannyas*, and devoting his attention to *Paramarth* and when Sai *Bahajan* groups gather, he comes and with his melodious voice sings Sai *Kirtans*, as he did at the All India Sai Devotees' Convention at Poona in 1952.

KUSA BHAV

Krishnaji Kasinath Joshi was known as Kusa Bhav and was the son of Kasinath Padmakar Joshi, a Joshi *Vatandar*, living at Mirzgaon, 70 miles from Ahmednagar. He was born in 1866.

Kusa Bhav's experience with Baba is very interesting as a study in Baba's ability to confer mysterious power. He was a poor *vatandar*, having passed a vernacular school examination to qualify himself for a master's place on Rs. 5 or Rs. 7 per month. He also got himself trained for the hereditary duties of a village priest. But neither the school master's place nor the priestship attracted him. He was ambitious. He found once Datta Maharaj, a *Guru* with great power and went to him and got trained in *Yoga*, that is, *Asana*, *pranayama* and the raising of *Kundalini Sakti*. The *Guru* imparted to him only the general teachings, but this *sisya* was not satisfied and prevailed upon the *Guru* to give him instruction in *Maranam*, *Uchchatanam* and *Vasikaram*. The *Guru* gave those *mantras* to him and he learnt them all. He had therefore to deal with evil spirits, and so he wore an iron bangle as a talisman when he was repeating the *mantras*. He mastered the *mantras* by his *japa*, and he was able to order sweetmeats to come, and they would come. He would spread out his hands and his hands would become filled with *pedas*. He would show this to the on lookers and distribute the *pedas* to them. But he was debarred from using them for himself. He could destroy *abhicharan*, evil spells, by others. When he was aged only 22 in 1888, fully armed with these magical powers, the *Guru* left him, wanting to go to the Himalayas to live there alone up to the end of his life. Kusa Bhav accompanied him up to Delhi, and there, when parting, the *Guru* told him that he should go to Sai Baba of Shirdi whom he referred to as his elder brother, '*Maja Vadil Bhai*' and that he

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should go to him and do whatever he directed. With this injunction he disappeared. Kusa Bhav in 1908 went to Baba at Shirdi, but, as soon as he came near the Mosque, Baba would not allow him to enter. "Throw away your iron bangle. Stop the production of your *pedas* and then come" was Sai Baba's order. Kusa Bhav broke the iron bangles and throw away. Then to sustain himself, he had to beg for food at Shirdi. Baba's order was that he should sit in a corner of the Mosque and go on reading *Dasabodha* of Ramdas Swami during the day. At night Kusa Bhav would sleep wherever he found some place to lie in. Baba gave him no *upadesa mantra*.

When Kusa Bhav went in 1908 Baba had few visitors, and he was not even asking for *dakshina*. But he would take only a few *pice* for his fuel for *dhuni*. Nana Saheb Nimonkar was a big man visiting him. Baba imparted faith to those resorting to him by his internal work and internal operation. He would ask every one to stick to his *Ishta Devata* and would grant them *Sakshatkara* of that *Ishta Devata*. Kusa Bhav stayed three full years at a stretch with Baba, and afterwards he visited Shirdi off and on for 9 years. Baba then told him, "See a man with three heads, that is, see Datta at Gangapur." Every year Kusa Bhav went to Gangapur twice; one for *Guru Poornima* and the other for *Magha Poornima*. Baba once told him to do 108 *parayanams* of *Guru Charitra*, taking 3 days for each *parayana*, and Kusa Bhav did this at Gangapur and stayed there for 10 or 11 months for this purpose.

As for his mantric powers Baba had forbidden their use and he was not using them. he felt the loss of mantric exercise keenly. One Ekadasi day, however, he visited Baba, and Baba asked him, "What do you eat today"" Kusa Bhav replied "Nothing, it is *Ekadasi* today."

Baba: What does *Ekadasi* mean?

Kusa Bhav: *Upavasa*.

Baba: What is *Upavasa*?

Kusa Bhav: It is like *Rojas*.

Baba: What is *Rojas*?

Kusa Bhav: It means eating nothing except *Kandamula*.

Kanda means tubers, usually sweet potatos, and *Mula* means roots.

Baba punning upon the word *Kanda*, called it *Kaanda*. *Kaanda* means onion. Baba said, "Kaanda you are eating. Here is *Kaanda* for you." So, saying, Baba handed over few onions to Kusa Bhav and asked him to eat them. Kusa Bhav replied, "Baba, if you eat, I will also eat." Baba ate some and Kusa Bhav also ate some. Then visitors arrived. Baba wanting to have fun, and said, "Look at this *Bamnia*, he is eating onions on an *Ekadasi* day." Kusa Bhav said that Baba ate it and so he also ate it. Baba said, "No, no; you see what I ate." He then vomited. What Baba vomited was really '*Kanda*.' Baba said, "See, it is not onion but sweet potatoes." Kusa Bhav was surprised and thought the production of sweet potatoes was his opportunity. He fell upon the sweet potatoes and swallowed them. Baba abused him and beat him, saying "Why do you eat the vomit – *uchishta*?" Kusa Bhav did not answer. In a moment, Baba's mood changed. He said, "I shall give you now my *varam*. Henceforth you will have the power to produce the *udhi*, that is, *udhi* from the *dhunimayi* of Shirdi, by merely remembering me and holding forth your hands. Give this *udhi* freely. It will help all people and you will get *punya*. This was said to contrast Baba's boon with Kusa Bhav's previously distributing stolen *pedas*, which if eaten would result in sin.

As Kusa Bhav was giving this statement, he was seated on a bed at Poona on a cold day and suddenly he stretched out his hand with closed eyes and uplifted face, and in a minute he said, "Here is *udhi*." His palms were full of *udhi*. "Hold your hands and receive the *udhi*" he said. Mr. Avaste, who was with Mr. B. V. N. Swami, stretched out a piece of paper as the *udhi* was falling from Kusa Bhav's hands, and it was found to be warm, coming fresh from the *Dhunimayi* on a cold day. Kusa Bhav used this power of producing *udhi* with great effect. There was an aristocratic family in Poona where a patient had a longstanding illness, paralysis probably, and Kusa Bhav, by the use of this *udhi*, cured him. "This production of *udhi*", Kusa Bhav says, "is a power vested in him by Baba once and for all and does not require any *japa* on his part, but only prayer. This *udhi* removes various ills and might even cure barrenness." He said that he had practically given up the production of *pedas*; but the temptation of producing them was sometimes irresistible. Once at Shirdi itself, this Kusa Bhav produced *pedas*. He also used his old power of exorcising *Abhicharan* in the case of Rajmachikar's grandson, who was suffering from mysterious bibe marks, that is, marks of the marking nut on his body, on his cloths, even his bed clothes and cured him.

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During one visit, Baba told Kusa Bhav, "Next time you come, come two of you." His father was with him at the time and Baba's order meant "Come married." Shortly thereafter he got married, but he went to Shirdi alone without his wife, at first. Then his wife came to Shirdi and took him away to lead a married life. In consequence of this, he had children and grandchildren.

On one occasion, Baba told him, "Why do you take the trouble to come all this distance to see me? I am there." Kusa Bhav could not understand this. Then Baba described a specific plot of land in Mirzgaon and Kusa Bhav went there and after clearing the prickly pear on it, found a *samadhi* there. That *samadhi* he began to worship. There he got *darsan* of Baba, that is, Datta Baba, whose *samadhi* it was, and that Datta Baba always appears once a year on Datta *Jayanthi*. That saint, however, was called Pakir Shah. He lived 200 years ago and held the land on which the tomb now exists as an *inam* from the *jagirdar*. That Pakir Shah or Datta as he is called, occasionally talks of Sai Baba, though he talks very little. People can see him only once a year. This Pakir Shah does not give any help either for *jnana marga* or *bhakti marga*. His appearance merely inspires faith. he is to be seen and worshipped or bowed to, and he says, "Sai Baba is alive", but whether as a spirit or as some *Avadar*, he does not say. Pakir Shah says that he and Sai Baba are inter-related as persons of the same order. Baba received Kusa Bhav from one Datta Maharaj and left him under the care of Datta Pakir. Kusa Bhav passed away and his tomb near the foot of Shivaji Hills is worshipped by his devotees.

RAO SAHIB YESHWANT JANARDHAN GALWANKAR

Sri Rao Sahib Yeshwant Janardhan Galwankar was one of the prominent members of the Sai Baba Sansthan Committee and Editor of the Sai Lila Masik for some years. Y. J. Galwankar was the son-in-law of Anna Saheb Dabolkar or Hemand Pant (author of Sri Sai Satcharitra). He was working as a Superintendent in the Home department of the Bombay Secretariat. Anna Saheb Dabolkar's contact with Sai Baba naturally drew Galwankar to Sai Baba. He was taken by his father-in-law four or five times to Sai Baba, and at the first visit did not derive any strong impressions. But gradually his interest in Baba increased. Baba himself appeared in his dream and asked for Rs. 2 dakshina. Later he woke up and wished to send Rs. 2 by money order to Shirdi. Baba in the dream gave him two directions, the first, namely *Nekene Vagave*, that is, behave with probity and integrity, (the advice given evidently referred to his official position) and secondly to be chaste and sexually pure. Galwankar says that he has followed those directions with great care and zeal.

However, the great impression that Galwankar got was in 1917, when he went to Shirdi and Baba placed his palm over his head. That had a strong effect on him. He completely forgot himself and all surroundings and was in an ecstatic trance. He learnt later that Baba then spoke and told the people present that Galwankar had integrity and purity already in previous *janmas*. Baba added that he placed Galwankar in his present mother's womb, and the integrity and purity were still retained by him. During Christmas and other vacations, Galwankar went to Baba with full faith. Baba, however, did not give him self-realisation on advaidic lines nor any teaching on ethical or

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religious matters except what is stated above. He heard Baba saying that he was not the 3 ½ cubits height of body, but he was everywhere and that the devotees should see him in every place. Galwankar believes that his studies of the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata* and *Eknath* were all directed by Baba, though Baba did not tell him to study these just as he told to Jog, Kaka Dixit, and others.

Being deeply interested and concerned with his office work and other affairs, Galwankar did not try to get into closer contact with Baba before 1918. He was also comparatively young at the time and did not view matters of life very seriously. After Baba's *Mahasamadhi*, Galwankar became more serious. In 1921, he set off on a pilgrimage with his family to Prayag and Kasi. At Baradwajasram in Prayag, he prayed to Sai Baba that he might get sight of some saint. Within a few minutes after he left Baradwajasram, there was a venerable saint on the roadside and the guide showed him the saint saying that rarely once in seven years or so, that saint would visit Prayag and that he would not allow people to approach him nor would he accept money. But, being emboldened by Sai's grace, Galwankar approached the saint, and instead of his getting angry, the saint welcomed him with raised arms saying, "Come child". His wife, mother and other ladies also paid their respects to the saint. They were all blessed by the saint and having only annas in his pocket, Galwankar gave that to the saint who received it. Thus Sai Baba answered his prayer effectively in 1921. Having become ecstatic by Baba's blessing and teaching, he gradually paid more and more attention to *Adhyatma* to the spiritual side of existence. That was in 1932. Then he had a dream. Baba came to him in the dream and asked him, "What do you want?" His reply was, "I want *prem* and only *prem*" – that is, love. Baba blessed him saying, "You will have *prem*", and disappeared. Even afterwards Galwankar had spells of *prem* gushing through him, sometimes while meditating, sometime while reading, and even at other times. Thus his slight touch with Baba before *Mahasamadhi* ripened into full fruition after *Mahasamadhi* and his life became nobler and higher.

SRI RAO BAHADUR MORESWAR W. PRADHAN

M. W. Pradhan was President of the Sansthan for some time and his contact with Sai Baba was the result of N. G. Chandorkar's influence. In May 1910, Pradhan's brothers were chatting with Chandorkar, and his brother Rama Rao asked, 'Akkalkote Maharaj was a great saint, and he is dead. Is there anyone nowadays of this type?' Then Chandorkar revealed to him that there was, and that was Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. Till then Shirdi had never been heard of by others, and they learnt that it was the Kopergaon taluk of Ahmednagar district on the Dhond-Manmad line, 11 miles from Kopergaon station. Chandorkar then gave such a vivid and glowing account of Baba's power, kindness, greatness and his personality that every one hearing it was anxious to start immediately to get *darshan* of Baba. So, a group of about 14 people went the very next day to Shirdi, but M.W. Pradhan was not in the party. The party returned and brought with them a copy of Baba's picture and Das Ganu's *Bhakta Lilamrita*, describing Baba's life and miracles. M W Pradhan took them to his wife and there read the book. Then all his doubts about Baba vanished and he became a firm believer that Baba was a true saint. His wife's faith was even greater. They were anxious to depart for Shirdi. A fortnight after the return of the first party that is in May 1910 Pradhan went to Shirdi. Chandorkar's two sons, namely Bapu and Babu, were his companions. He wanted to present Baba with gold sovereigns and carried them as well as some currency notes. When he arrived at Shirdi, Baba was standing on the road near the *Lendi* as though he was waiting for the party. At once Pradhan and others got down and he prostrated to Sai Maharaj. There he met Rao Bahadur Sathe and Mr. Noolkar, First Class Sub Judge, and then went to the mosque where he wished to garland Baba and gave him all the presents. There, he felt that Sai Baba was

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really a great saint, and that his having come was really fulfilling his mission in life.

This rising faith was lucky, because Baba put his faith to the test at once. Baba asked for *dakshina*. Originally Pradhan had intended to give Rs. 20, but he gave Baba a gold sovereign instead. Baba took it, turned it this side and that side, and said 'What is this?' Mr. Noolkar who was there said, 'Baba, this is a guinea (a former British coin)'. Baba said, 'What is its worth?' Mr. Noolkar replied, 'Rs. 15'. Baba returned the coin to Pradhan saying, 'I do not want this. Keep it with you, but give me Rs. 15'. Pradhan was glad to have a coin touched by Baba and returned to him and gave Baba Rs. 15, then Baba, professing to count the rupees said, 'I find only Rs.10 here. Give me Rs. 5 more'. This was a test because having Rs. 15 in hand, he said that he had only Rs. 10 and was testing a lawyer, who would generally be combative and discuss questions of accounts. But Pradhan rose to the occasion and gave him Rs. 5 more. Then Pradhan remembered that he had intended to give Rs. 20, and Baba took that Rs. 20 under cover of wrong calculation. Baba did not ask for more. So, Baba's *vairagya* and indifference to money was clear, and Baba's testing of *bhaktas* also was clear.

Baba gave him other means also for strengthen his faith, that is, instances of his *antarjnana* and help by miraculous means. On the next occasion, when he visited Baba, he beckoned to him addressing his as Bhav and said merely, 'It will be all right in 2 or 4 days'. Then Baba gave him *udhi* and Pradhan returned from the Mosque. Pradhan remained for there for 8 days on this occasion. And during that time he arranged for a special dinner or bhiksha to Sai Baba, and asked Baba, 'what the dishes were to be and who the invitees were to be'. Baba said, '*Pooran poli Obbattu*' was to be part of the dinner. Babu, nephew of Dada Kelkar, was to be one of the invitees. 'I also will come' - '*Mehe Yeyin*'. So, at the meal the next day every one was served, and a place was set apart for Baba, and dishes were also kept there. A crow lifted a *pooran poli* off the plate, and carried it away. They said, Baba is the crow and had taken the favourite *pooran poli*.

That evening, Baba gave one remarkable hint of his *antatjnana* and kindness to Pradhan. Baba touched his limbs on one side and said, 'On this side of my body there is excruciating pain. It will be alright in two or four days'. But Baba seemed to be healthy, and what he meant by his words was not then clear. But it became clear after Pradhan reached Bombay.

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During this stay, on a Thursday, Pradhan saw Baba preparing food in a *hundi* pot to feed large numbers, *samaradhana*. He drove away every one from the *Masjid* at that time, and was alone with his *hundi*. Pradhan, Bapu and Babu, went in. Baba received them well and evidently excluded all others to give these a private interview. Baba appeared to be singing something first, but Pradhan discovered that the words were

*Kayare Apla kai Manave,
Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram.*

that is, what we should say is,
Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram.

At once Pradhan was overcome with emotion, and he placed his hand on Baba's foot. These words were the *Guru Mantra* that had been given to M.V. Pradhan by his family Guru, Hari Bua, and that mantra he had long neglected. Baba was kindly reviving his interest and regard for that *Guru Mantra*, for his spiritual benefit, without having any express consultation or question from Pradhan. This deep love of Baba greatly impressed Pradhan. When the contents of the *hundi* were boiling, Baba put his entire hand into them, not using a spoon or ladle, and his hand was not scalded or swollen. Then suddenly at noon, Baba took Pradhan and the two boys to the *Lendi*. That was not his usual hour for visiting the *Lendi*, but there, after taking them, Baba was digging into the earth small hollows and giving some corn seeds into Pradhan's hands and made him sow that corn in the hollows. The seeds were then covered up with earth, Baba made Pradhan water the patches. Then the whole party returned to the Mosque. The significance of this event was that 7 or 8 years later *Lendi* garden was purchased for Baba's *Sansthan* by M.V. Pradhan for a sum of about Rs. 1500. Baba recognised that Pradhan would be useful to the *Sansthan* by his purchase of the *Lendi* garden, which has numerous holy associations with Baba, and forms an essential part of the sacred places revered by his devotees. At parting on that occasion, Babu Chandorkar placed a plate under Baba's feet, and pouring water over his feet, collected the *pada tirtham* to be carried home. That was unusual. Only *udhi* was taken till then, and *pada tirtham* was used only at the arati, at Shirdi, and not taken home.

But on this occasion, as Babu Chandorkar took *pada tirtham* home, Pradhan also took some home. On his way back, he was lucky enough to get into the first train, namely, the Punjab mail, though he did not have the ticket for it. That was lucky, for he reached home four or five

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hour earlier, and on arrival learnt that his mother had an attack of paralysis, *Hemiplegia*. She was having excruciating pain on one side as Baba said. So, Baba was referring her pain and not his own pain, and Pradhan was lucky in going home by the earlier train with *pada tirtham* and Baba's *udhi*. The relations at home were considering whether they should inform Pradhan of his mother's illness, But Baba himself knew it and sent him back in time. the doctor, noting the high temperature of the patient and her constipation and restlessness, considered her condition critical, but if, however, the bowels moved in the course of the night, the doctor thought he situation would be more hopeful. It was 4.30 a.m. when Pradhan reached home. At once he gave Baba's *udhi* and *tirtham* to the mother. She became somnolent. A little later, her bowels moved, and her temperature fell. The doctor came and noted the improvement. Baba had arranged everything for the benefit of Pradhan's mother. 'In two or four days it will be all right', Baba said. Actually in two days it was all right with Pradhan's mother. Baba's *antarjnana* and his blessing to the mother of Pradhan had this double advantage of first benefiting the devotees in the family and next of developing faith. So, every member of Pradhan's family went to Baba and got his blessing.

One night Das Ganu was performing his *kirtan* at Pradhan's mother's place. after that, Das Ganu went over to Santa Cruz, that is Pradhan's own place, and there sang *kirtans* from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. Listening to the kirtans, his wife got a burning desire to go to Shirdi at once. Baba came to her in a dream and this increased her desire. The question was if she went what was to be done with her sister-in-law, who was in an advanced state of pregnancy. Anyhow, she thought they would take risk, and so both the ladies started. Mr. Chandorkar received the ladies and Mr. Pradhan at Kopergaon station. Mr. Chandorkar was then getting an intermittent fever. At the time when he would be at Kopergaon for his return journey, the alternate day fever would come to him. so before leaving Shirdi he asked Baba's permission. Baba gave it, and the result was that when he came to Kopergaon he escaped the fever. He never again had that fever.

On the occasion of this visit, Baba pointing to Mrs. Pradhan said, 'This is going to be the mother of my Babu'. But Chandorkar thought that her sister-in-law being pregnant, the reference must be to her, and asked Baba, 'Is this the lady you mean?' pointing for the sister-in-law. Baba said, 'No. It is this' (pointing again to Mrs. Pradhan). It turned out that her sister-in-law had only a tumour and not a pregnancy. in 12 months from the time of Baba statement, Mrs. Pradhan delivered. Baba said it was Babu. When the child named Baba, because Baba said

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it was Babu, was taken to Shirdi, Baba took up the child and asked it, 'Babu where had you been. Where you vexed with me or weary of me?'

Baba gave Pradhan occasional proofs of his superhuman powers. On the first visit, when he was start back from Shirdi, there was a severe storm and rain for quarter of an hour, and if that continued, the streams between Shirdi and Kopergaon would swell up, and having no bridges, it would be impossible for him to get back to Kopergaon or Bombay. so Pradhan feared that Baba would not give him leave to start. But when he went to Baba for leave, Baba looked at the sky and said, '*Arre Allah, abhi Bursat Purakar, Mere Bal Bachhe Ghar jane Wala hai. Unku Sukse Janedhe*, that is O' God enough. Stop this rain. My children have to go back home. Let them go back without difficulty'. As Baba spoke these words, the rain becomes gentler and feeble. Pradhan was able to go from Shirdi to Kopergaon without any obstacle on the way. he caught the Punjab mail and took udhi and tirtha to his mother as stated already.

This help to Pradhan and his mother by his use of power over elements and nature can only be called divine. Baba when they started on this occasion, said, 'I will accompany you home'. That is to say that the whole journey would be safe and actually the journey was quite safe. on the night after his return, his sister-in-law dreamed that a fakir robed in kafni and wearing a towel on his head like Baba was in the house. that seemed to show the truth of Baba's statement that he would come to Pradhan's home.

Baba was fond of the child Babu, and when taken for his first birthday that is, the second visit after his birth, Baba bought two rupees worth of burfi and distributed it to all. Then Baba asked, 'Has the child no brother and no sister?' Mrs. Pradhan bashfully answered 'You gave us only this Babu'. But Baba's words were very significant. After Babu's birth, Mrs. Pradhan had one male child and one more daughter. To commemorate Baba's birthday, Pradhan gave an grand dinner at Shama's and all were invited. that was a Thursday. Baba Saheb Bhate excused himself from attending it saying that on Thursdays he avoided dining out. When he went to Baba that day, Baba asked him, 'have you eaten at Pradhan's? Baba Saheb Bhate said, 'Today is Thursday'.

Baba: What if?

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

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Baba: To please whom?

Bhate: To please you.

Baba: Then I tell you go and dine at Pradhan's. Though it was 4 p.m. Bhate came and dined at Pradhan's.

Mrs. Pradhan had a dream in Santa Cruz that Baba came to Santa Cruz and that she did *Pada puja*. Chandorkar interpreted it to mean that Baba wanted her to go on with regular *Pada puja* at home, and so asked her to go to Shirdi with silver *padukas*. Accordingly she went and placed two silver *padukas* on Baba's outstretched legs and took them away. Baba then said to Chandorkar, 'Nana, see this mother has cut off and carried away my feet'. This expresses his appreciation of her *paduka* worship. Ever since then, Baba's *paduka* are being worshipped at Pradhan's house.

Pradhan's last visit to Baba was in 1918. He had taken with him Rs. 3,800. But he overstayed his intended period at Shirdi, and Baba went on taking *dakshina* from him, and the result was that he had given Rs. 5,000, taking a loan of Rs. 1,200 from the veterinary doctor of Poona.

Baba was considered as *Datta Avatar* by Das Ganu and by those who heard his *kirtans* and by Pradhan also, of course. When Babu was ill at Santa Cruz, the family priest, one Madhav Bhat, was asked to look after the child, and he went on with his *mantra japa* and *puja*. But he said that illness was due to the fact that the family was now worshipping Baba, a Mohammedan saint, but Pradhan told him, 'Baba is not a Mohammedan saint. He is *Datta Avatar*'. Bhat was not convinced. Later, one night, he had a dream. There was a figure which, from the picture of the family, he recognised to be Baba, sitting on the top of the staircase in the house, holding a *Sota* in his hand. The figure said him, 'What do you mean? I am the lord of this house'. The priest did not mention it at once. But he made a vow that if really Sai Baba is *Datta* and all power, then he should cure this child and the child should improve sufficiently by 4 p.m. so as to be brought downstairs where Bhate was. The priest added he would then agree that Baba was and is *Datta*. This he uttered before Baba's photo. This was his prayer. Within a very short time of this prayer, the child's temperature was getting lower, and by 4 p.m. the child said, 'Let us go down and play'. His mother took him down, Madhav Bhat was then convinced that Baba was *Datta*, and he vowed he would pay him a *dakshina* of Rs. 120. So, the priest, Madhav Bhat, accompanied a group that went to Shirdi, and there Bhat paid Rs. 120. Shama was

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then with Baba. A little later, in the afternoon, Baba asked him 'Give me *dakshina*'; Shama said that Bhat had paid Rs. 120 in the morning. Baba said that he paid it to Datta, and added, 'Ask him'. Shama could not understand this. Afterwards Madhav Bhat explained to Shama the meaning of Baba's words that the sum of Rs. 120 was paid as a result of his vow that if Baba as Datta cured Pradhan's child, he would pay Rs. 120.

Madhav Bhat had no issue then. he vowed that he would pay Rs. 108 if he got a child. He vowed also that he would pay Rs. 1,008 if Pradhan's ambition should be achieved. With these vows in mind, he went to Baba and paid Rs. 108. sham said, 'He is giving this large sum of Rs. 108. Baba said, 'What is that? He is giving me much more'. Baba showed his antarjñana of Bhat's vow to pay Rs. 1,008.

Baba attended to the spiritual side of Pradhan's wife, and showed his concern at her shortness of temper. He told her, 'If anyone talks ten words at us, let us reply only with one word. Do not quarrel or battle with anyone'. Baba, after receiving Rs. 5,000 from Pradhan, made some gestures which were not clear. They seemed to mean "Even if the heavens tumble down over you, do not fear. I am with you'.

When Pradhan left Shirdi in 1916, Baba said, *Tuja Garam Jha Bara Me yein*, meaning, 'You go home, I will go with you'. He was not visible, but the whole journey was pleasing, showing that Baba looked after their safety and comfort. there was no danger or difficulty.

After Baba passed away, Pradhan got the following benefits. He became a second class magistrate of South Salsette for six years, 1920-26. In 1926, he became a Justice of the Peace. Then he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council, 1921-23. He received the Sanad of Rao Bahadur in 1927.

Mrs. Pradhan gives some more instances of Baba's kindness. When her child Babu had measles, the doctor was feeling hopeless. She prayed to Baba. Baba appeared and said, 'Why weep? The child is all right. give him a good feed at 6.30 a.m.' The child began to play in the morning and the doctor was surprised.

One night, Baba appeared to Mrs. Pradhan in her dream and said, 'Are you sleeping? Get up. Your boy will have convulsions'. Then she got up. The boy at that time had no convulsions, but she kept hot water, fire, and *Eau de Cologne* ready. Three hours later, the boy woke up, and had convulsions. All the children in Pradhan's family have

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convulsions occasionally, and as everything was ready, in half an hour, the fit passed off.

Once when she went to the Masjid, she was afraid that Baba would get angry. That day Baba said, 'See, I do not get angry with anyone.'

Once while she was doing *puja* at the Mosque, Baba stopped her and said, 'Go back to your quarters'. She went back and found her Babu was crying and that there was no one to look after the child. Then she went and pacified the child, and returned. Baba then said, 'Now do your *puja*'. So, Baba from the Mosque was keeping a watchful and kindly eye over all his devotees and their families, and looking after them. *Mungiki Pav me Avaj Hove, Obhi Sai sunta hai*. This means, 'Sai hears even the ant's footfall'. Once she was taking a convalescent boy to Shirdi against the doctor's advice. The child was ill in the train. the child could not sit up and had to lie down. She feared that people would laugh at her conduct. when the child was taken up to Baba the child stood up before Baba, and was all right in health. Baba said, 'People would not laugh now'.

On 15-10-1918, that is, on the day of Baba's *Mahasamadhi* she saw in her dream Baba's body, and said, 'Baba is dying'. Baba replied, 'Saints do not die. They take *Mahasamadhi*'. Subsequent news confirmed the fact that Baba passed away on that day.

BABA'S CONTACT WITH MUSLIMS

A reader who has read so far the life of Baba might be curious to learn whether Muslims got into contact with Baba and if so who were they, what they thought of him, what benefits they obtained and what other Muslims can now obtain from Baba. This is fairly practical and important. Baba drew no distinction between Hindu and Muslim and from the very beginning wished to bring together to himself so as to overcome their mutual differences and dislikes and enable them to work together, individually and nationally. This question is rather closely connected with Baba's being a Hindu or a Muslim, and that question cropped up very frequently when people came to meet Baba for the first time. With the information at our disposal, we can see according to Baba's own statement, that he had a Hindu birth, corroborated by his pierced ears. No Muslim male child get its ears bored. And from Baba's own mouth, we have the further information that his parents gave him away when he was a very tender child to the fakir who brought him up. So, the contact with Muslim starts from Baba when he was a tender babe. The question as to who the *fakir* was cannot be solved now. But what he was, may be inferred. He was the resident of a place fairly near Patri. So far as qualities are concerned, it is fairly good inference, from Baba's frequent reference to the word *fakir* on important and to his giving him valuable directions and guidances that the person who took him away was a real *fakir*, and a great soul. He must have been highly pious, dispassionate and full of *vairagya*. These qualities must have been imbibed by the tender child Baba even in his early years. Baba must have learnt to look upon that *fakir* as his *Guru-God*. Baba used the word fakir in the following cases, namely to denote God or Guru-God. who was constantly watching him and guiding him. The fakir who took charge of him must

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have been in all probability a Sufi. Sufis attain the state of trance, and in that condition adopt the Mahavakya *Aham Brahmasmi* in its Arabic form is *Anal Haq* to express their condition. *Anal Haq* was occasionally uttered by Baba. Some devotees say that Baba never uttered it, but that does not prove anything more than that those devotees and their friends had not heard it from Baba. But, if one devotee positively says that he heard *Anal Haq*, that is more valuable than 10 devotees negatively saying that they did not hear. *Anal Haq* is the Arabic form of words which may people have heard Baba utter. Baba has said in general terms that he is *Allah* or God. In particular, he has referred to himself being the various facets of God, that is, Laxmi Narayan, Ganapati and Maruti. Baba has himself said that all these – Maruti, Ganapati, Vittal, Ram are *Allah*. So Baba's saying *Anal Haq* is not improbable. It is only his occasional use of Arabic terms to convey what he often said in Hinustani or Urdu *Maim Allahum*. Baba was not constantly using Arabic or Persian in later days. But at the commencement he was known to be singing songs in strange languages (as Arabic and Persian would have seemed to his listeners at the Shirdi Takia) and also dancing with tinklets tied round his anklets and kanjira in his hand. Apart from question of language, the ideas in which Baba was thoroughly soaked in upto the last were in no way distinguishable from Sufism. Sufism stressed the following important points, namely our ego is a misleading and a disadvantageous entity and our true progress lies in merging the ego in the personality of the Supreme and coming to feel with the certainty of conviction that all action apparently done by us is really done by God, that is, the feeling that God is the sole actor, and the *Guru* is the only *Sadhana* needed. The *Guru* works not by preaching, teaching, and other similar methods, but purely by the force of love and mystic power. Through his soul-force, the *Guru* grips the sishya's soul, absorbs him into himself, shapes him, moulds him, and vests him with all knowledge and power and makes him like himself. *Apana Sarika karitit Tatkal*. These features once noticed in Baba's account of his own dealings with his own *Guru*, and with people like Upasani Baba, whom he wanted to mould perfectly. All things considered, one may very well take it that the *fakir* that Baba referred to, was the *fakir* who took charge of him in his earliest years and who developed him into the pure child that came immediately under the care of Gopal Rao Desmukh alias Venkusa. Here we see Baba's destiny. From Hindu parentage he passed to Muslim hands and from Muslim care again to a Hindu saint's care. The fusion of Hindu and Muslim had to be perfected first in his own person before he could effect any fusion of the Hindu-Muslim elements in society. We may well note how the conflicts are resolved when the two trends are mixed up in himself. The

predominant note in Islam is unity of God and the predominant feature of Hinduism is multiplicity of Gods. As we go into any Hindu home directly, we see a number of images representing a number of deities, namely, Rama, Krishna, Tirupati Venkatesa, Maruti, Datta, Lakshmi, Subbaraya, Ganapati, and so on. The Hindu's revel in all the mythology connected with all these forms and the *puja* is a full of reference to all the peculiarities and the mythological stories about all these, whereas to a Muslim mind, all such mythology, all such differentiation, is an anathema. He must think of only one God and the most fundamental and first dictum of Islam is 'There is no God but God and Muhammed is his prophet'. That is, there is only one God and there is no use of thinking other entities as God. On the contrary, in Hinduism the tendency is to look upon one entity after another as God. Max Muller coined the word Henotheism to denote this tendency, that is, everything is God by turns.

Namaste Vayo Twameva Pratyaksham Brahma Asi

this means, I bow to Thee, O Vayu, you are the visible God. Similarly, other forms are addressed as *Pratyaksham Brahma*, such as Fire, Sun, Water and apart from these, human personalities are to be worshipped and treated as God. The parents are first to be worshipped as God, *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava*. A Muslim cannot understand any of these dicta. Similarly, we may say *Athithi Devo Bhava*. Treat your guests especially, uninvited guests, as God. This is something which non-Hindus cannot understand. But amidst these dicta found in *Taittiriya Upanishad*, there is one which might be accepted by Hindus and Muslims to some extent, that is *Acharya Devo Bhava*. This means, 'Treat your *Guru* as God.' In Sufism, the *Guru* is the only God that the pupil is to have his mind. He must be swallowed up in the contemplation of his *Guru* and in the appreciation of his love, and think of nothing else. And this course is the same as the *Taittiriya* ordinance, *Acharya Devo Bhava*. Now, luckily for Baba, when he passed from his Sufi *fakir's* care to Venkusa's care, this element of *Acharya Devo Bhava*, common to Sufism and Hinduism proved to be his sheet anchor. His course for ten or twelve years under Venkusa is described by him in his own words with great glow of love and appreciation. The *Guru* wanted nothing but his love and in turn he wanted nothing but the *Guru*. So, for years and years he gazed on his *Guru* with love and completely forgot everything else in the world. That is the concentration that the Sufis want and that is the concentration, which yields the highest results in *Prema Marga*, emphasized by Lord Chaitanya and others. So, luckily the change from the *fakir* to Venkusa did not involve any serious change in Baba's method of progress. The

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sadhana was the same and the *sadhya*, the result was the same. The result was losing oneself in the Bliss of love. When for ten to twelve years Baba had gone through that course, with his Brahmin *Guru*, the development started already under the *fakir* was only ripening more and more. Hence the fusion of Hindu-Muslim was practically effected in his case by stressing the essence of both. The essence of both Sufism and *Bhakti marga* is development by love to reach the goal, which is perfect Satchitananda or love. Hence, in his own case, by providential arrangement, the fusion had become perfect and Baba often referring to God or *Guru* could use with equal felicity the word *Allah* or *fakir* or Hari. Baba has used all these terms and we shall see in his later life, he was having *nama japa* or concentration upon what he called indifferently either Allah smarana or Hari nama smarana. Ordinarily, the *Fakirs* or persons that we come across do not use both terms interchangeably. But in Kabir we have got an excellent instance of such identification or fusion. Kabir, according to Baba was his former *Avatar* and Kabir became the *Guru* or the chief of the *Gurus* of the Sufi sect who placed Kabir's poems in the forefront of their *sadhanas* for spiritual advance. Kabir's songs were sung by Baba especially in his earlier days at the takia and were referred to by him in his later talks 'Hari bole, Hari bole, Bayi' is the first line of a very well-known song of Kabir. There we see that all the highest associations of Godhead are brought into the Name *Hari*. Baba included Kabir amongst his inspiring agencies, and once said, Kabir was my Guru. Baba stated at Shirdi later that he went on with *Hari nama japa* and *Allah Smarana* and that Hari descended from the Vishnu Sahasranama (which he placed upon his chest for overcoming the troubles of his heart) into his heart, and that thereafter he got relief. He said to H. S. Dixit that he went on saying Hari, Hari, and Hari appeared before him. Thereafter he stopped giving medicine and went on giving *udhi* only. All who had his spiritual guidance also learnt to identify Hari with *Allah*.

When Baba left Venkusa and went and settled at Shirdi after some travels he had reached a condition in which this fusion was perfect. He appeared to be a Muslim *Fakir*, but Hindus support him and appreciated him, especially Hindu saints whom he used to meet and converse with, namely Devidas and Janakidas. His highly advanced concentration naturally resulted in several psychic powers and these drew the attention of those coming into contact with him. He was highly appreciated by saints from Poona and Sheegaon. During the course of his life, several apparently Hindu saints like Madhavanath Maharaj, Gajanan of Sheegaon and Datta Maharaj sent their men to be influenced by and taken care of by them. This is very good proof that Baba was not treated as an iconoclastic Muslim whom Hindus should

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keep aloof from. When he first entered Shirdi, Mahlsapathy mistook him for such a Muslim. But Baba, when he came along with Chand Bhai Patel's party to Shirdi, considered that Khandoba's temple was a proper residence for him, he having been trained under a great Venkusa *bhakta*, and having no anti Hindu tendencies. He considered that he could readily mix with saints. Mahlsapathy prevented him from entering into the temple, though under a mistaken impression, had a very good result. He was obliged to go and live under a tree and finally at the mosque where he was given the opportunity to carry on this work of fusion from a Mosque itself. The published accounts of Baba's experiences give us hundreds of cases of Hindus who took him to be a Mohammadan, but still found him to be fit to be considered their God, and therefore his being a Muslim in dress or using language of Hinduism or Urdu, or in his reference to *Allah* did not prevent them from worshipping him as their god or *Guru*. At first he tried to prevent their worship on himself but finally agreed to it and developed it, as this was part of the mission he had come to earth to fulfill. Getting Hindus to worship him at the Mosque was a great feat and he achieved it. But this was only half the problem. The counterpart of it was getting Muslims also to recognise him as their Godman. How far he succeeded in this we shall now consider.

Providence enabled him to have facilities for this purpose. Though losing himself in God and attaining *Ritambara* Prajna or Pratibha or knowledge of everything near and remote; past, present and future; here, there and everywhere was an undoubted help to his impressing people, whether Hindus or Muslims, to accept him as their God, had its characteristic obstacles. The Hindus were in a large majority and so though externally the mass of Hindus considered him as a Muslim, he was worshipped as a Hindu God or Hindu Guru-God in the Mosque. Now, how were the Muslims to treat such a person? He was an *Avilia*, a person with numerous siddhis and one who had developed himself wholly to the service of God and of humanity. But what was the proper course for Muslims to adopt towards him? Every person, be he Muslim or Hindu, when in distress or want, needs help. This powerful *Avilia* was rendering help, spiritual and also material. He was showering food and wealth upon a large number of persons and at the same time, showing his powers of reading the hearts of people and of controlling human and other beings, and even the forces of Nature. A Muslim also naturally reveres such a person with such powers. So, the Muslims had to decide in what way they should deal with such an *Avilia* in a Mosque. If he was a Muslim he was a very heterodox Muslim. The ordinary Muslim will not tolerate any Hindu God or God's portraits or images or rituals connected with Hindu gods. But Baba encouraged all

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these, and allowed Gokulashtami and *Ram Navami* to be celebrated at his Mosque with din and bustle. Along with the *Ram Navami* celebrations the Muslim ceremony of *Sandal* also went on at the mosque. The Muslims took out Sandal and went on applying *Sandal* paste with their palms to various objects. This idea of Sandal procession originated with one Mr. Amir Shakkar Dalal, a Mohammadan Bhakta of Korahla. This procession is held in honour of great Muslim saints. *Sandal*, that is, chandan paste and scrapping are put in the *Thali* and these are carried with incense burning before them in procession to the accompaniment of band and music through the village and then after returning to the Masjid, the contents of the dishes are thrown with hands on the *Nimbar* and walls of the *Masjid*. This work was managed by Mr. Amir Shakkar for the first three years and then afterwards by his wife. So, on one day, the procession of the Flags by the Hindus and that of *Sandal* by the Muslims went on side by side and are still going on without any hitch. This ceremony was held on *Ram Navami* day side by side with the Hindu celebration, and the two standards at the Mosque were gaily decorated and carried in procession throughout the streets of Shirdi, both by Hindus and Muslims. This *Ram Navami* celebration is an excellent illustration of how he was able to get Hindus and Muslims together at his feet. But the orthodox section whether of Hindus or of Muslims have their own insuperable difficulties. The extreme orthodox Hindu would not so much as step into a Mosque or bow to a Muslim or give him dakshina. Baba noticed and overcame this inhibition in numerous people who came to him. When Megha, Upasani Sastri, Mule Sastri and the South African doctor were asked to go to him, each one of them had this serious obstacle, the anti-Muslim sentiment to overcome. The Masjid is the last place to which an orthodox Brahmin would go and in a Mosque, under orthodox Muslim management, the presence of Hindu worshippers is neither expected nor relished. Yet, Baba so managed his mosque that his Hindu devotees were pouring in hundreds and thousands to worship him with all the religious ceremonials that Hinduism knows of. Therefore, Baba called his Mosque "A Brahmin's Mosque" and also named it *Dwarakamayee*. This, while attracting most Hindus, would still repel the orthodox Muslims and yet would not suffice to attract the orthodox Brahmin. But on the whole, the Hindu population in India especially in Mumbai and some other States, are far more advanced in education and far more tolerant in their culture and ideas than is generally believed, and great saints like Ramakrishna Paramahansa have widely scattered amongst the educated people and amongst the uneducated people, liberal notions of religion and God-head. More Hindus would naturally go to a Mohammadan saint who is not found to be an iconoclast and who is exercising his power

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beneficially to all devotees than Muslims to a Hindu saint. A few Mohammadans, who had known Swami Vivekananda's work like Rajab Ali Mohamed of Mumbai, appreciated Baba, and so had no prejudices, like the cultured and educated Hindus. But as for the others, their attitude towards Baba could not easily attain to the devotion of the Hindu devotees. In trying to give an account of the contact of Muslims with Baba, before and after his *Mahasamadhi*, this writer has encountered one great difficulty. A good number of Muslims no doubt swarmed to Baba because of the wealth he strewed about and the powers he displayed, but as for spiritual contacts, it was extremely difficult for the writer to find out even one person who had got into spiritual touch with Baba. Besides the statements of Rajab Ali who may be treated as a follower of Swami Vivekananda; and that of Chote Khan, there is no material of interest to get from Baba's Muslim devotees. So, it is worthwhile examining what Chote Khan says and then refer to other Muslims who have given statements to this author, which have been published in Devotees Experiences.

CHOTE KHAN

Imam Bhai Chote Khan, aged about 65 years and resident of Vajapur, Aurangabad district, told to His Holiness Pujyasri B. V. Narasimha Swamiji how he got into contact with Baba and how he became attached to him. Fakir Durvesh Shah told Chote Khan of Sai Baba in 1910, and asked him to go and see him and gave him some further direction. Soon, Chote Khan went to see Sai Baba. That was his first visit. Baba was then standing in a lane and a lady was bowing to him. As advised by Durvesh Shah, Chote Khan went and stood behind Baba and recited the first chapter of the Koran behind Baba's back. When he began it with Bismilla, Baba at once turned round and faced him and said angrily, 'Who are you? Why have you come to ask me about something as if you are my father?' Baba showered abuse on Chote Khan. Baba then went to the Mosque and uttered words, which Chote Khan could not understand. Chote Khan went and sat in front of the Masjid, as he could not get into it without Baba's permission. That permission was given only two days later. Kaka Dixit and others interceded on his behalf. In intercession, Dixit said pointing to Chote Khan, 'Baba, these children are yours. Why are you angry with them? Baba replied, 'You call him a child? He has beaten the master to death.' This referred to a recent escapade of Chote Khan, who was a Nizam's Sepoy in the Mamlatdar's office. Then he had beaten a Christian teacher or Master who had failed to give prompt information in a police investigation, at which this Chote Khan was assisting. The Master bled in the mouth and fell senseless. The Mamlatdar then advised Chote Khan to resign and go away. So, he resigned and ran away from the Nizam's State, but was still afraid that there might be prosecution, and that was one of the reasons why he visited Baba. That day Baba did not allow him. Two or three days later, one Kasim Bhai, son of Bade Baba, Jog and Dixit, all three took this Chote Khan

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up to the Mosque. Then Baba allowed him to take *darshan*. Baba said, 'Do not fear. *Allah Malik*, that is, there would be no prosecution.' He stayed on for a little less than two months after which Baba said, 'You go back safe. Your land dispute will be settled amicably.' This was one of the matters on which he wanted to consult Baba, namely, litigation then pending between him and his paternal aunt, who was also his mother-in-law. As Baba said, that litigation ended in his favour and he obtained possession of the lands.

His second visit to Shirdi was in the presence of Mahlsapathy and Maushy. As soon as he went in, Baba told Maushi, 'People do not listen to me. Rascals go away and suffer; by a thorn's injury and the parent dies.' This was a wonderfully accurate representation of what had happened to Chote Khan. At the close of the first visit, he went away without Baba's permission. Two days after he return home, his mother struck a thorn in her foot and died; evidently by reason of an infection it had turned septic and swollen. The fourth day after his mother's death, Chote Khan came to Shirdi, because he had no funds for her funeral ceremonies and no employment, and hoped that Baba would provide the funds. He stayed for 34 days or so. Then Baba said to Maushi in his presence, '*Udhi* must be received and then the man must go.' He thought that Baba was giving him leave because it is Baba's method to address one, while indirectly referring to another. Next morning, Baba extended his hands with *udhi* when Chote Khan approached him, and when giving *udhi*, Baba said, 'At the doorway of the house, there will be an old woman standing. She will give something, using which celebrations may be performed. Guests have come. Feast should be had in their company.' All this was Baba's *Antarjnana*, which Chote Khan could not make out then. But, when he went home to perform the fortieth day ceremony of his mother, a very old lady, the widow of the *Kazi*, was standing at his door and, out of love or friendship for him, paid Rs. 50 into his hands and said, 'Perform your ceremonies.' That was the fortieth day of his mother's death, corresponding to *Masik Shraadh*a, and he found his four sisters with their husbands had come in his absence for that ceremony to his house. These were the guests mentioned by Baba. Baba knowing the burdens of Chote Khan had provided funds for the ceremony and helped a *bhakta* relying solely upon him.

In his fourth visit, Baba said to him, 'Gulab has come to your house.' When he went back, he learnt that his wife had recently been delivered of a male child. That must be the Gulab mentioned by Baba, and the boy was named Gulab.

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In his later visits to Baba, Baba did not allow him to return when he wanted to. So, Chote Khan was impatient to get started. Baba when refusing permission said, 'People should not go, if they go, there will be storms and balls of fire and immense trouble.' This was spoken by Baba talking in general terms and did not appear to refer to him. So, he went on running or walking at 5 miles an hour and reached Vari, 12 miles away at 5.50 p.m. Then he went by the bank of Vari to Surala. It was then sunset. The Patel warned him, 'Do not go. The weather is cloudy. If you go, you will suffer'. But Chote Khan said, 'It is only four miles more to my village, and I will go.' He went on. After he went three miles, a big storm came and lightning fell upon a huge pipal tree close to him and in front of him. The tree crashed and broke into two and fire broke out in the tree. His eye sight was dazed and he turned his face back. Then he saw Baba standing behind him with two tawny dogs. He bowed to Baba. Baba disappeared. Then he went on. There was a river near his village. He went to cross it not knowing its depth. He felt the water only knee-deep, but when he reached the other shore and looked back, he saw in full flood overflowing its banks. He was amazed how he had crossed it. The depth of the water might have been 20 feet. How he could cross river 20 feet deep with water, he could not imagine. But he reached home safe. So, Baba's warning about the storm and ball of fire and trouble were all true, but Baba followed and saved him.

In 1936 Chote Khan was again badly in need of money to get Gulab married. So, he went to Baba and slept in the Mosque. In his dream, Baba blessed him and said, 'If you go to Poona, you will be benefitted.' So, he started off to Poona. One Mr. Ladkar, suffering from severe piles, came to him. Chote Khan told him that he knew of a saint Sa Baba's prescription that would cure piles. Ladkar said, 'Give it'. Chote Khan then prepared the remedy and that relieved the man greatly. He went at once, and betting on horses at the races in Poona he got Rs. 1,100. Out of that he gave Chote Khan Rs. 700 and with that money Gulab's marriage was performed

Baba on another occasion uttered words referring to the termination of his own fleshly life. Baba said:

*Laila illilah
Kya Bada Darbar hai
Munshiji to Andai hai
Sardarji Chuthai, Allah Malik Hai,
Alla Acha Karega.*

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As he said these, he was pointing to the Buty wada, which was then in construction in 1917-18. It was that Buty wada which is the *Bada durbar* now, and the *Munshijis* and *Sardars* are all coming here.

In 1918, some months before Baba passed away, Baba made some preparations for the approaching termination of life. According to the Islamic practice, Baba made the following preparation. To Baba's son Kasim, Baba gave some Poli with boiled fowls. Then Baba told him, 'Go to Aurangabad and see *Fakir* Shamsuddin Mian. Give him this Rs. 250. Let him do *Moula Kowali* and *Nyas*. *Moula* is the vocal singing of songs about *Paigambar*, *Kowali* is beating the tabla and singing songs about saints, and *Nyas* is preparing food and distributing it to people. Then Kasim was to go to Banne Mian *Fakir* to garland him and to tell him,

Navdin, Nav tarik: Allah Meyane Apna Dhunia Lagaya, Merji Allaki.

This means, 'Ninth day. *Allah* himself takes away the lamp, which *Allah* has placed. Such is *Allah's* mercy'. Saying this, Baba handed over Rs. 250 and one garland of *Javandi* flowers. But as Kasim pleaded that he was a stranger at Aurangabad, Baba asked Chote Khan to accompany him. So, these two went along with a servant of Kasim, namely Ameer, and when they were at Aurangabad station, *Fakir* Shamsuddin, whom Chote Khan knew, had come to the station. He asked, 'Who are the guests that have come from Sai *Fakir*'. Chote Khan and also Kasim then prostrated. Then Shamsuddin himself repeated the words of Baba word by word, just as they were delivered at Shirdi. He took these three to his house at the fort and fed them. Then the Rs. 250 which Baba gave were handed over. Then he did *Nyas*, that is, feeding a large number of people with it. He also performed *Kawali*, which is beating of the *tabla*, and *Moula* – that is vocal music. By night all this was completed. The next part of their duty was to go to Banne Mian's house. Next morning they reached that house. There Mian was standing with one arm raised and one arm held down. The Arabs there at the spot told Chote Khan and his friends not to approach Banne Mian as he would fly at them. They waited for one hour, and then Chote Khan plucked up courage, took Baba's garland in one hand and put it round Mian's neck. Then Banne Mian lowered his upraised arm also. Then Chote Khan repeated the words,

Navdin, Navtarik : Allah Meyane Apna Dhunia Lagaya, Merji Allaki.

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Banne Mian gazed into the sky and tears rolled down his eyes. He felt a slight sadness evidently at the approaching loss of Sai from the living world. four months after that, Baba passed away. *Navdin Navtarik* meant ninth day of the ninth month. Baba's passing away was on the 9th day of the 9th month. Baba knew Arabic and Urdu and had taught the *Koran* to Abdul.

The experience of a few other people with Baba, are still interesting, though they have no particular moral bearing, and are recited by Chote Khan to show Baba's *Antarjnana* and helpfulness. He mentions the following about a *Risaldar*, a regiment horse soldier by the name Nuruddin. He came to Baba one day and wanted leave to go back. Baba did not give him leave. Baba said, 'Go to-morrow'. But Nuruddin and rest of the regiment were marching on and so he could not stay. Then Baba gave him *udhi* and spoke in Urdu words which meant, '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 in due course he reached his destination. from that time, he had always a vision of the corpse before his eyes. On the days, when he had such a vision, he got food and was happy. On other days, try as he might, he could not get food. This mortified him and he gave up service in disgust. Thinking that Baba was responsible for this, he came back to Baba and stayed at Shirdi for six months. Then this curse left him. Taking leave of Baba, he then went away. he became a happy grocery shopkeeper at Deolali. Another case of Baba's influence mentioned by Chote Khan is that of one Abdul Khader.

Abdul Khader came to Baba in about 1915, and he was at the Takia. Baba passed that side. Khader then begged Baba, 'Give me *Fakir*, I want to become a saint.' Baba then stood in front of him and with folded palm, flung the palm at him as though he was flinging something at him. But nothing visible was thrown. after that Khader's manner and talk were changed. He began to give moral advice and behave like Baba, sometimes picking up a stone and threatening to throw it. Sometimes, he got unmanageable. For a month and a half this went on. he was a mad Fakir. Thereafter, Khader's relations began to get disgusted with Khader's condition. And one day Baba stood before Khader at the mandap of the Mosque and drew his folded palm from Khader's side to himself, as though he was pulling back something, and said, '*Lav Bale Ither*'. Then Khader got back his original state of mind, and stayed on for 15 days more. Getting Baba's permission he went to Kirkee and started a *bidi* business, and was flourishing.

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People were doing Moula everyday during day time before Baba at the Mosque; and *Kowali* with *tabla* and sarangi. Baba ordered a tabal to be constructed at the *mandap* and paid for it. Baba prepared *kichadi* with mutton. The *tabla* was stopped after the *mandap* was prepared. Baba was either pronouncing *fatia* himself or getting it pronounced by some others. Muslims always came for *Idga* to the Mosque. Baba occasionally pronounced *Namaz* at the Mosque near the fire without, however, bending the knee or prostrating. He pronounced the *Namaz* when the fire was prepared in the pit at the *mandap* and thrown at Muslim bodies.

Chote Khan then mentions the names of two muslims who got spiritual uplift from Baba. Ine was Sheik Abdulla of Vajpur, that is Chota Khanta village. Baba spoke to him about *vairagya*. Baba said, "If you die today, the third day's ceremony follows and people thereafter forget you. What is the use of house, and land to us? Sheik Abdullah had only a wife and a child, and getting *vairagya*, left his house and property to them, and wandered in the streets. He spent his nights at tombs muttering something. He lived upon what people gave him and if he got nothing, he starved. This he did for 10 or 12 years and died. During those 12 years, he developed wonderful powers. For instance on one occasion he asked Chote Khan not to go on his journey, for a particular place, which he mentioned, there would be a serpent. But it was daylight and Chote Khan did not care. Exactly at the place mentioned by Sheik Abdulla, Chote Khan found the serpent.

Abbas Sait, a bidi seller told Abdulla, "Why are you behaving like a mad man, deserting wife and child?" Abdullah replied, "You yourself will come to know." Then Abdulla flung his closed fist in the air as though he he threw something at Abbas Sait, uttering the words, "You also become like me." From that time, Abbas Sait gave up his *bidi* business, home and relations and was wandering about.

In Bhopal of Warhad lived one Anwar Khan and he came to Baba, and said, 'I do not want samsara'. He lived at Shirdi in the chavadi for 12 days. Baba gave him a *mantra*,

Bismilla Kuliya hiyo Valkafirono nabudo mabudana.

that is, in Chapter 1 of Koran, Baba told him to repeat this 101 times at midnight. Thereafter, he was to recite Davut. Then Baba gave him *peda* as prasad. Haji Kasim of Bombay provided him with a free passage to Arabia. He was then returned. It is one of the five duties of

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Muslims to go and visit Mecca, and Baba helped this man to perform that duty.

Muhammad Ka, a Rohilla of Nevasu, was with Baba. Once he lifted the curtain to see who was talking with Mahlsapathy. Strange to say, he could not see Baba, though Baba was there. Then he grew queer and crazy. His younger brother came to Shirdi to take him. Then Baba gave *udhi* to him and sent him back, and then he became all right.

About 1936, Chote Khan and Madhav Fasle were at the Mosque one night. Chote Khan heard Baba's voice 'Ye Madhav, Get up, I want to pass urine.' But Madhav in his sleep did not get up. Early in the morning, both of them found in the hollow at the place where Baba used to sit, scented water. The hollow was filled with water. Baba had passed urine, and it had become scented water!

One Anwar Khan, an Ahmednagar Kazi, wanted to rebuild a *Masjid* at Telikakoot and came to Baba for Funds. After waiting for three days, he was told by Baba, 'The *Masjid* will not accept any money from you or from others. The *Masjid* herself would provide the funds.' Dig three feet under the *Nimbar*, and there is a treasure there. With that rebuild the *Masjid*. Then Kazi went, dug and found the treasure there. with that rebuilt the *Masjid*. Then he came back to Shirdi and told all the people including Chote Khan of the above facts.

One Maddu Shah, a Fakir at Meron in Jalgaon in Kandesh, came to Shirdi around 1913. He asked Baba, 'Give me Rs. 700.' He cried and cried. then Baba told Bapu Saheb Jog, 'Give him Rs. 700. Jog brought Rs. 700 silver coins and placed them before Baba. Baba told tow boys, Lakshman and Gulab, 'Take this money and give it to the *Fakir*.' These two boys took the money, but they handed over only Rs. 500 to the *Fakir*. And the Fakir wept and cried, 'I have been given only Rs. 500.' For two or three days he went on grumbling. Baba kept quiet. After that, Baba give him *udhi*, and this man went out. Baba said nothing to him, but when this man was walking on, near Nimgam, two miles away from Shirdi, a tonga came up. One Irus Shah, a Parsi *Tahsildar* in the Nizam's state got down from the *tonga* and told the *Fakir*, 'You take this food and take this Rs. 200. Are you now content?' Then Irus Shah came to Shirdi to Taty Patil's new house, and told the people that in a dream Baba told him 'You come by tonga to Shirdi. On the way you will see a *Fakir* near Nimgam carrying tiger skin. Then alight and give him food and Rs. 200, for which he is pining.' In accordance with that dream, Irus Shah said, 'I found the fakir and gave him Rs. 200 and food.'

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From Lazur in Nizam's State a Muslim came to Baba and said that he urgently needed Rs. 400 or Rs. 500. Baba told him 'Go and sit under the *Vatam* for motions. There a vessel full of coins will be found by you.' The next morning, he passed motions, and went to wash himself and stumbled upon a very heavy vessel, evidently full of treasure. He could not lift it. So, he came back to Baba at the *chavadi*. But when he returned back to the place, he could not find the treasure. Baba said, Ganukadu of Ruihad, who was coming in a cart, found it and took it away in his cart. So, nothing can be done. That Ganukadu became rich and Lazur went back in grief and poverty. So, here are Muslims experiences showing what Baba did to serve or help Muslims.

ABDUL

Of the Muslims who came to Baba, the one about whom the greatest amount of information is available and who is revered by large numbers of Sai devotees, is Abdul. Abdul is the one Muslim who permanently attached himself to Baba for nearly thirty years during Baba's life in the flesh and for thirty six years after *Mahasamadhi*, sticking on to Baba, and living upon the doles he got from the public. Abdul was born in about 1871 and died in April 1954. He was a native of Nanded on the banks of Tapti. When he was very young, and under the care of Fakir Amiruddin of Nanded, Sai Baba appeared in the dream of that *Fakir*, and gave him two mangoes telling him to give the fruits to Abdul and send Abdul to Shirdi. Accordingly the Fakir told him of that dream, gave the fruits and directed him to go to Sai Baba of Shirdi. So, he came in his 20th year, about 1890, to Baba. At that time even Nana Saheb Chandorkar had not come to Baba. Baba welcomed him at Shirdi with these words: *Mera Kabla Ala*, that is, 'My crow has come.' Baba directed him to devote himself entirely to his service. So, his work was to feed the five perpetually burning oil lamps, such as those at the *Lendi*, the *Masjid* and the *chavadi* and to keep them lighted.

As for the food, at first Baba did not give him any food. Baba himself was going out begging, and Abdul for himself. He lived at the stable near the *Masjid*. He was always by Baba's side rendering service. He read the Koran sitting near Baba at the Mosque. Baba occasionally opened the Koran and made him read or rather recite passages at which he opened the book. He occasionally quotes passages from the Koran. Abdul went on writing down what Baba was saying, and Abdul

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Shows a note book in Marathi and Modi script which contain Baba's utterances. That is Abdul's Koran. Everything which fell from Baba's lips is sacred and is enshrined in that book.

Abdul stuck on to Baba right up to the end, doing all menial and even scavenging services. After Baba passed away, he was the one Muslim in the establishment, and his work was to decorate the tomb of Baba, arrange the clothes and the flowers on it, and to receive first *prasad* for his sustenance. As for his record note book he had got full faith that what Baba said was sufficient to guide him and every one. When anybody wanted to know about the future or about any problem and came to him, he consulted this book and the answer came out of the page opened. This proved to be effective. This is the gift of prophecy, which he got by Baba's grace.

He gives two instances of such prophetic consultation. In the Sai *Mandir*, a well was dug. The water proved brackish. Baba was in *Mahasamadhi* at that time. So, Abdul consulted Baba's book of sayings. The reply he got was, "If deeper the well is dug the water will become sweeter". Accordingly the well was dug deeper by 2 feet, and the water was not brackish.

Another instance was this: Barrister Gadgil wanted to know if his son would come back from England and where he would stay then. After consultation, Abdul said, "He will return". And so, he did return with his English wife and children. So, he says he has used this manuscript book as his Koran. He goes on reading reverently, gets absorbed in it and rolls beads in his hands at the same time.

Nanda deepam or the perpetual lamp at the Lendi is now in 1936 covered by a pillar. But when he was maintaining it, it was only a pit. There was nothing above to protect it, and on its four sides 20 pieces of cloth were tied and the hole was covered with zinc sheet. Baba used to sit behind that lamp and ordered him to fill up two pots with water and place them near him. Baba would pour out water in various directions from those pots. Why that was done, Abdul could not say, nor whether any mantra accompanied the action. Except Abdul no one else would be present when Baba scattered the water. Abdul said, "Except myself no other Mohammadan was reading the Koran or any other Holy book sitting by Baba's side. Baba would occasionally utter sacred words. And all of them were noted in that book. By Baba's order or permission, Abdul took them all down. It can now be read either Narasimha Swamiji or any other devotee. This script is neither Devanagari nor Modi.

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Abdul used this book not merely for daily reading but also for prophecy. Abdul died in April 1954 and till then, he was in the establishment of the Sai Sansthan. Abdul had great faith in Baba, and would give *udhi* with Baba's grace to many and help them achieving their objects such as cure of diseases. As he was for 66 years, either the bodyguard of Baba or the attendant on his tomb, he is esteemed as the *Hanuman* of Baba; constantly attending on the *Guru*, never expecting any payment or reward, but simply out of faith sticking on to his master. His was noble example of complete and perfect devotion and active service with fullest faith, that is *Nishta* in the *Guru*. He had both *Nishta* and *Saburi* and Baba on occasions, told him, 'Arre, what are you going to have? You are going to live in storeyed houses and terraced houses. You will have a glorious time.' Abdul lived for some time in Buty's *wada* upstairs and he commanded the respect of a very wide circle of Hindus and Muslims.

Baba used to give Abdul excellent advice fitting him for a *yogi's* life. Baba told him, 'Eat very little. do not go in for a variety of eatables. One sort of dish will suffice. Do not sleep much.' Abdul followed this advice. He kept awake all night, and in a kneeling posture kept repeating his Koran, that is, Baba's words. He was meditating on them. Baba said, 'Have *Dhyan* on what is read and think Who am I.' This might have been beyond the capacity of Abdul.

One night, he says, he was tired and tired to sleep, and held his palms in front of him to rest his drowsy head. Baba then said, 'Are you trying to see the moon?' That night when he fell asleep, he fell upon Baba and his *gaddi*. Baba gently stroked his feed, and then he awoke. The next day when he took water in his palms and looked at it, there was a big moon in that water. It was 2 p.m. This was what Baba had spoken of.

A zinc sheet was placed on the top of the *pandal* which protected the *Lendi* lamp. Twenty pieces of curtain cloth were tied all round the lamp to form something like a tent round it, and Abdul looked after the lamp, which was in the centre. That light has been shifted from its place now and is put inside a raised pillar of brick and mortar, containing a chamber for the lamp. Baba would get up from near the lamp and walk a few yards in each direction gazing intently into the distance evidently supervising with a parental eye the devotees in each of those directions.

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Abdul's services were washing clothes in the streamlet at the village boundary, sweeping the Mosque, the *chavadi* and the surrounding places, lighting the lamps in these buildings, feeding them with oil and sweeping the village streets and removing the nightsoil from the way of Baba. That was why Baba called him, *Halalkoor* and 'My *Mirambi*'. He fetched water and also engaged himself in sundry services.

Baba protected Abdul by providing him with food and ensured his safety and progress. About 1927, that is, 11 years after Ramakrishna Ayi's death, in the *Sala*, which she had occupied. Abdul was once reciting the Koran. Suddenly three walls of that dilapidated mud building collapsed, and Abdul was buried waist deep in the debris. But Baba saved him from harm. Abdul's first *Guru* had sent him no doubt to Baba, but later that *Guru* came to Shirdi and wanted him to go back. But Abdul pleaded that nothing could be done without Baba's permission. Baba not having given the permission, the former *Guru* went away from Shirdi.

Baba sometimes used to give blessings concealing them under abuse and violence. Baba beat Abdul and Jog many times. Baba said to Abdul *Tereku, Dhariaku, Par uttar Dhea, tera Matti Sona Banadiya Kyabadi Madi Bandhya*. this means, 'I have enabled you to cross the oceans. Your earth, that is mud body, has been turned into gold. What a high storeyed building?' Like this Abdul had various blessings and prophecies, and Baba sat with Abdul at the *chavadi* in the morning before he started for the Mosque. Abdul's statement about *Avatars*, his book shows, has reference to all the *Dasa Avatars*, and there is a hint that Baba treated himself as one of the avatars. Baba also prophesied that the British Empire in India, would have only nine rulers in India. In 1947, evidently at the time of the ninth king, India passed out of British jurisdiction.

The remaining devotees who have given statements are just a few, namely Rajabali Mohamed, Abdul Rangari, Thanadar and Adam Dalali. Of these Rajabali Mohamed, being educated and a *Khoja*, having read Swami Vivekananda's lectures and books, has something useful to say about Baba. He regards Baba as a great saint with vast powers, which are possible only to those who have got *Atma jnana*. he went to Shirdi, because he had some business at Nasik and that business was delayed. So, during the time when there was no work at Nasik, he visited Shirdi which is not far from Nasik. When he went and presented Baba with a coconut and sugar candy, Baba did not ask him for *dakshina*. Rajabali Mohamed asked leave of Baba to go away. Baba said, "That man is not yet ready to deliver your goods" , showing that

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the Nasik man was not yet ready for completing his business contract. So, Rajabali Mohamed spent two or three days in Baba's company.

Rajabali Mohamed only wanted to strengthen his faith and he wanted that at the time his death, he may have full *imam* or faith, so that he might be sure of good end. So, he prayed to Baba mentally for it. Baba then placed his hand on his head and blessed him. Rajabali Mohamed's faith steadily increased. He got great benefit from faith in him and faith in *udhi*. For example, in 1931, his buffalo was in great travail trying to calve. Pained at her suffering Rajabali Mohamed sent for the Veterinary surgeon. He tried his best, but to no purpose. Then at once Rajabali Mohamed took Baba's *udhi*, placed some *udhi* on the head of the buffalo and hoped that Baba would come to its aid. In ten minutes, she safely calved. There was no more trouble. In several other cases similarly, he used Baba's *udhi* with great success. He takes a bit of it, applies it over his chin, eyes, forehead and thinks of Baba. Then all his difficulties are removed. So, Rajabali Mohamed feels convinced that Baba is a saint of vast powers. He feels convinced also that Baba continues after *Mahasamadhi* to exercise that power.

According to Islamic tradition, saints do not die. They only pass from one state to another. Rajabali Mohamed has seen Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur and Baba Jan of Poona. They had given him earthly benefits. They also strengthened his *imam* or faith. being in the company of a saint is better than saying a hundred prayers. he keeps Baba's porcelain statue and a picture of Baba in his family house. Scented sticks are burnt before them on Thursdays.

The other Muslims who contacted Baba are all worldly people, namely Abdul Rahim, Adama Dalali and Abdulla Jan.

ABDUL RAHIM RANGARI

Abdul Rahim Shamsuddin Rangari lived at Thana and went to see Baba in 1913. His wife was suffering from some disease. Her throat and cheek were swollen and she could not eat. Medical help gave no relief. So, he went on the advice of a local pleader to Baba for the cure of his wife. When the journey began, she was unable to eat anything at all. But as they went on to Igatpuri, she was able to take tea and at Nasik something more. Her condition had greatly improved by the time she approached Shirdi. At Shirdi they went into the Mosque and bowed to Baba. Baba asked him, 'Why are you coming? What have you come for?' He said, 'My wife had a swelling in the throat.' Baba said, 'Ask her to come up. Then the lady went up the steps and bowed to Baba.' Baba touched her head and said, '*Khuda Acha karega,*' that is, God will bless. Then Rangari gave Rs. 1-4-0 and Baba accepted it and gave him *udhi*. After staying there for two hours, and finding that her swelling was fast subsiding.

Rangari and his wife left without Baba's permission. But he had to pay penalty for it. The *Tonga* by which he went broke in the middle of the journey at 10 o'clock in the night. There were no conveyances available there. He, his wife and child, could not walk up the many miles that would take them to any village. It was a lonely road and the weather also was very inclement. So, he was repenting going away without Baba's permission, and he did not know what to do. He was wondering what would happen. At midnight, he heard the rumble of a carriage, and a voice crying out, 'Thanawala, Thanawala'. that was the voice of the driver, and the *Tonga* came nearer. Rangari said, 'I am the Thanawala.' The '*tongawala*' said, 'Baba has sent me to you.' Baba knew of the cart breakage, and so he said, 'Baba has sent me to fetch you.' It was 2 a.m. when they reached Shirdi. Baba said, 'You went

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away without permission. So, you have fared in this way.' Rangari begged pardon, and Baba said, 'Wait. in the morning.' Baba after returning from his *bhiksha*, gave some bread and vegetables solid food. Then Baba said, 'You may go.' He looked for a *Tonga*, and could not find any, and came back to Baba. Baba said, 'You go now; see there is a *Tonga*.' He turned and looked, and found a *Tonga*. How suddenly it happened to be there, he could not say.

He found Baba smeared with *Sandal* paste over his face and hands and said, 'This is against Muslim custom.' But Baba said, '*Jaisa Desh, Taisa Vesh,*' which means, 'While in Rome, do as the Romans do.' Baba also said, 'Instead of worshipping their own God, they are worshipping me. Why should I object and displease them? I myself am a devotee of God'. Then Baba spoke to him about music. The night previous to his arrival, there was plenty of music and Baba said that he was completely absorbed. Rangari then said, 'One who loves God would weep, laugh or dance as the songs in praise of God go on.' Baba said, 'Just so, have you got your *Guru*?' Rangari said, 'Yes. Habi Balishah Chisti Nizami is my *Guru*'. Baba said, 'That is why you understand.' That Chishti Guru was always accompanied by music whenever he went out, and music was used as help to trance.

ABDULLA JAN

Abdulla Jan, originally of Tarbella, Mazra district near Peshawar, was a Pathan, living at Korhale, near Sakori, is next Muslim devotee of Baba who had some spiritual and some material touch with Baba. He had left Tarbella when a young boy, as he had none to support him. He simply roamed abroad, and wanted some one to help him to go to Mecca for that is one of the cardinal duties of all Muslims. He walked on and travelled up to Manmad. At Manmad, instead of going to Mumbai, as he originally intended, he heard that Sai Baba was at Shirdi, 30 miles further south and so, as he heard that Baba was showering money on *fakirs*, he hoped that Baba would send him to Mecca. He went to Shirdi in 1913. When he entered the gate of the *Masjid*, Baba was in the main building. Their eyes met. At once, he had the feeling that Baba was his *Guru*. So, he stayed on at Shirdi, as Baba was feeding every *fakir* abundantly and instead of going to Mecca. Abdulla Jan wanted to live an easy life at Shirdi. He was aged only 17. He had no serious views about life. But as he stayed at Shirdi, there were noticeable changes in his mentality, which illustrate Baba's way of promoting Hindu-Muslim Unity. When he first came to Shirdi, he like other Pathans, regarded Hindus as enemies and proper prey. After staying 3 years with Baba, this hatred passed away, and he began to view Hindus as his brethren. He gradually absorbed the national feeling and regretted very much that at Mumbai, Hindus and Muslims were fighting with each other destroying Mosques and temples, and he thought that if they wiped each other out the foreigners only would have the whole country to themselves.

When Baba passed away in 1918, he was 22. Even then he was not sufficiently serious to have any development on the religious side. He felt however grieved at Baba's disappearance and started off on his

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travels again. In 1926, he was going back North. Then in the Swat valley (Malekand Agency) he found the tomb of a great saint, Akun Baba, who was a Sayyad, a direct descendant of Mohamed. His miraculous powers were the subject of popular legends. That Akun Baba is said to have locked up Lord Roberts on a hill for three months and 11 days. During Abdulla Jan's stay there, one night he had a dream in which a saint appeared. 'Who was it?' It was not Akun Baba that he had prayed to, but Sai Baba who was seated on a chair near his head. When he woke, he remembered the dream. So, he found he was still under Baba's care, though it was eight years since Baba passed away. As Sai was kind enough of his own accord to give him *Sakshatkar*, 1500 miles away from Shirdi, his reverence for Sai increased and his former idea that Sai Baba had deceived him by giving him no help during the five years of his stay, was found to be wrong. At This discovery he returned to India with full faith in Sai Baba.

In 1924 he married. He is now living at Korhale, four miles from Shirdi. He is lucky enough to have Baba's appearance before him once in two or four years and he moralises on the past and sees the vanity of human wishes. Baba was surrounded by crowds in his lifetime, and it was hard to find room in the Mosque on account of these crowds of men swarming around him, and a large number of dogs intermingled in the crowd. In 1936, when he was giving this statement to B. V. Narasimha Swamiji there was very few people to be seen. In 1936, he said that the Mosque, as a rule was deserted. He said, "If Baba's splendour was so short lived, then what about a gnat like me?"

R. A. Tarkhad called Baba Saheb Tarkhad, told B. V. Narasimha Swamiji of the following incident. One night when Baba Saheb Tarkhad and others were sleeping at the chavadi on one side of Baba, Mir Jaman of Kandahar who was then with Baba as a recent arrival was sleeping on the other side and suddenly got up at 3 a.m. and told Baba, "Hindus are spoiling you and the Islamic faith. Permit me, I will cut throats of all these and effect your release." Baba Saheb Tarkhad listened to those words with fear, and wondered if the wretch really meant to murder him in cold blood. Baba, however placated Mir Jaman by saying that he, Baba, was *pagal* and the Hindus worshipping him there were mad and that he was responsible for their worshipping him. Contrary not only to the tenets of Islam, but contrary to their own Hindu customs, the Hindus worshipped him. Baba said they were not responsible for his madness, but he was responsible for theirs. So, if anybody's throat is to be cut, Baba said, "my throat is to be cut". Saying this, Baba offered his throat. Then Mir Jaman kept quiet.

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There was another intolerant Muslim, named Abdulla Khan of Nagpur, who stayed for three or four months with Baba. He was a journalist and familiar with Buty and Mahatma Gandhi. He was a Hindustani Pathan and not really a Rohilla. He died at Ahmednagar. During his stay at Shirdi he occasionally complained that Baba had deceived him. Once this man beat Nana Chopdar and was charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate. He was convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 15. As he had no security to offer and so was in jail for a while. Buty sent him Rs. 15, but he declined to receive it saying, "He that had deceived me should pay the Rs. 15 and no other." So, Baba sent the Rs. 15 out of his own pocket and got him released.

When Baba was in the flesh, Abdulla Jan once expressed his fear that Baba would expire and all his work and influence would pass away with him. Baba said, "*Turban Hun Danda Hani*, which is the Marathi expression for, "From within the tomb I will beat with sticks." This meant the death of his body would not terminate his influence or activity.

It is better to note here whether Baba observed the five essential tenets of Islam so as to impress the Muslims. The five tenets are uttering the *Kalami* or declaration of faith, namely, There is no god but God and Mohamed is the Prophet; *Panch Namaz*, saying the *Namaz* five times a day, at dawn, at 10 a.m., at 12 noon, at 5 p.m. and at night, kneeling and bending the body at each utterance, fasting, especially all the forty days of *Ramzan*, and on other occasions about 8 or 10 times in the year; alms-giving; Haj, that is, going to Mecca. Whoever has funds, must go to Mecca. Others, if they can get the funds, must go to Mecca. These are the five tenets of Islam. Of these, Baba observed only alms-giving, that is, when he got funds after 1908 and up to 1918. His alms-giving was a princely scale and he supported over two hundred homeless beggars at Shirdi and distributed not merely vegetarian food, but also meat for non-vegetarians specially prepared as *samaradhana* from his Hundi, by himself. He also distributed clothes to the poor periodically. In addition to regular donations to certain persons, he also gave liberally to dancers, athletes, acrobats and *Ramadasis*, and all sorts of people that came to him for alms. His reputation as a liberal Maharaj was known very far from Shirdi and attracted people like Madras *Ramadasis* and this man Tarbella Abdulla Jan.

As for going to Mecca, Baba never cared to go to Mecca and had no need to go to Mecca. As for the principles of Islam, and how far Baba

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observed them or accepted them, the question is very difficult to answer. Amongst Muslims themselves, there are various sects, and some of them like Quadians, following Mirza Ahmed who claims to be the resurrected Messiah or Mohamed held views resembling Hinduism in many particulars. *Sunnis* and *Shias* agree on certain particulars and differ in others. It is very difficult to take up doctrines of each set, and see how much of it is in accordance with Baba's views, especially those, which may be found in the Gospel of Sai Baba or his sayings. Taking the Qadian, that is Mirza Ahmed's book, we find that practically the major portion of his tenets expresses only what Baba was acting upon and declaring all his life. This Qadian book was published after Baba left the flesh. Mirza Ahmed says that one must believe in the true and living god, and the proof of the truth and life of God lies in the fact that God is All powerful and responds to prayers. Surely, these were Baba's doctrines and he in fact was and is himself responding to prayer and is possessed of vast divine powers. Whether the Quadians would treat Baba as an Angel of the highest degree or in any other way, cannot be known, as no Qadian has expressed his view about Baba. But Baba himself has stated, "God has agents everywhere" and agents would include angels. "They have vast powers. I have vast powers." These appear to be in full consonance with Islam, and they are Baba's doctrines. The Qadian description of God nowhere differs from the ideas of God expressed by Baba. So, Baba has taken up for his basis, ideas of God common to many, if not all Muslims and Hindus. The differences in doctrine or practise between sect and sect are matters of no importance. The essence of religion, however, is in the height reached by the truly pious man; and the truly pious Hindu and the truly pious Muslim, reach heights of love to God by surrender to God, and such persons are recognised as perfect followers of their respective religions, as judged by dicta of all religions. Baba himself was perfect. By reaching God, enjoying the bliss of God and thoroughly surrendering his will to God. Baba had placed himself in a position that could be appreciated by all great religions. Hindu or Muslim or other. Therefore, the question as to how far Muslim can or will appreciate Baba in the near future, is capable of a very hopeful solution. So long as the anti-Indian and the partition of India movement was afoot, bitterness between Hindus and Muslims was sedulously developed as part of the political platform. But as matters stand at present, things appear to be settling down, and in any case, hatred cannot remain long as the plank on which any State Government policy could be built. The anti-Hindu feeling of Muslims is steadily dwindling down and as the years pass, we may be sure that more and more people of other sects will be drawn to Sai Baba who at present is mostly a Hindu possession, in the sense that it is the Hindus

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who are managing the Sai Sansthan without a single Muslim amongst the trustees or on the committee of management. The books and journals dealing with Baba are all in the hands of Hindus and as for the followers of Baba, the Hindus outnumber the Muslims out of all proportion to the strength of their population. In the Indian Union, the Muslims are about 15% of the population. Amongst the followers of Baba, however they are perhaps less than 5%. The rapidity with which the Sai faith is spreading amongst the Hindus is phenomenal. Year after year, lakhs are drawn to Baba, and, if anyone visits Shirdi now, he would note how the whole place and the Dwarakamayee are crowded daily, much more now than they were crowded even in Baba's time. They are mostly Hindus. But even amongst other groups, those who are a bit cultured, are contributing their quota to the number of Sai bhaktas, and to the literature on the subject of the Sai Faith. The Parsis are a very cultured portion of the Indian Community and though small in number, they are prominent among Sai *bhaktas* and even in contributing literature. A Parsi lady has written a fine booklet in which Baba is treated as the *Guru-God*, the All-in-All of the writer.

As far the other communities, Christians form according to the census of a very small minority and amongst Sai devotees, they form still a smaller minority. But still there are Christians who have benefitted from Sai's light and Sai's Grace. They are visiting the Sai Shrine and regarding him as their guardian angel and Saviour. Naturally the Roman Catholics being more like Hindus, are drawn more easily to Baba and in greater numbers than the Protestants. But so far as doctrine or dogma is concerned, Baba's catholicity, Baba's wide liberality and freedom from any rigid doctrines, make it quite as easy for the Protestant as for the Catholic to resort to him and derive benefits from him. The only thing needed is the requisite degree of faith.

ADAM DALAI

Adam Dalali, an estate broker at Bandra, went to Baba for purely earthly benefits. He had several sons. Everytime one of these had to be married, Dalali found himself short of funds. According to Muslim custom, the father of the boy has to provide the funds. So, he went to Baba. Baba blessed him and said, "Go now, you can perform the marriage." When he returned, he got an excellent brokerage giving him money for the marriage. So, like that, on the occasion of each son's marriage, Baba's blessings gave him the necessary funds. Once he was charged in a criminal case with having acted as a broker in the sale of a mortgaged building. A title deed then given was said to be a forgery. The police first included Dalali amongst the accused. Then, at the instance of Tendulkar, he prayed to Baba and Tendulkar and Mrs. Tendulkar also prayed to Baba. Then Dalali was discharged.

All his experiences, he said, were earthly matters. He never read the Koran nor asked for spiritual advice. Baba occasionally came to him in other forms and tested him. Once Baba came as a *marwadi* and said that he was hungry. Then Dalali gave him four annas and asked him to go to a marwadi's hotel. When later he went to Baba, Baba said to the persons present, "I went to this man. He sent me to a *marwadi's* hotel". This man is also liberal-minded enough to have Baba's picture at his house and burn scented sticks before it. Extremely orthodox Muslims will not worship or tolerate even portraits.

B. V. DEV

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B. V. Dev was at the close of his life a trustee of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan. He went to see Sri Sai Baba for the first time in about 1910 being drawn through Chandorkar. Chandorkar was the Deputy Collector under whom he was the *Mamlatdar*. His brother wrote to him that Chandorkar had faith in Sai Baba and consequently Dev might try to derive information and contact through the Deputy Collector. When Chandorkar gave him some of his experiences and advised him to go to see Sri Sai Baba, Dev wondered whether he should not also like Chandorkar wait for a call from Sri Sai Baba. That implied some degree of egotism that if a Deputy Collector was worth a call, he, as *Mamlatdar*, also was worth a call. But later he gave up that absurd attitude, for it was not the official position of Nana Chandorkar that merited the call. It was the previous contact of four *janmas* with Baba and the great work of an apostle that he was to be entrusted with, that made Baba send for him. Similar reasons could not apply to B.V. Dev. Anyhow being pressed by Chandorkar and finding that a visit to Baba would be productive only of good, he made up his mind to go. His first impression of Baba was fairly good. He had his own ways of viewing spiritual matters and he was a good student of sacred literature especially in Marathi. He was studying Eknath's and *Jnaneswar's* books, making fairly good progress in spirituality, as ordinarily understood. But there was something very peculiar in his case. *Jnaneswari* is used as *pothi*, a daily *parayana* book by most people and they succeeded in effecting one complete *parayanam* within a specified period, the reading going on from day to day. In Sri. B. V. Dev's case, however, on the first occasion, on the second and also on the third, whenever he began the *parayana* of *Jnaneswari*, obstacles of various sorts sprang up, and he could not finish the reading in a continuous fashion. He was very puzzled and also disgusted. There must be some unseen reason behind the obstacle. What it could be, he could not guess. This was one of the things, which brought him nearer to Baba. When he went to Shirdi with *Jnaneswari*, he was anxious to get Baba's aid for overcoming the unseen obstacle. He gave Baba the *Jnaneswari* with one rupee so that the book might be returned to him for study.

Baba: Why one rupee? Bring Rs. 20.

Dev brought and gave Rs. 20, but still Baba said nothing about *Pothi*. That night Dev was trying to talk to Balakram Manker, who derived much spiritual benefit from Baba and asked him to narrate his experience with Baba, showing how he got into His Grace. Balakram Manker put off the narration till the next evening. Next day Baba asked Dev, "Give me Rs. 20." Dev paid it and went back and was

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talking to Balakram. Balakram was just beginning his narration. Just then Baba sent for Dev and Dev went.

Baba: What are you talking? With whom and where?

B. V. Dev: At Dixit wada I was talking with Balakram about your greatness and fame.

Baba: Fetch Rs. 25.

Dev fetched and paid Rs. 25 to Baba.

Baba: Sit here in Mosque.

Baba then suddenly grew angry and said, "Why are you stealing my rag? Is it your way to steal and that despite your grey hairs? I will kill you with a hatchet". Baba's asking dakshina and his sudden anger might ordinarily be supposed to act as shock to his mind, but in whatever way they were intended to operate, Baba did not make it clear at once. Dev was benefitted and did not know what the rag was and what the anger would lead to. After ten minutes of such fiery anger, Dev was sent back. Half an hour later, Baba sent for Dev and all the others came to the *Masjid*. Then Baba addressing Dev, said, "*Tambye Bhav*, have I wounded you by talking of the rag? If there is theft, it has to be mentioned. There is no other go. Be it so. God will look to everything." Then he asked Dev for Rs. 12 dakshina, which Dev procured and paid.

Baba to Dev: What are you doing?

Dev: Nothing.

Baba: Go on reading *Pothi* daily in the morning at the *wada*. When I wished to give you a nice lace shawl in its entirety why do you go and steal a tatter?

Dev then began reading *Jnaneswari* as *Pothi* and thereafter there were no more obstacles. This was a sure proof to him of Baba's controlling powers and there was no necessity for him thereafter to enquire about the experience of others. Dev realised that such personal experiences formed a full lace shawl given by Baba and picking up secondhand information from others of their experiences of Baba amounted to stealing rags of Baba.

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Though Dev succeeded in reading *Jnaneswari* without obstacle, he had made no progress in understanding its meaning. Baba then appeared in his dream and asked. "Do you understand the meaning of what you read?"

Dev with tears: "No. How can I understand unless you grant it by your grace?"

Baba: "You are reading too hastily. Sit by my side and read."

Dev: "What shall I read?"

Baba: "*Adhyatma*."

Dev went in and brought *Adhyatma Ramayana*. Then dream ended and Dev woke up.

When Dev found that his completion of *Jnaneswari* was evidently a *chamatkar* of Baba, by which he overcome the unseen obstacles to the completion of his *parayana* of *Jnaneswari*, he understood that this *chamatkar* of Baba was a full lace shawl while the stories about Baba's lilas which he would glean from Mankar would be second hand stories of other people's experiences. Baba occasionally gave him hints for his spiritual progress. But it was not always that Dev could understand them correctly. Baba asked Dev once, "*Bhav*, give me *dakshina*" B.V. Dev gave one guinea.

Baba: Give more.

Baba, after getting four guinea said, "Though four were given by you, Baba has got only one."

Dev: "Baba I have given four."

Baba: "Yes, but I have only one. You will know."

The obvious interpretation is, though the devotee surrenders his fourfold *Antahkarana Manas, Buddhi, ahamkara* and *Chitta*, Baba receives only the *Jiva* and all multiplicity when it reached God – Baba, becomes one. So, the mind must surrender multiplicity unto the *Guru* God to attain unity.

Baba helped B.V.Dev to surrender himself more and more and derive Baba's help at every stage and hence, B.V.Dev in his turn become a

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means of spreading Baba's glory. Though not quite on the large scale in which Chandorkar did work for Baba. Dev also absorbed Baba's magnetism through Chandorkar and also directly, and communicated Baba's magnetism to others. But it is not always easy to make people derive full faith in Baba. A *karnam* under B.V.Dev, having learnt about Dev's attachment to a great *Satpurusha* called Sai Baba, came to him to get Baba's help to decide an important question for himself and his family. That *karnam* had his own Guru who for his own purposes wished to get a new image to replace the *karnam's* former image and have a grand installation ceremony, hoping to derive considerable pecuniary profits from the proposed ceremony. So, while the priest of the *karnam* insisted on it, the *karnam* himself had some doubts and came to Dev and through him consulted Baba as to whether the new image should be brought and installed. Baba was consulted, and gave his opinion that the new image should not be brought in. The consultation was through Shama. The *karnam*, being very anxious to get his priest's advice confirmed, wanted to ask Baba, "What would happen if the new image was brought?" Baba gave a story. He said he and a companion had gone together and he told his companion not to buy an animal. In spite of his advice, that animal was bought and brought to the village, and at once an epidemic of plague broke out as the result of the animal coming in. Baba left it there. The *karnam*, not fully impressed by Baba's All-knowing character, tried to please his *Guru* and brought in the new image. At once an epidemic broke out and the *karnam's* own wife was attacked first. The *karnam* asked his *Guru* to help him, but that *Guru* wanted half the property of the *karnam* to be made over immediately to the priest, and was trying in various ways to deprive the *karnam* of his property. The *karnam* woke up. He went to Dev and mentioned how things had turned out. Then on Dev's advice he removed the new idol and reinstalled the old idol. By Baba's grace he was saved from further harm.

Dev's services for Baba were mainly through Sai *Sansthan* and through his researches into matters connected with Sai Baba and the *Sansthan*. These researches he made after great trouble. For instance, he made researches into the ancient history of Shirdi and into the meaning of certain words and phrases. These articles appeared in the Sai Lila Masik which was the organ of the Shirdi Sai *Sansthan*, of which he was a member, and signed them with the pseudonym, *Babache bal* that is, child of Baba. He had a very good command of Marathi and even in Sanskrit his proficiency enabled him to compose brilliant verses which have appeared from time to time in Sai Lila Masik. He took very active interest in promoting the welfare of the *Sansthan*, and spent a very large part of his time at Shirdi. He had a good physique

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and could endure thirst, hunger or troubles for long periods. He had assisted various enquiries into matters on Sai and enabled them to become staunch Sai *bhaktas*. In the statement he has given to the author, some hints may be found of the way in which he helped the Sai *Sansthan*. He worked to the last as a trustee of the *Sansthan*, and he passed away dying in harness so to speak. He has written a good deal in Marathi and these would be appreciated by those who know that language. The accuracy of some interpretations he has given to Baba's Sayings has appeared, however, to the author to be doubtful but one cannot be positive in these cases. Taking first the conclusion in Baba's Charters and Sayings in paragraph 245 mentioned earlier, the interpretation given to Baba's statement is the author's and not Mr. Dev's for Mr. Dev thought that he should keep Baba's teachings secret and did not reveal how he interpreted Baba's statement that he gave four. Baba received only one. Dev's services have now been continued by his son Sri. S.B. Dev, who is now also a trustee of the *Sansthan*, doing yeoman service for Baba.

P. R. AVASTE

Sri Purushotham R. Avaste, B.A., LL.B., Poona a retired judge of Gwalior, is another devotee of Sai Baba whose great merit is the fact that but for him, Sri B.V.N. Swami, who was made the instrument of spreading Baba's faith throughout India, would not have known about Baba, at any rate not enough to make him do that work as he has done. Sri Avaste was born in February 1870 in a fairly orthodox family and had very good and holy associations and contacts for nearly two decades. In his sixth year, he came in contact with Dev Mamlatdar, as he was known, that is, Sri Yeshwant Rao Basker, *Mamlatdar* of Satara and when that officer was transferred to Nasik, Sri Avaste's father was also in Nasik. Young Purushotham had the opportunity of taking his *darsan* and receiving one guava fruit as prasad at his hands. Thereafter the young Avaste had many opportunities of taking his *darsan* and learning about his wonderful piety-piety that is said to have wrought miracles like that of Ramadas of Bhadrachalam. This Dev *Mamlatdar*, being very charitable, helped a poor man to perform his son's marriage and gave the funds out of treasury of which he was in charge, hoping to replace it in due course when he got the funds. This leaked out and somebody carried the report, and the Collector of the District paid a surprise visit and looked up the treasury and later tried to check the accounts with the cash balance. Dev *Mamlatdar* who

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did not know anything of it, was quietly carrying on his usual work at home including puja, learnt after all his puja and other things were over that the Collector looked up the accounts and checked the cash balance with it, and found that the two tallied. Dev then thanked his *Ishtamurti* for making up the deficit. When Dev *Mamlatdar* retired, he was leading a very pious life, influencing the minds of old and young. Avaste was very impressed with him, especially between 1887-90, that is, between the ages of 17 and 20, when Dev *Mamlatdar* was at Nasik leading the life of a religious recluse. Avaste and his father often visited him and derived considerable religious influence. This was a very important grounding. Soon after, in his college course, Avaste went on with his studies of John Stuart Mill and Spencer, and the prevailing scepticism and theism of the West easily captured his mind, and he became materialistic, combative and egoistic. He wished to distinguish himself as a debater and a speaker, and wanted to earn lots of money. The old influence appeared to have left him. Luckily however in 1889, when he was just 19, he got, in a street *bazaar*, a copy of the Bhagavad Gita for half an *anna*, and he carefully preserved it in his pocket, and it had become a habit with him to read the Gita everyday during his leisure hours. This stood him in very good stead in later life. This atheistic period lasted for eight years, namely, from 1890 to 1898 when he was in the full flush of youth. As Providence would have it, even in that period his atheism received some shocks, which were noteworthy. He picked up a stray leaf from the Srimad Bhagavata and read it. That contained stanza wherein fear is described as arising out of a sense of duality resulting from one going astray from God and getting caught up by *Maya*, which veils one's view of God, and prevents one from uniting with God. Another such opportune interference with his atheism was when he went to listen to the devotional songs of a very charming South Indian lady singing in Tamil or Telugu before the figure of Sri Ram, making gestures and referring to Mira Bai, Mukta Bai, Jnana Bai and others. Sri Avaste was always very sensitive and impressionable and this lady's songs brought home to his mind the beauty and advantage of *Bhakti*. A third such interference was when he indulged in hot discussions with his cousins about the existence of God, in which they appointed their maternal uncle Sri Bala Bima Thakurdas as the judge. The discussion went on endlessly and the umpire was not consulted, each hoping to beat down the other and convincing him about the correctness of his position. Anyhow Sri Avaste met the umpire, who had a great belief in *Kirtan* and *puranas*, and asked him whether he truly and honestly believed that the saints were as great as they were represented to be and whether he could convince him of it. Then that uncle Sri Avaste took him before the Sri Ram image inside the temple, and swore solemnly

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an oath before him that he fully believed every word stated in these holy books, and hoped that it would be P.R. Avaste's lot to meet such a saint, he would get into the same certainly. Then Sri Avaste asked him to mention the name of some saints who were living. That uncle gave him the names of Dondi Bua of Palus, Hari Maharaj of Phaltan and Sri Kumbharaswami of Kolhapur. The uncle took a promise from Avaste to visit them and that he should test them and get convinced. Luckily, Sri Avaste was able to meet all the above three.

Sri Avaste had attended philosophical lectures of Dr. Besant and Dr. Richardson, and read books on philosophy and religion. Poona was suffering from an outbreak of plague at the end of 1896, and the anxiety for life and property on that account drove him to religion and God. He began reading reverentially the lives of Maruthi saints namely Jnaneswar, Eknath, Namdev, Tukaram, and Ramdas, as a refuge from plague. He went to Targaon to his uncle's house where sacred books on Krishna were all available and read them daily. Enquiring about Dondi Bua of Palus from his uncle, he was told how to get to Palus. He went to Palus and got Dondi Bua's *darsan*. He was reading Bhagavad Gita on the way, and stopped suddenly at the IV Chapter, 34th Stanza, where saints are said to give jnana. He resolved to test this with that Dondi Bua and whether he would give jnana to him. In the beginning, Bua treated him curtly, asked him to go and salute the temple, because when he looked at the Bua seated outside and guessed that he was evidently a *Sudra*, he did not find it easy to bow to him being a *Brahmin*. When he said, "Go to the temple", he felt it easy and he went inside and discovered that it was the picture of the same Sudra Bua inside that was worshipped. Anyhow, he had flowers and offerings in hand and placed them there. He discovered that the Sudra outside was the God worshipped inside. There was no image there but only his picture. After a couple of hours spent there struggling against his own doubts; he came out and apologized to the Dondi Bua, and asked him how he came by his powers. He replied, "It is very easy. Simply say, *Ram, Ram, Rajaram Seetharam* and everything is accomplished" Then Dondi Bua asked Avaste to cook for him and his company. Dondi Bua provided the salt, as he did not wish to eat anybody else's salt and be obliged to him. He mixed his salt with the food and Avaste prepared. On the whole Avaste was not willing to treat Dondi Bua as his *Guru*, and Dondi Bua also said that he did not want to be anybody's *Guru*. Anyhow, he gave him his blessing and Avaste came back.

The next person he met was a Brahmin Paramahansa. Avaste approached him with the mental question. "Can *Brahma Jnana* be got?" That person made Avaste lie down and he also lay down on the

ground by his side and told him, "Have no fear". But when that person put his hand across the throat of Avaste and nearly choked him, Avaste got frightened and tried to evade the grip. That man said, "You are a coward. Get away. You cannot realise *Brahman*".

Sri Avaste next went to Domi Bua of Satara. After that he came to meet an elderly lady who was on a sojourn at a *dharmasala* at Poona in the Somvar temple which was said to be free from plague. He went along with a friend, who was the devotee of a yogi, to visit that lady. Avaste took Vivekananda's Raja Yoga, in respect of which he wanted to put question as to *Kundalini*, how it progressed through various *chakras*, etcetra. They found her surrounded by a motley crowd of devotees, *pandits*, sceptics and scoffers. They thought that there was very little chance of talking to her. So they sat at a distance and resolved that at a fixed time, say, 5 o'clock they should go away if they got no chance of talking to her. Just five minutes before that hour, the lady got rid of the crowd by a very clever device. She suddenly covered her face and said that she was dying, and asked all the people to go away. The crowd dispersed. Naturally Sri Avaste and his friend thought that they too should go away, but first went near her to bow to her. As they said that they should not trouble her, as she was not in good health, she said that she was feigning ill-health for their sake, and she gave evidence of her powers. The picture of the *Kundalini* and *chakras* was shown to her, and she was asked whether she could enlighten them on the subject. She returned the book and said her Guru Maharaj had shown her only the path of *bhakti*, and she could therefore, give no help on Yoga. Then, they left her, well impressed with her simple and unassuming manners. So, Avaste went again to listen to her talks, which was after dusk, sitting in a dark corner outside the assembled crowd. He used to carry some questions in his head for solution in respect of matters he had studied during the day. During the talk he would change her topic, and raise the very question, which he had in his mind. She would then put those questions before elderly people and the *pandits* near her, who would join the discussion. After sifting and rejecting their answers, she would give the solution, which satisfied Avaste. She stated that the same question was once raised and answered by her *Sadguru*. Knowing her powers, Avaste induced his friends to go with him to pay their respects to the lady. They continued to attend her talks and became more intimate. He had very high regard for her divine powers. One day she sends for him at his friend's house, and he came along with his friend, his younger brother, and both their wives. She said she was going to leave the place shortly and wanted to give some *mantra* and instruction under instruction from her Guru Maharaj, if Avaste and others were willing to accept it.

But Avaste had no desire to have a *Guru*, and would not accept mantra except under conditions. At last, she made him accept some *mantras*. The mantras were *Sivapanchakshari*. She gave Panchakshari to each one, prefixing in the cast of the males *Hari Om* and omitting it when giving it to the ladies. To Avaste, she said she had come to Poona especially to meet him, and there would be no harm in his accepting her advice. He imposed a condition that he would not use any *japa* mala or keep any reckoning *sankhya* of the number of *japas*, not would he observe any formality about the time and place of the Japa, but will only mentally repeat it, whenever his mind was not otherwise engaged. She agreed, and then gave him *Panchakshari* and also said that she was not going to be Avaste's *Guru*, because she thought Avaste was her *Guru*, and thus flattered him. In the japa, she made slight changes for each, giving precedence to one after another of the letters of the *Panchaksahari* as representing the five elements with five presiding deities. Then she left Poona. She was a widow with a two or three year old child, and she went to see her son. But she wanted to be *sanyasi* following the lines of Tulsidas whose Ramayana she had always been reading since childhood. Hanuman was pleased to give her his *darsan*, and thence forward she went from place to place visiting holy places and holding *saptahas*, feeding the *Brahmins* and poor by the hundreds. It took her three years thus to march from Hardwar to Coimbatore. At Coimbatore in South India she sat up at a Hanuman temple and began her routine. People were attracted to her. Her Guru was at Velankurichi in the Coimbatore district. He was a coffee planter living with his family and he was a devotee of Sri Ram for whom he had built a small temple near his quarters. She stayed in his village for six months and then started off for her home at Saraitareisn in Uttar Pradesh. She came to Poona directly from Pandharpur, and told Avaste at a private interview, that she had been specially commissioned by her *Sadguru* to come to Poona for his sake. She received messages from her *Sadguru* during her japa and meditation, after daily *pooja* of Hanuman and her Guru. His advice to Avaste was to concentrate his mind on the first three letters of the *japa*, then on the *pranava* alone and finally on the inflow and outflow of the breath, *pranayama*. He was told not to be anxious to have darsan of the presiding deities of those letters but to carry out her instructions as well as he could.

A very young girl Shanti, whom he was fond of once, was away and when he was searching for her, she cried out from a distance, "What are you searching for?" He answered "Shanti". She replied, "Shanti is not got by this sort of search by waiting quietly; then it comes automatically." One day she came to the group in which her father,

Avaste and others were talking about *sakshatkara* and God and asked whether any one of them had seen God. She asked Avaste point blank, "Have you had *Sakshatkar*." and he said, "No". One day while reading Tukaram, he came across an *abhanga* in which Tukaram insists on giving his *diksha* then and there and Avaste was started and sat quiet. He felt as if God was asking him from outside the window next to him whether He should come in. Avaste felt that he was not yet fit for *darsan*, and said, "No, no." Then he stopped the reading, as he felt himself incapable of bearing the strain of seeing God and he promised not to trouble God again. Then Shanti asked him to pray to *Sri Ram* to grant him *Sakshatkar* and he promised each night to pray. She also would pray for *Sakshatkar* each night before going to bed. One night, he felt that *Sri Rama* was slowly descending from the top of the door of the hall where the image of the deity he worshipped had been placed. He bowed down, and the vision passed away before he could see the part above the breast. He had seen only the legs and the waist. He discontinued this practice of night prayer as he did not wish to repeat the experience and he stuck to that idea ever since.

His initiation into the *Panchakshari* was in 1898, and his *darsan* of *Rama* was in 1912. In 1914, he wanted to go to Pandharpur, and prayed to Pandharinath for the fulfillment of the word of his lady *Guru*. Then M. B. Rege, a devotee of Sai Baba, came to him and learning about his intention to go to Pandharpur, told him to stop at Shirdi, which was on the way from Indore to Pandharpur. Avaste promised to go with Rege to Shirdi. So, during Christmas of 1914, they started. It was then that they had the threatened interruption of the rail journey at Mhow as already described. Eventually the Commander who first commandeered the train allowed Avaste and Rege to continue their journey and when they reached Shirdi, They went to stay with Ramakrishna Ayi, and she appeared to him as a *Sadguru*. She recalled some peculiar incidents that had taken place years ago in the company of his lady *Guru*, and therefore struck him as a remarkable person. He agreed to treat her as a sister of his lady *Guru* but not as a substitute for her. "Even if I die will you not agree?" asked Ayi. He said, "No." Suddenly Ayi cried out that she was dead; and lay flat on the ground as if she was really dead. "This was exactly like his first *Guru's* conduct on the first occasion when he had met her. He got upset and ran up to her and put her head on his lap and shed tears. Then in order to revive her, he began to loudly recite the *Panchakshari mantras*, which his *Guru* had taught him, though his first *Guru* had said that he should not loudly recite those mantras. He implored each of those gods presiding over each of the *Panchakshari* letters to revive this lady. He offered to give up all his *punya* of 16 years of *japa* of the *mantra* if she revived.

LIFE OF SAI BABA

Then she gradually opened her eyes, as if she had come out of her swoon. She said to him, "You go and mind your business." He felt grateful for having repaired the consequences of his folly. He felt sorry for violating his *Guru's* instruction not to pronounce the *mantras* loudly. Then his mind was so upset that he began to repeat the *mantras* again. He began to see one deity after another coming down as in a magic lantern show. After the first two or three deities appeared, Ayi told him, "Stop all this show. Lie down. Go to sleep." He obeyed Ayi. During the succeeding days also, he had similar experiences. On the final day, an *Ekadasi* day, he got into a repentant mood for having to go Shirdi contrary to the advice of his *Guru*. He had been told not to visit saints, as they would molest him. Then he feared that his stay at Shirdi would endanger him and his *mantras* would all lose their efficacy. In this mood, he was slowly beginning to feel that he and even Ramakrishna Ayi were led to astray by Sai, a juggler, an old *fakir*, who imposed upon the public and upon so many honest and devout people including Ayi, inducing them to believe him to be a saint and an incarnation of God. Suddenly he felt that Sai was trying to overpower him by his sorcery and felt he must protect himself and overcome him. So, he began uttering loudly and vehemently *Sri Ram, Sri Ram*, and carried on that *nama japa* for a long time. Ayi and Rege went up to Sai to free Avaste from this fit of craziness, having passed the whole night in this way. He was cured of this spell instantly when he heard in the morning Baba uttering the words, in a solemn and melodious way, "*Allah Malik hai* from the *chavadi*, which is fairly near the *sala* where Avaste was staying. He then mentally apologised to Baba for his thought and behaviour. As soon as the morning prayers and *arati* were finished, Baba sent for Rege and told him to take Avaste away from Shirdi. A *Tonga* was soon got ready and he and Rege started off. They saluted Baba near the village gate and got his blessings for leaving. Every male bird or beast on the way appeared to Avaste as Baba and female birds and beasts as Ayi. That was so till they reached the *Lendi* rivulet. After that, this spell left him. He lay quietly on his friends lap and slept. He reached home safe.

One result of his visit to Shirdi was that his desire to go to Pandharpur vanished. Baba had shown himself as Vittal. Thereafter Avaste repeated his visits to Shirdi along with his family or friends, twice or thrice each year, until Baba's *Mahasamadhi* in 1918.

CHAKRA NARAIN

The persons that swarmed to Baba's feet generally were persons of the Hindu religion and to a small extent of other religions also. The Hindus, as a whole, are more liberal in their outlook and do not hesitate to approach a *Guru*; to whatever community he may belong, or go to any place of worship and worship any object. The Mohammadans, as a rule, are too conservative to approach a saint shows himself saturated with Hindu ideas and who allows the worship of idols and the worship of himself, especially in a Mosque to the accompaniment of the noise and din characteristic of Hindu worship. The Protestant Christians have similar views and neither of these two classes will go near a place where an idol of a man is placed and worshipped. This explains why the Mohammadan followers of Baba were a very small minority. We do not know of a single Protestant Christian who approached Baba with the spirit of devotion to him.

Chakra Narain was perhaps the only one and one of the few Protestant Christians who had some appreciation of Baba. In his statement in the book, *Devotees Experiences*, Vol. 1, in October 1936, he showed some appreciation of Sai Baba. He admitted that he was not a believer in Baba, but he began to admire his noble qualities, which he came to know when he was ordered to watch Baba. He and some of his men were watching Baba for various purposes including income tax. He conceived a great regard for Baba because he found that Baba was not moved by *kamini* or *kanchana*, woman and wealth. Many women would come to Baba and place their bare heads on his bare feet and sit close to him. But Baba was totally unmoved. He would not care to cast one glance of admiration or love or lust at any face. Baba was clearly an unmistakably unattached *virakta*. This *Fouzdar* was asked to watch Baba regarding the money he received from people. He also had great admiration for Baba. People voluntarily gave money to Baba. If anybody did not give him money, Baba would not hate him or displease or curse him. The same thing about his begging for bread. Baba did not care what it was that was put into his sling or into his tin. The sling carried the solids and the tin carried the liquids, which were given to him. No doubt they all got mixed up and became *Olla Podrida*. Whatever he got, whether food or money, he scattered it with a liberal hand. Food was distributed to innumerable beggars and the money was given away as soon as he got it. When he died, the Government took possession of his cash, and the amount with him was only Rs.16.

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Yet daily he gave away hundreds of rupees and Chakra Narain was thunderstruck at the fact that his riches, which they noticed were limited, and that thought there was no stock of cash with him at the beginning of the day, at the end of the day he had paid hundreds of rupees. Wherefrom did the excess come for him to disburse or pay? The Police could not make out. Therefore Chakra Narain concluded that Baba had divine powers. Again he noticed with great admiration Baba's behaviour towards other religions. When Chakra Narain, a Christian, was appointed as Sub-Inspector at Rahata, some of his followers, who were displeased, went and told Baba, "The new *Fouzdar* is neither a Hindu nor a Mohammadan but a Christian." Baba's retort was, "What of that? He is my brother". It must be remembered that Baba was called a *Maharaja* and looked exactly like a *Maharaja* in the midst of all regal paraphernalia. His powers also struck Chakra Narain as marvelous, that is, his powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience, in popular parlance, but known to scholars as *Antarjnana* or *Ritambhara prajna* or *Pratiba*. He cites one instance. A police officer went and bowed to Baba. Baba asked for *dakshina*. The officer said that he had nothing. Baba said, "See your purse. A fifty-rupee note is in it." Then the note was produced and offered to Baba. Baba took only a small amount of it and returned the rest to him and asked him to keep the balance as he would soon be in trouble and would need it. That is what exactly happened. Soon after his visit, the officer got into trouble and had to use the balance to extricate himself. After thus escaping from trouble that officer in his gratitude sent the balance to Shirdi. Chakra Narain also notes that Baba's *udhi* was being given as a cure and acted as a cure for many cases of illness.

LIFE OF SAI BABA

VOLUME IV

BY PUJYA H.H.NARASIMHA SWAMIJI

PUBLISHED BY

ALL INDIA SAI SAMAJ

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Preface to Part IV

To write a preface to the works of our Master Revered Sri Narasimha Swamiji, will be a feat. Anyhow I have made a bold attempt upon request.

Every biography or a life of a person is a story of adventure. The spiritual and mystical personalities of the world represent an adventure of a worthy living, besides thinking intellectually in the pursuit of their lives. The life of Sai Baba especially gives a very tough treat for the spiritual seekers. There are indeed a few writings only which present so vivid a picture of the life and teachings of Sai Baba—in so descriptive a form, and for this reason, the present volume, (Part IV of Life of Sri Sai Baba}, possesses a value of its own. The publishers therefore feel it again a happy privilege to offer this volume to the public and Sai devotees in particular, believing that in so doing they are making one of the best gifts which a man can make to his brother devotees.

Devotees will really understand that the mighty pen of Revered Sri Narasimha Swamiji wrote from the lips of Sai Baba. In my personal experience, I have found two-in-one, i.e., the physical frame of Sri Swamiji and spirit of Baba that has blessed us with four volumes of the life of Sri Sai Baba. We can consider the IV volume as 11th Skanda of Bhagavata to Sai devotees.

I remember that one of the Greatest of Devotees of Baba, Bhakta Parayana Das Ganu Maharaj, once said 'A jeweller like Sri Narasimha Swamiji knows the value of a gem and will not rest till he brings the brilliance of the crystal to the people's notice".

Readers can understand that how much toil and labour (in the form of Guru Seva) might have been taken by Rev. Swamiji to unearth and present this flawless diamond—The Life of Sai Baba—to all of us.

In a close study of the life of Sai Baba from Parts I to IV, one can understand that truth is dealt in all aspects to feel and follow with concrete examples of the right perspective to realize one's Self.

A monumental present (in the form of spiritual food) has been provided to philosophers and spiritualists alike, through his books, especially The Life of Sai Baba, IV volume. No doubt, these intellectual works of Rev. Swamiji will really

get into the religious history of India. His whole life, I can say, has been dedicated on spiritual pursuits to cater to hungry souls on the path.

May Sri Sai Baba, the Benevolent Master, and Sri Narasimha Swamiji awaken us with a renewed interest in our spiritual practice to attain the glorious heights of spiritual realisation.

— **Radhakrishnaswamiji**

CHAPTER I

Baba And School Of Philosophy

In religious matters, ordinary people ask many questions without considering the implications thereof and without having any definite idea themselves as to what the questions mean. For instance, to ask about any person to what school of philosophy he belongs, is rather absurd. School of philosophy is for those who pride themselves upon their mastery of some branch of philosophy and who have got egotism enough to identify themselves with only one set of ideas or one school of philosophy as they will call it, and reject the others as being worthless or untrue. Ordinary men have no philosophy at all. Highly advanced souls like Baba also have no school of philosophy, because all ideas are theirs and all wisdom is theirs, and they are not likely to identify themselves with one line of thought to the exclusion of others. Therefore, the question to what school of philosophy Baba belongs, is strictly unanswerable except by saying that He belongs to no school or to all schools. Yet as the question is natural, some sort of rough answer which will satisfy the ordinary reader is sought to be given. But one must always remember that Baba was a *Ritambhara Prajna* or *China Samvit*. All knowledge is in the universal Soul or ultimate Reality identifying itself with the centre of all existence, and that is that Sat Chit Ananda, which has manifested itself in the Universe. There have been many minds in many places and in many ages. All of them and their thoughts and ideas belong to it, but it is not confined to any one of them. Baba at any moment without any preparation would answer any question from his standard of *Parabmhmaan* or *Ritambara Prajna* and expound any view. But ordinarily Baba dealt with people only at their own level or in the levels which they can expect soon to reach, and so his answers would disclose material for showing that Baba approved some times of one school of philosophy and sometimes another. Really, however, he approved of truth and reality and, if any school of philosophy can claim to be coeval with or corresponding to truth and reality, that school is Baba's.

Baba knew full well that persons coming to him were hardly in a position to reach the heights of advaitic realisation which Sankara aimed at, and, therefore, he was reluctant to give out a complete outline of the system of philosophic thoughts known as advaitism and woven in Sankara's works for instance. But he was great enough to see that advaitic philosophy has its very legitimate place in any complete idea of the Universe and of ourselves. In point of fact, Jnaneswari, the well-known Maratti poetical commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, is based upon Sankara's commentary on the Gita, which of course, is mainly on advaitic line, Baba had great reverence for Jnaneswar and Jnaneswari, and referred people like N.G. Chandorkar and others, who professed to admire and follow Jnaneswar, to pick out for themselves from Jnaneswari, especially on matters of Jnana. Therefore, it is not necessary nor is it possible to go fully into the question of the exact advaitic view of life to which Baba subscribed and addressed to his devotees.

Baba seldom delivered any lengthy address to his disciples, especially after the masses began to come to him in 1908 or 1909. Some of his rare discourses are recorded in Das Ganu's chapters, and some of these chapters give out philosophical sketches which look like advaitism, but there is a sufficient admixture of other schools of philosophy in every one of Baba's utterances, and, therefore, it is safe for us to remember that we should not identify Baba with any particular school of philosophy. We must remember always the principle enunciated in interpreting case law that any general position advanced must be considered as based upon and relating to the facts of the case. In Baba's case, the advaitic remarks that he offered to Chandorkar should not be taken as an absolute statement which should be addressed to all. On the other hand he did not address it to all. In point of fact, the vast majority of persons that came to Baba were hardly fit to understand high philosophy. They were generally mediocre persons with mediocre intellect and obliged to come to Baba on account of their difficulties or on account of their attachment, without having any special pretensions to a capacity to understand subtle systems of philosophy. In several cases, Baba, however, did valuable piece of service for the ultimate

development and growth of the spirit of capable devotees by giving them hints to work on, and the Hints sometimes bordered on advaitic philosophy. We shall in subsequent paragraphs point out what hints he gave and how.

1. (Baba's Charters & Sayings, Nos. 120 and 121). Who am I? Who are We?

120. Baba often said, "Who are we? Night and day think on this".

2. About 1915 R.A. Tarkhad, Managing Director of a mill, got into a compartment at Manmad in the dark and was fighting for a seat with a police constable who was there. When R.A.T. arrived in Shirdi, Baba asked him:-

With whom were you persisting in contest this morning? Bhav (brother), we should not engage in contest with such people! "Who are We?" This we must enquire into.

R.A.T, saw first Baba's reference to the social inequality of the disputing parties, and later on, the Vedantic meaning of the words, i.e., the unity of those parties in Brahman.

3. Baba (to Bala Bhav, i.e., Sitaram Dev): We have only to see (i.e., know) our self.

4. 121. In October 1917, Baba spoke to a Bombay lady:-Mother, what do you want? Ask for it. Lady : Let me be free from the whirl of births and deaths.

Baba: (laughing) : Is this all you want? What! Have you come to die?

Lady : (Shocked), Baba, I do not at all understand you.

Baba : Think who you are.

Lady : I do not understand.

Baba : (pointing to her husband): He will tell you.

Then the lady went with her husband to her lodgings and asked him what Baba meant.

Husband : Baba's words are mysterious. I cannot be sure I have made out his meaning. Probably he means something like this. The Jiva goes on reincarnating any number of times till it gets Sakshatkar i.e. sees or realises God. Baba is God. But people seeing him do not get full faith and do not see him, i.e., feel him to be God; and hence they do not get Mukti.

One must learn from the sastras that essentially Jiva and Siva are one. You think yourself to be a Jiva, is it not?

Lady : Yes

Husband : Baba and the Sastras want you to regard yourself as Siva or God.

Lady : No. No. I am a petty sinner—a Jiva, and not the great God Siva.

Husband : No doubt that is your feeling. But Baba means that by constantly regarding yourself as God, your deeply ingrained belief that you are only a finite Jiva will be removed. This process continued, may be through numerous births, and strengthened and helped by contact with Saints, will give you the firm belief that you are Brahman. That must be Baba's meaning,

(The pair again returned to Dwaraka Mai).

Baba: Mother, I have listened (from here) to all that your husband told you. Keep that in mind.

Baba sometimes in the course of his talk on other matters introduced the question, 'Who am I?' 'Who am I is the test question for Atma Vichara. Yoga Vasishtha says:

Ramasva atma vicharoyam koham soyam itirupah

Avidya jatasamsara dahane dahanasmritah

Vasishtha says to Rama, "O! Rama, this is Atma Vichara. It takes the form of 'Who am I', and it burns up the gross of ignorance and samsara".

Now, Baba naturally talked about the inner nature of various problems, for instance, property. In the sadhak's progress, he has to analyse I and all its derivatives like 'mine' etc. Now, 'mine' means property. To help Sadhakas Baba had several times to explode their notions of property. Property and egotism are both warping the real vision, which would enable a person to understand what he really is, that is, what the self is. Self is distinguished from I in this way. I is the egotistic aspect of the self. Too much of identification with the body, and its particularities is involved in the I. The real self is more inward, and is the true basis of the I. That self is regarded as the one thing that underlies all selves, that is, the Universal Self. It is the same as the Paramatma, the Parabrahman. It is God. So, on one occasion, when Baba wanted to show people how ridiculous

fighting about property was, he said that at Puntamba, which he once visited, he discovered two parties were fighting with each other bitterly, and he wanted to know what the bone of contention was. He found out a pot full of coins was there, and that was what they were fighting for. While they were fighting, he quietly moved on to the pot, and removed the pot away. Then he put the questions, 'Who am I? and 'Whose is the pot?' He said, 'I am the pot and the pot is mine', thus showing that notions of property were highly artificial and baseless. As Goldsmith put it, 'The world is mine', one can treat everything on earth as one's property and rejoice over it so long as there is no other person to run counter to one's thought or activity. Therefore, Baba wanted to disabuse people of their notions of property, and took occasion to correct the ordinary people's notions of property.

Once Kondaji's (a Marwadi) stack of hay took fire. Baba tried to prevent it by sending him to go and look at it. But he returned without seeing it properly, and then said there was no fire. Then Baba pointed out to the smoke issuing from the stack. He then ran up and found that the whole thing had been reduced to ashes. People in the neighbourhood, with neighbouring stacks, were all afraid that the brisk breeze that was blowing would set their stacks also on fire. Baba then came up, and going round Kondaji's stack, drew a line of water round it, and said, 'Only this stack will be burnt'. Kondaji, however, was very sorry that he had lost his property. Then Baba said, 'How stupid is this? The marwadi talks of himself as his body, that is the form made up of flesh, bones etc. Hay is something totally different. What has he to do with the stack or the stack to do with him? Hallo. Marwadi you better make up for this loss in some other transaction'. Thus. Baba gave him some practical advice to get over his grief, and at the same time pointed out that philosophically speaking, there was no basis for the notion of either 'I' or 'Mine'. It is ruinous for any soul that desires its true welfare to go on dwelling over and over again upon I and 'Mine'. When he thinks of the I it does not get to the real inwardness of the I. On the other hand, it centres its emphasis on everything unimportant. For instance, if you ask a boy whom you meet, 'Who are you?' you may get ten different answers, such as, 'I

am a boy, I am named Rama, I am the son of Krishna, I am a Hindu, I am aged 16, I am a boy attending St. Peter's School', etc. That is, every one of these things is not he, but it is an accident attached to him which he mentions as he. What is the central core round which all these accidents gather? That he does not know. Philosophers might say, There is a piece of Chaitanya or Pure Consciousness which, however, changes its purity and gets attached to some external body, and then a particularity comes into it, namely, a red haired youth. So, the I becomes a red haired youth. Thus we develop various notions of I, which strictly speaking are not true, and which do not help us in the ultimate goal that we have to reach, however useful some of them may be for our progress in our material circumstances. Therefore, Baba tried to rebuke this egotism especially when it showed itself in offensive forms. *Abhimana* means overfondness of dwelling on this particularity you call I connected with the body, and it also comes in relation to property, Therefore, the most important thing to be attained in the case of a sadhaka is to lessen and remove this *abhimana* to dissociate himself from the body idea. I and 'mine' represent the body idea. Baba has rendered great service in exposing this idea, (as we will show in a separate chapter).

The term, School of philosophy, has a meaning only to theoretical and intellectual labourers like college professors and students. Abstract philosophies do not spring up in life, where (1) complex problems involving theory, etc., rise and (2) practical methods are evolved for progress and satisfaction not necessitating an enunciation of problem or solution. Once a spiritual advance is made and a certain position reached, differences in theory between schools of philosophy are not seen at all and their solution becomes unnecessary. For saints and sages like Sai Baba, there is no unsolved problems of philosophy. Again schools of philosophy rise only amongst theorists and intellectuals, who see things in their separateness and dogmatise. Dogmas lead to bitter controversies. To the person who has reached a high level, life is a whole. His whole life and life all round at all levels, become intelligible, orderly, controlable and single. Such siddhas get on with life and have no troubles. Contradictions

and the irreconcilable are no contradictions or irreconcilable at all to the siddhas. A man standing at one end of a long alley sees the two sides of the alley meeting at a point. But to the place owner who runs through or flies above them, there is no point of juncture, and all the way is open and unobstructed. Words and our brains are poor instruments to grasp or express the entire truth of Reality. It is a firm principle with siddhas not to waste their time to discuss the problems of the ignorant or to take sides along with them on such questions.

Sai Baba used to find Chandorkar, Khaparde and others, very often discussing amongst themselves, what interpretation they should put upon Baba's words in the light of one theory or another. Baba invariably dissuaded them from doing so, for as they gradually progressed they would themselves understand what was necessary, and that was quite enough.

The real truth when reached in actual life is so different from the guesses one makes especially after enormous discussion and argument about what the truth is. Persons having various doubts as to the state of realization of God or the soul, come into the presence of one who has realized thinking they would ask the latter questions to clear the doubts. But they simply sit and find questions unnecessary. Persons in a state of calm with ability to face the truth, and allow their minds and hearts to soak in it, find their doubts and problems all dissolved. This has happened frequently at Ramanasram. Similarly people sat before Sai who could grip every one's mind and put it into the correct attitude. Occasionally God-realizers like Ramana Maharishi and Sai Baba may drop a hint or two and clear a difficulty. The difficulty to understand or reconcile is found mostly not in the theoretical portion of the philosophy but in the Sadhaka's ability to realise its truth. We see at each higher step more and more of the truth and less and less of difficulty, i.e., the difficulties that daunted us when we had not conquered our self, and when passions and egotism clouded our view. To Saints like Sai who are Samartha Sadgurus, the sishya's entire mind, its state and difficulties are all quite plain, and the Siddha can easily take it along to appreciate and attain the final goal of life without allowing any problem or hindrance to arise.

Sri Sai Baba himself pointed this out in connection with his friends and fellow-workers. In Baba's Charters & Sayings, 175, Baba mentioned that intellectual differences frequently obstruct one's progress in spiritual and philosophical matters, and that the solution for them was not from an intellectual point of view, but from a new path, i.e., a path of faith given and adopted. Prof Kant discussing the question of reality, intelligibility and quality of the soul, world, and God, said that this could not be solved by pure reason, but by practical expediency, i.e., by adopting some rule that in practice works and yields satisfactory results. In the above mentioned B.C. & S. 175, Baba states that himself and three others were studying *puranas* and other works and discussing among themselves (obviously on an intellectual basis) how to get realization, and they had their own differences. One stressed the necessity of depending upon oneself, as the Gita says, *udhdharet atmana*. Another, equally self-sufficient, said that the main thing was to make the mind self-centred, free from thoughts and doubts, because it was we who were in everything and everywhere. A third companion said that *Vichara* was the thing to be stressed, and *Vichara* consisted in the *Viveka* regarding the difference between '*Nitya*' and '*Anitya*', the Changeable and the Unchangeable, the Changeable form and the formless Unchangeable Reality. Obviously with all this controversies they were not anywhere near God-realisation. Baba disliked all these metaphysical and intellectual discussion and stressed the practical steps that had to be taken i.e., to approach a Guru, and surrender one's *Tan, Man, Dan* to the Guru and leave it to the Guru to accomplish the rest. The field of this intellectual discussion was a veritable forest, vast and dense, through which no way out could be found. So, as they rambled on without finding their way out, until they came across one who thoroughly knew the forest (a *vanajari*), a forest dweller. The Vanajari, asked them, 'Where are you going into these trackless wood unnecessarily?' He kindly invited them to go with him and take food, which should enable them to continue their journey through the forest. The majority being selfsufficient and independent, the Vanajari's words were not heeded. But the party went into this intellectual wood and lost their way. Again the Vanajari appeared before them,

and showed them how by relying on their own intelligence they had lost their way and gone on the wrong path, and told them that a guiding finger was necessary to show them the proper way. The Vanajari said offer of food was not to be despised, for offer of food was an auspicious sign betokening the coming success in the enterprise. So, he repeated the offer of his hospitality. For a second time the majority decided to reject the offer.

So they continued their rambling in the trackless forest. Hunger seized them all but the unbending three were too proud to change. Baba alone left that company, went to the Vanajari and accepted food and water. That Vanajari was the Guru and enquired of all that they had talked about, and the conclusions they had come to. Baba revealed to him the entire facts. The others did not care to depend on a Guru or a Guide. Baba for himself, he felt that the Guru, and Guru alone, was the thing needed. So saying Baba bowed in reverence to the Guru with faith. The Guru at once put his faith to the test. Baba's description of the test resembled an allegory, and was obviously symbolical, Baba says—

"Then he took me to a well, tied up my legs with a rope, and suspended me, head downwards, from a tree by a side of the well. My head was about three feet off the water, which I could not reach. And my Guru left me there and went away, God knows where. He returned after 4 or 5 hours and asked me how I fared. "In great bliss was my time passed", I answered. The Guru, mightily pleased with me, drew me near him, passed his palm over my head and body and spoke to me tender words dripping with love, and he put me into his school where I entirely forgot my father and mother and all attachments and desires.

"I loved to gaze at him. If he were not there to see, I would not like to have eyes at all. I did not wish to go back. I forgot all other things but the Guru. My life was concentrated in my sight and my sight in him. That was the object of my meditation. In silence I bowed.

"Meanwhile Realisation flashed upon me of itself without effort or study, purely by his grace.

"Guru's grace is our only sadhana. Jnana comes as experience (or in its wake)".

We are now in a position to answer the questions which are sometimes asked about Baba. What school of philosophy did he belong to? Did he uphold the advaitic view that there is only one absolute truth and that everything that we see in the Universe is but the result of Maya, or was he a realist holding that the Seen Universe is the Truth, the Reality? Was he an upholder of Nirguna worship, that is, the worship of the Unseen, the Absolute without attributes, or was he a worshipper of various forms of God? Was he advocating the margas of bhakti or yoga or of karma? But to give a full answer to each of these questions may require many chapters. We shall take the first question regarding Baba's school of philosophy, whether it was pure Suddha Advaita, the Advaitic standpoint of Sankara found in his innumerable works, such as, Vivekachudamani, etc. The one short answer to all questions about Baba is that Baba's complete views and complete nature are totally unknown to any one. No one was with him all through his life, nothing, as Boswell did in the case of Johnson, everything he did or said, or omitted to say or do. But we have fairly large mass of his sayings and doings when he was in the fleshy body, that is, up to 1918. As to his lilas and utterances and deeds, after 1918, we have an equally large, if not larger mass. From these one may attempt to give some answers. But in the first place, it is better to preface our observations with this remark that Baba was everything to everyone. He suited himself to the capacity or circumstances of each.

Ye yatha mam prabadyante tans tataiva bhajamyahatn.

This means, 'In whatever way one surrenders himself to Me, I suit myself to him in that line'. This is the remark of Lord Krishna, that is God.

Mere babaku marma na janare koimere

Sree babaku siddhaavasta

Jisku jaisa janare

This means "None knows the real inwardness of my Baba: Some said he was a Yogi, some a sensualist, some called him a wise man, some a hypocrite, some called him Brahman or God. Baba's state is the Siddha Avasta. Each finds in him what he thinks him to be".

Sri Sai Baba who identified himself with God had the same observation to make. He was treated as the Ishta Devata by many devotees as Rama, Datta, Vittobha, Khandoba, Ganapati and Maruti, and was approached as a great Saint by Hindu philosophers and saints, and as an avalia by Muslims, and as a weird person by the ignorant outsiders. To each he gave the response suitable to him or her. Where a person was absolutely against realistic or dualistic ideas, Baba did not force on him such ideas. Where persons, for instance, held the view that a Guru was unnecessary and did not care to go near him closer and closer, he simply dismissed them with the remark, 'A Guru (to you) is unnecessary. In the case of pure advaitic sets, his role was that of a sympathetic adviser. Many persons holding advaitic views are in practice realistic and advaitic. This applies to millions, especially in Maharashtra as also in the South. Baba found that persons like Upasani Baba belonging to the Uddhava Mutt adhered theoretically to the school of Sankara while following in practice much the same method as Sri Ramanujacharya's followers or Madhvacharya's followers. The worship that they adopted was realistic and dwaitic and they had to build upon it and hoped all the time that at some time, the advaitic goal will be reached. Baba dealt with them, in accordance with their own views.

So, when Upasani Baba approached, Baba guided him, in practice, on lines suitable to his fitness. He had to develop more and more of bhakti to his Ishta Devata for he already held the ideal of advaitic unification, realisation as a distant goal. So, he led him on to bhakti first. Bhakti in his case, as in the case of most others, was bhakti to his Gurudeva treated as identical with his Ishta Devata in accordance with the closing stanza of Swetaswatara Upanishad. He had to develop staunch bhakti and implicit reliance on Sai Baba before he could get any benefit as a sishya. So, Baba revealed to the sishya much of his powers and nature, and enabled him first to admire, and then to love him. He undertook everything on behalf of his Ananta i.e., sealed the sishya marked as his own, undertook all temporal and spiritual obligations on his behalf. Thus he succeeded in preparing the soil for sowing the seeds of spiritual growth. He implanted and increased in him the necessary virtues of Brahmacharya, Satya, and Vairagya,

and thereby prepared him for the position of a Samarta Sadguru. While doing all this, he did not omit to point out in a general way, the ultimate goal. Upasani Baba could not understand how everything could be one, himself, all beings and his God; nor could he tolerate loss of personal identity to merge in the Impersonal Absolute as the goal of man. But that was the school or Mutt to which Upasani Baba by birth belonged. Sai Baba taught him through hints the wonderful truth that all that exists is but a manifestation of the one reality which transcends them. This realisation, according to the Sankara doctrine, is to be reached mainly through *vichara* supported by *vairagya*, *samadhi shatka*, (equanimity, and five other virtues) and *mumukshutva*, i.e., desire for liberation from samsara. So Baba started him on vichara marga also in a rather peculiar way. But first for Vairagya, i.e., for overcoming the desire for wealth and women (Kamini-kanchana) and other lower urges, Baba gave him instruction through visions. He first showed him that there was a Papa purusha or lower element in him and that had to be burnt out. So Baba in a vision enacted the scene of his catching hold of a person standing behind Upasani exactly resembling him but wearing dirty clothes, who was interfering with Upasani's receiving instruction from the Guru. Baba caught hold of him and burnt him up. Upasani was crying out all the while. 'It is me, Baba, you are burning; it is me, Baba, you are burning'. Baba Said, 'No doubt, it is you, but you in the papa purusha form, that is your sinful nature. Unless that is burnt up, how is the grand work which is to be accomplished by our joint endeavours to be achieved?' Baba said that he had burnt out the papa purusha.

To overcome Upasani's attachment to wealth, Sai Baba showed him in a vision that there was some figure exactly like Upasani, seated on a grand pile of wealth, and asked Upasani to see him, and said 'That is you, that is your punya purusha., After seeing that second figure, Upasani asked, 'If the figure you burnt the other day is my papa purusha, and this is my punya purusha, who am I?' This is the vichara or enquiry into the Self, which every true teacher must encourage the sishya to make. Baba used to say occasionally, 'Enquire who we are, where we are, and what we are, etc., and he enbaled Upasani to note that in himself

there was a *papa purusha* and also a *punya purusha*. Therefore, when the question was raised by Upasani himself 'What his Self was', Baba gave the correct hint. That is how he sowed the seed of *vichara*, which was to bear good fruit very much later. Baba gave the explanation, "You are neither the one nor the other, but beyond both; you are neither your *punya* nor your *papa purusha* but beyond both. That which constitutes Me constitutes you, And there he left it. He was simply talking above the head of the sishya who had no ideas on this subject. But long afterwards, when Upasani started Parayana of Avadhuta Gita, wherein these ideas are fully expanded and explained, the seed sown at Shirdi bore rich fruit.

According to true advaita of Sankara, the Jiva talked of as I by Kasinath Upasani was *in essence* the same as Parabrahman, the one underlying Reality which ought to be seen in all manifest things, and which people call Brahman or God. What is it you call God or Brahman? 'That from which everything came and into which everything is going to have laya or merger, is Brahman" and "That Brahman is Yourself. That Brahman has manifested itself as the Universe, and has manifested itself as the Jiva. The Jiva like so many other forces is but a manifestation, the underlying reality being the same in all cases. Descartes, when he said that the whole world was his idea ('I am the thinker of the whole world') did not note this truth, namely, that he, when he talked of himself as a thinking force, was but a manifestation, like the rest of the world, of the one ultimate reality. So, the world is a manifestation, the ego is a manifestation, and that which manifests, namely the Real is "Brahman", and that is what Baba meant when he said 'That which constitutes *me*, (i.e. Brahman) constitutes *you* , This pithy teaching was just delivered, and then the vision closed. It was only remembered by Upasani Baba for very many years that is, till 1936 or so, as something remote from life. It was only about 1936 that the teaching commanded respect and acceptance. Upasani Baba then understood how the Jiva also merges in the Purna Parabrahman, and how real moksha or liberation consists in the Jiva losing its separate identity and imaginary independence and sinking itself into the one absolute, undifferentiated Real.

CHAPTER II

Sri Sai Baba & Propaganda (Or Prachar)

The term propaganda has been seriously strained; it obtained a very bad odour during war days. War propaganda meant downright falsehood to serve one's own purposes. Therefore, the term 'propaganda' is disliked very much, and when it is used in connection with prachar for Sai Baba, some people are shocked. However, we might repel the tide of misuse and bad odour in respect of that term and resume the proper use of the word 'propaganda'. Sai prachar and propaganda are exactly the same, and using them in that sense, we shall consider the question whether Sai prachar is to be objected to. This objection is unintelligible to many people. Why should anybody object to Sai becoming known? Sai prachar means Sai getting known. Why anybody should object to this, passes one's understanding. If Sai is a great soul, if he has done good to hundreds and thousands of people in certain parts of the country, why should not that be known to a larger number of people in a larger number of places? If that is proper, prachar is the means. It is not only proper but desirable, nay, it may even be a duty, at least in the case of those who are fitted to do prachar and to whom prachar has become a *sadhana* by Baba's grace. So we shall just for one short moment note what the implication of prachar is.

The implication of prachar is that someone who is aware of Sai's nature and Sai's doings, and the great benefits derived thereby, goes about communicating to other people who are not aware of them the facts which are within his knowledge. *Prima facie* there should be no objection to this, but on the other hand one should be thankful that there is Sai prachar. But objections have been raised, and first they have been raised by those who are asked to give out their experiences for the purpose of prachar. To many people experiences are of a special and personal nature dealing with delicate matters, and, therefore, their disclosure is not easy. In some cases, Baba has objected to people disclosing their experiences, especially to outsiders who may have no regard for the same. That was in times long gone by, and, at present, the esteem for Sai Baba being so widely prevalent. the chances of one's communicating experiences to

strangers who will scoff at them, are not great. Still if there are people who are merely scoffers, even for propagandists it would be well not to open their mouths and start propaganda in the midst of such company. Sometimes it may happen that scoffers at propaganda might turn to be men who came to scoff but remained to pray.

In this connection, we may note what happened to one Mr. Bala Saheb Bhate. He was a Mamlatdar at Kopergaon with numerous friends, who were Sai Bhaktas. They were living at various places, and whenever they wanted to go to Shirdi to see Sai Baba, they had to go by train to Kopergaon, and at Kopergaon they would see their friend, Bala Saheb Bhate. Bala Saheb Bhate would ask them what they had come for, and when they said they had come to see Sai Baba at Shirdi, he would scoff at them and say, 'You graduates and big people with education, training and civilization, you go and call on an uncultured rustic, a poor, worthless fakir, and is it to this your degree and University position have come?' In that style he would go on, and if they asked him to go and see Sai Baba for himself so that he might correct his opinion of Baba, he would scoff even that proposal, and he thought it *infra dig* of his position to go and see Sai Baba living at Shirdi, though Shirdi was legitimately within his own taluk and jurisdiction. It so chanced on one occasion that when he had gone to visit Rahata, the head village of Shirdi, he happened to visit Shirdi. Then it struck him that he might see Sai Baba. The moment he went and saw Sai Baba, Baba's wonderful power gripped him. He could not get away from Sai Baba for an hour or two. When people reminded him that it was time for him to get away, he said, 'Yes, wait, wait,' and went on looking at Baba for one or two hours. The fascination of Baba was most extraordinary. He had gone with the opinion that Baba was something below his notice (because he was a man of importance, not only a mamlatdar but one highly thought of by the Collector, and one who thought very highly of his own qualities and abilities). With such an opinion up to that time he had gone there. Perhaps an undercurrent was started by Baba within Bhate's mind that he had been reviling, abusing, and considering low a person about whom he knew nothing. He thought that if that person were proved

to be really a wonderful and great Saint with weird powers, then his action was a great sin and would badly react on himself. This undercurrent might have been working in him to change his tone. When he went before Baba, Baba attracted him to himself.

Baba had no difficulty at all in seizing his (Bhate's) mind and filling it with fear and remorse. He had to make a right-about-turn in his own mind, and he suddenly conceived a great regard and esteem for Baba. From that moment onwards, he used to pay frequent visits to Shirdi. Finally he actually made up his mind to quit his appointment and remain with Baba. People reminded him that he had a family to support, and that it was not proper for him to give up his employment. Even Baba asked him not to give up service. But his attachment was so great that he would not care for the consequences and he sent up his resignation. The Collector thought that he might give him a year's leave, though he was not entitled to leave, on the ground that he had been caught up by the fascination of a mad fakir, and, therefore, deserved consideration. But Bhate would not change his mind. Finally, even though he was not entitled to get anything from Government, the Collector enabled him to get a compassionate gratuity on the score that in the course of his duties, he fell under the clutches of a mad fakir, and therefore, was unable to continue his duties any further, as though it was sickness that seized upon him. Thus, a person like Bala Saheb Bhate, who began with violent aversion to Baba, was finally drawn to, and became a very ardent devotee of Baba and derived great benefit thereby till his death.

Thus we see that merely because there are some scoffers, we should not avoid mentioning Sai Baba, and the great work that he is even now doing for people. The effect and value of propaganda will depend on circumstances. Generally, prachar is undoubtedly good. Incidents like the above might be quoted about others also. On principle there is absolutely nothing wrong in publishing and broadcasting Sai's great merits. This was not at first properly understood, and leading gentlemen, the trustees of the Shirdi Sai Sansthan, set their faces deliberately against all prachar, thinking especially that it was wrong on

principle. It was about 1935 that the broadcasting of Baba's good qualities in 'Sunday Times' was started by the 'Southern Swami' who was pulled by Baba to himself through Upasani. When this work was going on in 1940 Baba suddenly thrust large sums of money into the hands of the Southern Swami and the work gained ground. But suddenly just a handful of the influential people amongst the Sai Sansthan set their faces against propaganda and published in a number of language newspapers in Bombay State that the Southern Swami was not to be trusted, and that he was doing propaganda for his own private purposes, and that propaganda was never favoured by Baba. All these have since been found to be incorrect even by the Shirdi Sai Sansthan and in their later publication by Gunaji they have practically withdrawn their aspersions. So far as their aspersions on the Southern Swami go, there is Baba to look after the Swami and his name.

But so far as the Swami's propaganda is concerned, it might be mentioned that Sai Baba has shown that it is he that carries on the propaganda and really not the Swami. This truth was forced upon the Swami in a number of ways. Once when he went to a village near Vellore, a child, only then months old, was shown to him, and it was mentioned that for 8 months the child had fits, and the chances of its survival appeared to be very poor. People wanted the Swami to bless. Swami took up some *udhi* of Baba, and, putting it on the child, said, 'By Baba's Grace this child would never again have fits'. And from that time onwards the child had no more fits. So Baba himself had worked a miracle or *chamatkar*, and that converted the whole of that village into Sai Bhaktas.

A Similar incident occurred at Kakinada. There was a lady with hysteria. It was thought to be a very hopeless case. But this Swami was invited and the Swami, after offering *Karpura Arati* to Baba, gave the *arati* to the lady, and assured her that Baba, being her mother, would keep her from hysterical attacks thereafter. She was practically free from further attacks so long as she was in Kakinada, and even later she had only very few and mild attacks. She had also derived great benefits. This fact spread the name of Sai Baba far and wide in all the places where she was living and thus Baba's propaganda was really carried on by Baba himself. That was the truth which Swami had to mention, but some

people thought that it was a piece of bragging on the part of the Swami that Baba was working through him. But now, more than ever, the Swami has got clear proof that everything which was called his own work was really Sai's own work, including the writing of the articles and other things and the other means employed by him for prachar. As is found in Baba's Sahasranamam, prachar is the work allotted to Das Ganu and Narasimhaswami by Sai Baba himself and is looked after by Sai Baba himself. Thus one important step which at least Sai devotees should not condemn, is Sai prachar by Swami and Das Ganu.

Above all, the recent happenings in Coimbatore, Ramachandrapuram and Totapalli hills, have shown that Baba is carrying on propaganda himself by working miracles in a most unexpected fashion. There are persons who say 'Sai Baba is dead, and, why do puja for him? Why do you preach about dead Gurus and not living Gurus? Why do you talk about Sai Baba at all?' These questions become absurd when people get to know of what is being done in the three places mentioned above. At Coimbatore, Sai suddenly appears as a serpent and stays with people for 17 hours receiving worship, receiving naivedya, and never harming any one, and inspiring every one with confidence and courage that Sai Baba might be approached even though he comes in the form of a serpent. At Ramachandrapuram (Godavari District) he showered messages and inscriptions on such a large and liberal scale that people were simply dumbfounded. When the Joint Registrar of Co-operative Societies goes to Ramachandrapuram and offers a huge rose garland (*Nila Malai*) consisting of hundreds of flowers, on each petal of each flower of the garland, the words 'Om Sai' appear. This is stunning proof that Sai is living, that Sai responds to prayer, and that Sai Baba wishes that all should come to know of his glory and benefit thereby, especially because once they see that Sai is living and answering prayers, and is helpful, vast masses, hundreds, thousands, and lakhs of people will get Sai faith, and that will build up their future. Thus the best answer that we can now give to the objection to Sai prachar is that Sai Baba himself is doing prachar over and over again, especially in places like those mentioned above, Totapalli Shanti Asram being the most recent one.

CHAPTER III

Baba's Moral Teachings

Was Baba a teacher of morals and of Moksha Marga? This is hard to answer. Up to the last, Baba concealed his greatness and his nature and even his activities from vulgar gaze. It is the chosen few, the Ankitas, that benefited from him, who discovered that Baba was a teacher, and the highest form of teacher and trainer¹. But as they mostly maintained secrecy, the world wondered at Baba, and many were asking, and are even now asking sometimes derisively, what Baba could teach, and what his cult is which is not widespread to-day. A District Magistrate before whom S.B. Dhumal (Pleader of Nasik) appeared in a criminal appeal, and whose mind Baba influenced so as to make him give verdict in favour of a Sai devotee, overriding all forms, conventions and procedure, asked 'What does Baba teach?' This was about 1911 when no books on Baba had been written. Even pamphlets were hardly available and the world had no conception at all of Baba's works, teaching, or cult. Dhumal's answer was, 'His teaching would be suited to the individual approaching him and the District Magistrate must himself go to Sai Baba to learn his teaching'. But the Magistrate was not sufficiently serious to approach Baba and get his teaching. Similarly there are many light-hearted people asking about Baba's cult and teaching. To all these the best answer that should be given is that they should get serious enough, unlike the District Magistrate mentioned above, to learn it and to make an effort to approach his bhaktas, and read the literature about Sai Baba. A dip into the History or the Gospel of Sai Baba or Sai Satcharitra might reveal a portion of Baba. But most of our readers might not be prepared to make a detailed study of such big books on Sai Baba, and, therefore, it is necessary to answer the above question briefly and indicate in a few words what might be called Baba's teaching or cult as the term is loosely employed,

¹ *Jo saducha ankita Jeeva Jialci Tyacha use 8tiara Niranjanala CArti Song*), i.e.. the burdens of the person marked out as his own by the Sadguru are borne by that *Samartha Sadguru*.

Baba was not really starting any cult. Cult implies that it is something narrow and not applicable to the Universe. Baba was just a highly gifted person with numerous divine qualities, especially in his contacts with those anxiously approaching him each grasping some particular truth or aspect of Baba. It is only when we put together the contact and the results of contacts of the tens of thousands that met Baba, during the 50 or 60 years of his life at Shirdi, that anything like a fairly full account of his teachings or trainings can be obtained. Without attempting or professing to reveal the entire teaching we shall just select a few salient features of Baba's teachings, and the reader may peruse other books or even the earlier portion of this book more carefully to discover Baba's essential teaching more fully.

When the author (Sri B.V.N. Swami) was staying in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's Ashram, the President of the Ashram once declared that he could not understand how Sai Baba went on like a juggler performing miracles and what the use of all that was, and what Baba could be supposed to be teaching. He also asked what Baba's marga might be. This was about 1936 or 1937. Then the Swami was so puzzled, he made a mental appeal to Baba that light should be given to him to answer these questions. Then the thought occurred to him that he should write about Baba in Tamil, his mother-tongue and avoid English which alone he used in the articles he had so far written about Sai Baba in 1936 in 'Sunday Times'. As he proceeded with the work in Tamil of the life of Sai Baba, thoughts were rearranged and aspects of Baba were perceived in a harmonious connection, and then the truth gradually dawned upon the Swami that Baba was a teacher of the highest sort and a trainer also, and not merely a teacher by utterances, but a Bhagavatottama, a Samartha moulding the completely dedicated and surrendered sishya so as to turn the sishya's soul into his (Guru's) own likeness. "*Apana Sarika Karitat tatkal*", — That is, The Sadguru turns the sishya into his own likeness immediately', says Tukaram. This process of Baba involves the full application of all his Samarta Sadguru powers, all the yoga powers inherent in his divine nature. Chamatkars would only be utilised as part and parcel of the process of shaping the sishya into the Guru's likeness.

As for Baba's margas, the answer became patent from considering Baba's own words as to what his teaching was. When one Uddhavesa Bua appeared before him, Baba told him to read the purana in which Baba had spoken to Uddhavesa Bua, and in which he was still speaking to him. Bua could not find out what that purana could be. Baba asked him to go and fetch the book that was being read at the wada. That was Ekanath's XI Skanda of Srimad Bhagavata. Baba suddenly inserted his finger into the middle of the book and asked Uddhavesa to look into it, for there as Sri Krishna he had already taught Uddhava of the Dwapara Yuga and again through the same as Sai Baba was now teaching the same truths to this Uddhavesa Bua of the Kali Yuga. The Ekadasa Skanda is mostly Krishna-Uddhava samvadha or Uddhava Gita, as it is called. So, he discovered that Baba was the same as Sri Krishna. '*Main Allahum*' denotes that fact, *Brahmavit Brahmaiva bhavathi* This means. 'The Knower of Brahman is Brahman'. This is an authoritative aphorism of Hinduism, and is a patent psychological truth. With the aid of all this, the Swami discovered the answers to the posers and conundrums put to him. What is Baba's teaching? It is the same teaching in his Gitas, the Arjuna Gita and the Uddhava Gita. What are his margas? The same margas as are advocated in the above two. That is, practically all the margas. All roads lead to Rome. 'All margas lead to God' is the object of all teaching. When the question is asked. "What is Baba's mission?", the answer must be given that a person having one and only one mission is having a very narrow existence.

Sai Baba, Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, are all divinely gifted or perfected souls and expressions of divinity transforming every one who comes into contact with their divine personality especially those who are drawn through Rinanubandha by their divinity and that is the purpose or mission of their lives. So, Baba has not one mission, but a hundred missions. Protecting the good (virtuous), punishing or reforming the wicked, establishing Dharma (Virtue) or its hold on the people, are the functions of divine personalities, and Baba was performing all these functions. A mission may come in as a part of these functions. Studying these Gitas one sees that there is no meaning in asking for any one marga expounded

by the Divine Person. Saints expound all the margas and find which marga or combination of which margas would suit each approaching devotee, and give the same to him. Thus Baba adopted every marga but in particular one may note that the predominance in his methods was neither for ritual nor for

Vedic study, but for living in consonance with the Supreme manifestation of Divinity in himself. His mission is to help every one, that means, of course, everyone capable of benefiting, not persons who come in an unreceptive mood like the Valambi Station Master. He quoted occasionally his master's or Guru's behest that "as he had received liberally from his master he must similarly distribute liberally amongst those that approached him". Baba was distributing not merely wealth, worldly relief and comforts, but also spiritual gifts and spiritual blessings to all and sundry that were capable of receiving those benefits. Baba once quoted in the presence of Lele Sastri,

Apichel siiduracharo bhajate mam ananyabhak

Sadhureva sa mantavyah samyak vyavastito hi sah.

This means, 'Even the most wicked, if he concentrates on or worships ME, the Lord, then he must be deemed to be a Sadhu or a good person. He has begun rightly (and he would soon turn into pure ways and attain spiritual heights)'.

Thus Baba checked vice and weakness in men, giving them purity, strength, etc., and enabling them to rise spiritually. Baba has benefited a large number in this way, but of these we may give a few instances to show how 'Suduracharah', very wicked persons, were benefited by him morally and spiritually. One D.V. Sambhare had the misfortune of serving under a master given to drink, and himself was getting into the grip of the vice. Baba once appeared to him in a dream, sat on his chest, and told him, 'Once or twice will I give you warning. If no heed is taken of the warning, then I will let you have your fate'. The man noticed that he should mend his ways, and swore that he would not touch liquor. However, when his master was sending away his children from India, he gave a feast, and, of course, drinks played an important part. The glasses went round. When the master came to fill up the glass of D.V. Sambhare, Sambhare (being afraid to mention the name of Sai Baba) said 'My

doctor advised me against drink'. The master in a jovial mood said that his doctor also gave him the same advice, but he honoured the advice more in the breach than in the observance. He asked Sambhare to drink. It was a perilous situation. But suddenly by Baba's grace all the electric lights went out, and the whole hall was plunged in darkness. The Master went out to see the cause of the failure of lights. Meanwhile, Sambhare's neighbour obliged Sambhare by himself draining away the whole cup placed before Sambhare. The lights suddenly reappeared, and when the master came, he found that the glass placed before Sambhare was empty and he imagined that Sambhare had taken the drink. This is how Baba saved one of his bhaktas from the temptation of drink.

Another person whom Baba saved similarly from this strong vice of drinking was a goldsmith's son, whose health and even soul were getting seriously imperilled by his increasing addiction to drink. He was advised to go to Baba of Shirdi. He started for Shirdi; even during the railway journey he found his bad habit was losing its hold on him, and when he came to Shirdi the desire for drink was not there. Baba then blessed him and sent him back, and for a good time, he was free from the vice. But this goldsmith had a family God, who wanted drink, and the leavings of the Gods, the Prasad', had to be taken by all the devotees, and thus, he once again got into the old monster's clutch. The habit then grew, and ultimately, the man was ruined by over-drinking.

About other evil habits also Baba has rendered very interesting service. Sri Ramaswami Iyengar, a doctor, accompanied his patient Rao Sahib Subbiah Chetty to Shirdi. There the doctor vowed that he would not take betel and nut (of which he was very fond) after visiting Shirdi. In spite of that vow, the desire for betel was strong upon him. As he sat in a bullock cart along with Subbiah Chetti, the sight of Subbiah Chetti's betels in his hand was too powerful, and the doctor ate some. This man, who had forty years been chewing betel. i.e., betel, nut, and chunam found on this occasion that the betels had burnt up the entire mucous membrane of his mouth. Thereafter for 15 days he could not take pepper water or eat even ordinary food. His vow was thus enforced on him through physical disability by Baba. In the case of Subbiah Chetti himself, he had vowed that he

would give up his habit of taking quids. When he returned from Shirdi, he asked his servant to bring him tobacco. When it was brought and placed before him it looked to him like dung. He felt a repulsion for it and asked the servant to take it away. Thus Baba strengthened the inside - the mentality - of Rao Sahib and enabled him to observe the vow.

Baba is not only a teacher but a controller from within - the ever-watching Guardian angel. One might easily remember how he played the part of the University Proctor in the case of Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe. He had by mistake and carelessness allowed himself to visit the house of a lady with bad reputation, and was closeted with her under circumstances which made his moral ruin imminent. The door was apparently closed. But suddenly it was thrown open, and on the threshold Baba's figure was seen making gestures to Sathe, "What! You have come all this way to your Guru and now you are descending to Hell! What an excellent course!" Like a thief caught in the act, H.V. Sathe felt greatly ashamed and left that lady's house never to visit it again. Similarly his attempt to beat his wife, with a stick for her refusal to accompany him to see the land recently acquired was the occasion for Baba's acting again the watchful guardian angel. Megha was sent by Baba to Sathe, and he came running to Sathe's quarters saying, 'Baba wants you,' just when Sathe lifted up his whip to strike his wife. Thus Sathe was saved from the sin of cruelty on this occasion as he had been saved from the sin of sexual immorality on the previous occasion.

Baba's helps of a similar sort were rendered to many other devotees, even who never saw him before Mahasamadhi. Baba is still exercising his Proctorship and still guiding and warning people. But there is one disadvantage. Baba was dealing with large numbers of devotees. It was not possible to make the entire lot moral and properly behaved, in spite of all the efforts of Baba to correct them. In B.C, &S. 153, Baba Said 'I have been considering long and thinking day and night. All are thieves. But we have to deal with them. I prayed to God night and day for their improvement. God delays and does not approve of the (i. e. my) attitude or grant the prayer. I will wait for a month or two and then see. But living or dead, I will have what I have been praying for. I will not go to Teli or Vani nor

beg of them. People are not good and devoted. They are unsettled in mind. A few friends will gather and talk divine wisdom, and sit and contemplate.' Again in 1918, he said 'People have got bad and give trouble. They are pestering me for money. Moreover, they become shameless. Now I am disgusted'. Once in such a disgusted mood, he went to Nimgam and told the zamindar of the disgusting way in which devotees behaved at Shirdi and added that he wanted to leave Shirdi.

In spite of all this, Baba had to stick on to his place, for Rinanubandha required him there, and he slowly and gradually developed some persons, who would mend others and carry on his work. He told Upasani Maharaj to stay for four years with him. But that Maharaj could not find himself strong enough to continue for more than three years and so left Shirdi without even taking permission of Baba. Baba had told him, "You and I together have to work and improve people and hence the papa purusha in you has been driven out". Baba wanted Upasani Maharaj to develop along lines marked out by him. But unfortunately, Upasani Maharaj took his course at a tangent from Sai Baba's and went off on his own ideas, which were so wholly at variance with Baba's. Baba had to put up with it. Thus Baba did not find all his plans for the moral improvement of others that came to him quite successful. Yet he did his best. He kept several people to Brahmacharya for the required period, namely, Tatya, Dhumal, etc. He regulated the lives of those who wholly surrendered to him. Yet, the work of moral regeneration was not and could never be complete. While doing service, incidentally the work of conveying moral teachings was carried on by Baba, and he gave occasional talks about morality. But we may sum up the whole in the way in which he himself put it to Shama, namely, 'Behave properly', and the way in which he put it to Rao Sahib Galwankar, 'Behave with integrity and probity'. This advice is represented by the Sanskrit stanza.

Slokardhena pravakshyami yad uktam granthakotibhih

Paropakarah punyaya papaya pampeedanam

This means, 'In half a stanza I shall tell you the teaching which has been set forth in crores of moral books. That is benefiting humanity is punya (merit). Hurting others is sinful'. This is a teaching that even children, and sometimes creatures

like dogs also, can understand. Baba expected people to act up to this teaching. What other teachings he gave, we shall set out below, at least in part.

When a great Saint leading a perfectly pure life as a Samartha Sadguru and helping thousands that came to him in the course of about half a century on their way to God is to be described, his utterances are sure to cover practically the entire field of ethics and spirituality, and it is neither possible nor desirable to make anything like an attempt to give a full account of his moral teachings. It will be enough for us to note a few more of the prominent teachings that came from him to benefit his immediate devotees that have revealed their experiences to us. This is specially so because Baba's influencing his devotees was not and is not mainly by any sort of express teaching.

He was moulding his children, as he called his devotees, from inside and he used not merely words but also his gaze, his touch, and even his aura or the will power to remove undesirable tendencies and influences and replace them by useful and holy ones. An excellent instance of such exercise by him is the case of Bala Saheb Bhate.

Bala Saheb Bhate was a brilliant graduate employed as Mamlatdar or Tahsildar at Kopergaon from 1904 onwards. Many of his friends and acquaintances, from near Bombay especially having to go to Shirdi, met him on the way at Kopergaon, and when they declared their object, were jeered at by him, and when they desired him to try himself, he was laughing at them to scorn and would not care to visit. But in 1909, he was actually visiting Shirdi - one might say accidentally except for the fact that Baba's wonderful influence was unseen; and what appears as accident might really well be Baba's pulling. In 1909, when he visited Baba, he just sat before him and looked at Baba. The very look of Baba pierced and transfixed him. He sat on for half an hour, then for one hour, and when reminded by those near him that it was time to move away, had not the slightest inclination to move away but remained, and it was with difficulty that he was pulled away from Baba. Here is a case of what we may term to be fascination. The person whom he loathed and held in high contempt had exercised a fascination over his mind that he could not overcome. He was so

deeply attached to him that he stayed another day, and a third day also at Shirdi though he had no official business there. He made up his mind that, his life's goal being Baba, he should stay with him and that for ever. Wife, child, office, property, all these were simply blacked out of his mind, and the one thing dominated his mental vision was Baba. When at last he was compelled to go, he soon came back again and was thus frequently at Shirdi. At last he made up his mind to give up his office. He remained at Shirdi without even applying for leave of absence. He forgot his official and family or social interests so much so that Baba had to tell some of his official friends like Nana Chandorkar to write on his behalf an application for leave. He had become absolutely indifferent to the office which was till then the be-all and end-all of his existence. In fact, he was the pet of the Collector, as he turned out the best work in the whole of the district. All that went for nothing, and Baba held him by an iron grip. On the fifth day of his stay, Baba put *aageru* cloth (*kashayu* cloth) over his shoulders, and after that his change of heart was complete. This is what he himself in 1913 told O.K. Gurde, who was Sub Judge at Khamgaon. a friend of his. Here, in this case we cannot say that this man's obstinacy and materialistic outlook were overcome by any moral teaching. There was no teaching here. There was only the inner influence changing his heart.

Such moral changes were so frequently effected by Baba that it is difficult for us to enumerate them or say which of them is important. The important moral work of Baba was not orally uttered. Even now it is so. It is not the experiences of devotees that matter most to bhaktas. Even today it is his *inner* working that counts in the improvement and building up of the devotee. His presence, his gaze, his touch had all their effect. Narayan Ashram, a Sanyasi, mentions that Baba had four or more ways of touching people's heads. Sometimes he barely seemed to touch. Sometimes he seemed to press out something from the head. Sometimes he made passes without touching the head. Each of these had its own peculiar effect as intended by Baba. Baba's gaze is described by several devotees. Mrs. Sadasiva Tarkhad says that one felt that Baba's gaze was reading one through and through, as nothing could be concealed from him. Baba

was not merely in one's heart, but in every particle of one's body. That is what one felt when Baba was gazing. This power seems to extend even to the eyes in Baba's *picture* kept in the Dwarakamayee. The Pleader of Thana, Sri G.B. Datar, once visited Baba, but being worldly minded, got frightened at Baba's demand for dakshina and remembered that Narayan Maharaj used to return dakshinas given to him along with sugarcandy. But the same Datar, in 1931 visited Baba's Mandir, after reading Upasani Lilamrita giving an account of Sai Baba. When he entered the Dwarakamayee and gazed at Baba's eyes in the picture kept there, he felt the powerful influence of Baba's eyes even in the picture, and declared that Sai Baba alone was his Master and Guru. Many others gazing at Baba's eyes for purposes of trance or dhyana can vouch for similar powerful influence of Baba on the moral and spiritual characteristics of his devotee through his gaze.

Baba in many ways sowed the seed of morals and spirituality in the hearts of those approaching him, and sometimes almost imperceptibly. Whenever he rendered any worldly help, that help was accompanied by a spiritual seed sowing, and the beneficiary remembered Baba with faith, love and admiration for his power, guidance, and kindness. These thoughts were the seeds from which a huge tree of faith would grow up later on and Baba who sowed the seeds mostly, watered and manured his plant, and in many a case, beginning with worldly benefit, the devotee got on higher and higher spiritual levels. This cannot be called moral teaching but only moral elevation. But Baba's moral teachings have a very wide range. And, before closing this chapter, we may just set out a few of his teachings with perhaps an incident or two for illustrating the same.

Baba's teachings are so common that when set out, they may look like copy book maxims, and some may wonder why these should be set out at all, as everyone knows these moral teachings. What Baba taught was not something new and strange. It is the old, old truths of morality and spirituality that have to be rubbed into each soul and lived up to, and, therefore, Baba would place these truths before the devotee when the appropriate occasion offered itself. Anyhow, in order that a curious reader, wanting to know what sort of teachings Baba's were, might get some satisfaction, we shall give below a few of his teachings and

hope that the reader will not stop with mere curiosity but really proceed to read, digest, absorb, and live upto them and make them part of himself. For instance, about contentment and surrender, Baba used to say, 'God is great. He is the Supreme Master.' (The Arabic equivalent of it is "*Allah Malik*", which phrase was constantly on Baba's lips). Baba also said occasionally, when people thought that he was great, 'How great is God? No one can compare with him. God creates, supports and destroys. His lila (sport) is inscrutable. Let us be content to remain as he makes us, to submit our wills to his.' This is the most important doctrine, the doctrine of submission and surrender. Baba Said, '*Allah Rakega Vahisa Rahena*'. This means 'As God places us, let us remain.' Baba also said, Take what comes. Be contented and cheerful. Never worry. Not a leaf moves but by His consent and will. We should be honest, upright and virtuous. We must distinguish right from wrong. We must each attend to his own duty. But we must not be obsessed by egotism and fancy that we are independent causes of action. God is that Actor. We must recognise his independence and our dependence on Him, and see all acts as His. If we do so, we shall be unattached and free from karmic bondage'.

This is the most essential point in all religions. Baba's whole life was governed by it. He appeared to be ever active. But throughout he knew that God was acting, and he was merely an instrument in the hands of God. He said at times, 'God has agents everywhere, and they have vast powers; and I also have vast powers.' But *abhimana*, the idea that I am doing, has to be completely suppressed in order that one may really have spiritual elevation, peace and happiness.

Another important thing for peace and happiness is love of all creation. Baba's moral teachings were conveyed by his own life and activity. Baba loved all creatures, and the underlying motive of every act of his was love towards all human beings and all creatures. Baba said, 'Love all creatures. Do not fight with any. Do not retaliate nor scandalise any. When any one talks ill of you, that is, against you, pass on unperturbed. His words cannot pierce into your body. Others' acts will affect them alone and not you.' One is very strongly reminded of

the teachings of the great Greek stoic teacher Epictetus, when reading these words. As for activity, Baba was ever active and never idle and His advice was, 'Do not be idle. Work, Utter God's name. Read scriptures'. Baba's advice was always simple and capable of being accepted and acted upon by even persons of the meanest capacity and women and children. He told Chandrabai Borkar, 'We should not harbour envy, rivalry, or combative disposition towards others. If others hate us, let us simply take to Nama Japa and avoid their company'. He told the child Bapu Rao N. Chandorkar 'Hearken to the words of your parents. Help your mother in her tasks. Speak the truth and truth alone'. Baba's regard for truth was so well known. He had no interest, nothing in him, to make him swerve from the path of truth and rectitude. He occasionally had to impress on people like Mrs. M.W. Pradhan the virtue of meekness. The lady had a bit of temper. Baba told her, 'If anyone talks ten words at us, if we reply at all, let us reply with one word. Do not quarrel, retaliate, or bandy words with anyone. Do not give tit for tat'.

Baba's Guru had implanted in him from the earliest stage '*Nishta* and *Saburi*'. '*Saburi*' is patience and perseverance with cheerfulness. Baba had to press this home on some, especially those who were of an impatient nature. Uddhavesa Bua of Omkar on the Narmada banks came to him and asked him at once, 'Where is my Moksha Guru and how is he to be got?' Baba counselled patience, and said, 'Wait for five years, and you will know. How can you swallow at one gulp an entire loaf? Wait for five years and then see'.

As for the need for perseverance, that had to be driven home to persons with weak faith. There was a Prarthana Samajist who went to Baba, having caught up some little faith. However, on his way, before he saw Baba, he had a discussion with someone else about the Gita definition of *Sthitha Prajna* mentioned in Chapter II, verses 48-52, and wanted to know whether Baba had the characteristics of a *Sthitha Prajna*. This discussion unsettled his mind, and when he went to Baba, his mind was in a thoroughly disturbed state. Baba noticed at once his unsettled mind and told Shama, 'Take him and tell him something (of experiences of devotees)'. Then Shama took him to his wada and learning what

happened, he gave him this valuable advice, namely, (1) Despise irresponsible and uninformed people's talk, and (2) place your mind at Baba's feet, and then all will be safe. Have Saburi, and you will be safe. When they returned to Baba, Baba told the Samajist that he should follow Shama's advice.

Baba insisted on harmony amongst his followers. He said, 'If you avoid rivalries and bickerings, God will protect you'. This is specially valuable for promoting Hindu-Muslim relations of harmony amongst Baba's bhaktas and their surroundings. Baba also said 'Return not evil. Return good for evil. Others' words cannot harm you'.

Baba preached industry and patience. Baba said, 'Life is lived in vain if no yoga, yaga, tapas, or jnana be achieved'. He asked a devotee, 'Will you sit idle merely eating your food? Have Saburi, that is patience and courage'. Baba set the example himself of tapas. He kept awake the whole night lying on a small narrow plank making Namasmaraṇ, keeping his eyes open, and holding his mind in trance, telling Mahlsapathy to sit by his side and place his hands on Baba's heart. If Baba fell asleep, Mahlsapathy should wake him up. It was by such rigorous and extraordinary vigils that Baba got grey and also by the amount of pesterings he got from visitors of all sorts, desirable and undesirable. Baba's advice to sadhakas like Abdul, his constant attendant, were special and not applicable to all. He told Abdul, 'Eat very little. Do not go in for a variety of eatables. A single sort or dish will suffice. Do not sleep much. Have dhyana on what is read. Think of Allah, Hari Nama, Hari Nama, Hari Nama'. This applies to every serious minded devotee who wishes to reach God. Baba also rebuked scandal-mongering, himsa to animals, and other forms of irreligious behaviour. About scandal-mongering. he knew who was scandalising whom and where. When in S.M. Naik's place scandalising was going on and when Mathuradas came to Dwarakamayee. Baba at once asked. 'What was Naik saying?' The man felt ashamed of the scandal. Baba then said, "The good and the wicked alike come here. Why draw their frailties and foibles to public notice by depicting them?" When Dixil was in his own quarters scandalising Jesus Christ, and then came to Baba, Baba would not allow him to approach him till he repented.

Once there was a devotee at Shirdi reviling other devotees behind their back. Baba came along and met that man near the Lendi, and pointed out to him a pig eating human dung. Baba showed him the pig and said, 'What is it doing?' That man said, 'It is eating filth'. Baba said, 'You see with what gusto the pig is gorging itself on nightsoil. But we feel it disgusting. This is exactly how you behave. People fret and fume against their own brethren and kinsmen to their hearts' content. Human birth is obtained after much (punya) merit and after obtaining it, is a man to go to Shirdi and commit moral suicide?'

About cruelty to creatures, Baba was ever watching his devotees, wherever they might be and, whenever they might be indulging in such cruelty. Mahlsapathy had hit a sickly dog near his own place, and when he came to Baba, Baba told him, 'There is in the village a bitch sickly like me, and everyone is hitting it. Mahlsapathy felt that Baba was hitting him. Mrs. Khaparde, a very orthodox lady, was cooking her food at the Wada, and then a dog came near. She flung burning fuel at it. Later on she went to Baba and said 'Baba, come to my house for dinner.' Baba then said, 'Yes, I come and you fling burning fuel at me.' Baba's advice on cruelty to creatures might sometimes seem to be extraordinary. When Dixit asked Baba, 'The serpent kills so many people, and so, should not one kill the serpent whenever one sees it?' Baba answered, 'No. The serpent will never kill us unless it is ordered by God to kill us. And if God has so ordered it, we cannot escape. So, do not kill the snake'. Ever afterwards Dixit avoided killing snakes, scorpions, bugs, fleas, and other creatures. Once a mad dog bit a small dog, and the small dog was thought to be rabid, and big dogs were running away from the small dog. The villagers wanted to club the small dog. It ran through the streets and sought sanctuary behind Baba at the Dwarakamayee. The villagers wanted Baba to drive the dog out so that they might kill it. But Baba told them to get out and saved the creature. After all, the dog proved not to be rabid. Similar instructions given by Baba might take numerous pages to relate. So, we might as well stop this chapter about moral teachings with one quotation, which we copy from Sai Satcharitra.

"Unless there is some relationship or connection nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Shri Hari (God) will be certainly pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked and your Verandah to strangers for sitting and resting. If anybody wants any money from you and you are not inclined to give, do not give, but do not bark at him like a dog. Let anybody speak hundreds of things against you, do not resent by giving any bitter reply. If you always tolerate such things, you will certainly be happy. Let the world go topsy-turvy, you remain where you are; standing or staying in your own place look on calmly at the show of all things passing before you. Demolish the wall of difference that separates you from Me; and then the road for our meeting will be clear and open. The sense of differentiation, as I and thou, is the barrier that keeps away the disciple from his Master, and unless that is destroyed the state of union or at-one-ment is not possible. "*Allah Malik*" i.e. God is the sole proprietor, nobody else is our protector. His method of work is extraordinary, invaluable, and inscrutable. His will will be done and He will show us the way and satisfy our hearts' desires. It is on account of Rinanubandha (former relationship) that we have come together. Let us love and serve each other and be happy. He who attains the supreme goal of life is immortal and happy, all others merely exist and merely breathe."

In closing this chapter on Moral Teachings, it is once again necessary to draw the attention of the reader to the fact that Baba did not profess to be a teacher, and to more than 99 per cent of his visitors he did not even appear to be a teacher and was chiefly a granter of wishes. But all the same, he was a powerful instiller of principles and virtue into the hearts of those capable of receiving such impress. The one most important fact to remember about morals and Baba is that Baba was the embodiment of all virtues and Baba did nothing which he did not preach. In himself all the virtues were the efflorescence of the central root in him with which he began as a little child, namely, love for the Guru, love that knows no bounds of time, place, or circumstance, and love that sacrifices anything and everything at its altar. Gratitude, service, equality, justice,

consideration and so many other good qualities that were in him and taught by him were the direct issue of this love, and could not have all been sustained without this love. This is the central point to remember about Baba. This enables the sishya to get more and more like unto the Guru, and by constant meditation on him become the soul of the Guru. "*Apana Sarika Karitat Tatkal*" says Tukaram of Gurus. The sishya grows in love, absorbs the love from the Guru, and returns it with all his soul and body, and does not consider himself as anything except as the lover and the beloved of the Guru. Thus he attains moral perfection, spiritual perfection, perfection of siddhis and perfection of every sort This is the natural result of Baba's moral teachings.

CHAPTER IV

What is God?

This, to some, appears a very childish question to ask, and they promptly retort, 'Is there any one who does not know about God?' But after apologising, if we are again to press them to answer the question, then they begin to flutter and flounder, and find that what first seemed easy is certainly not easy, but one of the hardest tasks. The truth is that the God idea is as widely prevalent as air is in the world. But, when one tries to grasp it, and set it forth, either in the mind or heart or in words, with some definiteness, the task proves impossible. The truth is that God is a peripheral idea and not a central idea. Things like charcoal, silver, food or pencil, represent material objects, which normally appear before our eyes and our minds. As Leibnitz has put it, perfect knowledge is possible about them and all the circumstances about place, time, size, colour, weight, etc., can all be given, and, therefore, when a statement expressing it in all these particulars is made, we say we have "perfect knowledge." But philosophy comes as a poser at the end of all that, and says that we have been describing only attributes, but that we do not know what is the substance behind these attributes. People are unable to answer what substance is behind the said attributes. Similarly about God, We find it quite easy to pray to God and ask some one to pray to God and attribute various things to God or God's activity with perfect clearness in our minds. But when all things stated about God are put together and analysed, then we

discover that God is a mere peripheral idea. We have a faint touch with that idea sufficient for working purposes. Our ideas have not the clearness which they have in dealing with solid objects like charcoal or gold. That is why, we call the latter the central idea and the former the peripheral idea, basing our expressions upon the analogy of the light thrown by a torch upon a field. Where there is a central strong light, on a focus, where everything seems to be clear, and again where that centre is surrounded by gradually lessening light in all directions, the circumference (the peripheral limit) seems to be nowhere. We see things about the circumference (e.g. the like appearance of the sky overhead) and feel sure that there is a circumference, but we cannot locate it with any definiteness. That is the nature of our ideas about God and about other kindred matters.

Therefore, when the question was pressed home about God, many a saint or teacher has given answers which have puzzled devotees who wanted something definite and central. In order to have a preliminary test some questioners come forward and ask a teacher or a saint "Have you seen God? As you are talking about God, this question is asked of you". The answer given is very often dependent upon the mood of the answerer. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, when first approached by Narendra (who later on became Swami Vivekananda). being anxious to grip the soul of his questioner and make him his agent for instructing the world about matters, moral and spiritual, had to answer, 'Yes, I have seen God'¹. He also promised to make him (Narendra) see God. In one sense, this is true. There are certain things seen which give one the impression that one has seen God. There are hundreds of persons who have this experience and to tell them that God cannot be seen is to horrify them and make them nullify themselves. But philosophers have a way of getting behind the experience of the God-seers, and telling them that what they see is not God but something else, and their net impression is that they see God. These philosophers have also been working in ancient times when Rishis were writing the Upanishads. Kenopanishad for instance goes on declaring line after line, verse after verse, that God cannot be sensed, that he is not seen or heard or felt or even thought of.

*Yat chakshusha na pascyati yena chakshumsi pascyati Tadeva
brahma tvam viddhi na idam yad idam upasate.*

YaT manasa na manute yena ahur manomatam.

Tadeva brahma tvam viddhi na idam yad idam upasate.

The first stanza means, 'What one does not see with the eye but that by which the eyes see. know That alone is Brahman - not this which people worship as God'. The second stanza means, 'What the mind cannot form a conception of, but what is said to be that by which the mind is conceived, that alone is Brahman, not what people here worship as God'. This forms the *Neri-Neti* portion, that is the negative, or rather the chiefly negative portion, of the description of Brahman or God. There is also a very a small panicle in the above two which sets forth the positive aspect of Brahman. But it is better to take it up after we come to explain the more popular conception of God. "God" and "Brahman", we shall use for the purpose of this Chapter as synonyms.

What is God? That which you appeal to when you are in trouble, and that which helps you when you cannot help yourself and when your friends on whom you depend cannot help you, something Superhuman, something kind, something all-powerful which comes to your rescue just at the moment when without it you are totally at a loss. Therefore, God is conceived of as a *power*. God is conceived of as something *kind*. God is conceived of as something *Superhuman*, and God is that which *we approach in times of trouble to obtain relief*, and *God is that which gives that relief*. This is a fairly correct analysis of the popular idea of God as it occurs in most cases.

Apart from giving relief, there is an idea of God also formed by people, When they approach what is vast, what is immense, and what is perfect, they express it thus: - This is God'. Everything in place and time is limited, changing; and everything dies, perishes, and is transformed, The human heart naturally longs to see something which is above all this, which is beyond place and time and the power of change and death, and which will give satisfaction to us by absorbing us and saving us from all this limitation, change and trouble. Therefore God is conceived of in this instance as something transcending the changing

manifested Universe, which has the power to absorb the soul unto itself and free it from the miseries of this changing Universe. This is the next higher idea of God which is popular and well understood.

Beyond this if we begin to analyse our notions of God, we get finer and finer and more conclusive ideas into metaphysics. The Taittiriya Upanishad sets forth that these difficulties occurred even to Superhuman beings. Indra, a God, and Virochana, an Asura were both puzzled by the question 'What Brahman is'. Brahman is felt or talked of by so many, and both these wished to understand definitely what Brahman is, and they approached the Universal father Prajapati, and asked him the question.

After making them duly observe the rules of preparation for realising such a highly important branch of knowledge, they were told what Brahman is. A similar passage occurs in the same Upanishad where Varuna, the father of Bhrigu, one of the earliest of the seven Rishis, is asked by the latter, 'What Brahman is'. Varuna, that is the Supreme, told Bhrigu, the enquirer, that he had understood clearly or felt that he understood clearly the Universe consisting of *Vak, Manas, Indriyas*, etc., and Brahman is that which is the universal origin of all this, that Brahman is the sustainer of the Universe which *he manifested from himself*. Finally that Brahman is the withdrawer into himself of all that is manifested as Universe. Bhrigu starts with a known Universe or what he considers to be a known Universe, wherein the law of cause and effect is bound to have full operation. Naturally he wishes to apply that law to the whole of the Universe and not to particular particles only. Varuna told him that the first cause, the original cause of the Universe, that which existed before the Universe, is that Brahman, the Primordial source of power and existence and that naturally it must be the same power that upholds the Universe and keeps it working in its present form. As everything we see before us changes and has an end, the whole Universe also will have its end, and the end of all that Universe is Brahman, It is the Changeless from which change *has come, by which it is maintained*, and in which it will finally merge. This is an idea that may take some time to be received and more time to be absorbed and realised, and its final realisation would result

in the individual soul giving up the false identification with the body and to consider itself as identical with that Primordial Brahman, as a result of which identification, it becomes the Brahman. This was Vamna's teaching to Bhrigu. Up-to-date, we have nothing better than this teaching.

Mostly it is understood to refer to the Impersonal Brahman, at least it is so understood by the Advaitins and the followers of Sri Sankaracharya. Visishtadvaitins and Madhvas would consider the Primordial Force to be a personality, and direct their disciples to retain their personality, and they themselves never wish to surrender their personality into the Supreme (with a view to losing their personality). Even in the final stage of life or merger, the latter two schools want the personality of the Jivas to be retained as separate entities from the personality of the Supreme and broken themselves in that state to the pomegranate seeds in the ripe fruit. This is a very rough but still fairly accurate summing up of Hindu philosophy on this subject of God. Personal and Impersonal. But a fuller statement is bound to be very long and very subtle, and cannot be put forward here. Suffice it to say that for actually knowing God, one must actually go through the process of knowing God and not merely read about it or talk about it. That process of state is called *Brahma Jnana* and it is a proverbial phrase that *Brahma Jnana* is the hardest thing for man to get. It is not everyone that can have it. Even for ordinary progress, a great deal of preparation is necessary, and the approaching Jiva must be pure, receptive, full of faith and perseverance - faith in an *Ishtmurthi* of God, and in equally powerful faith in a Guru. He must completely surrender all that he things is his, and all that he is, for the purpose of this Adhikari.

Amongst the thousands that approached Baba, just a few tried to get knowledge of this from Baba, and of them very few were real adhikaris. A great many were totally unfit and mostly were brushed aside by Baba. Occasionally Baba demonstrated their unfitness and revealed that fact to them. The Kopergaon Station Master, called Valambi Master, had no faith in Baba, and was still induced by Das Ganu to go to Baba to see what sort of person he was, and how much he could learn from him. When the Station Master with Das Ganu

reached Shirdi, and went near Baba's Mosque, Baba was taking up a number of pots, washing them, and placing them mouth downwards. The Station Master got impatient, and asked Das Ganu, 'What is all this?' At Das Ganu's instance, Baba gave the reply. Baba said, 'Every pot coming to me comes with mouth downwards'. That is, people came to Baba with their minds closed against all influence and unreceptive, that nothing could be poured into them by Baba. People who went to Baba were unreceptive. Others also who approached Baba wanted him to use all his siddhi powers for various temporal purposes.

Occasionally some turned up wanting *Brahma Jnana* from Baba to be handed over to them like a packet of sweets across the counter. One such person was a rich man who went to Baba, and expressly put the question to Baba, 'What is God like?' Baba did not address the visitor, but asked some devotee near him to go to Bagchand Marwadi and tell him that Baba wanted Rs.iOO, and then bring the money. That man returned in a minute and said, 'The Marwadi (Money lender) says that he has no money, and sends his namaskar'. Baba again sent this man to another moneylender to ask him for the loan of Rs.iOO. This time also the devotee returned saying that the moneylender said that he had no money. Baba next said, 'Fetch Nana Saheb Chandorkar'. Nana came. Then Baba told Nana that he wanted Rs.iOO. Nana at once wrote a chit to the same Bagchand Marwadi for a loan of Rs.iOO, and in a minute the money came from that Marwadi, and Nana placed that sum in Baba's hands. Baba then said, 'It is all like this in this world.' The impatient visitor could make out nothing at all and could not understand why, when he asked about God. Baba did not answer the question but went on sending people for loans, and asked Das Ganu why Baba did so. Das Ganu said that Baba had answered his question. The visitor wanted to know how. Das Ganu said, 'When others asked for money, it was not forthcoming, but when Nana Saheb asked for it, the money was at once forthcoming. So, the man who merely asks, "What is God like" does not get to know it. But the man who is qualified to know that and only the man who deserves to know that, gets that knowledge. Baba's answer, therefore is "Deserve before you desire Brahman".'

On another occasion, a very rich man came to Baba with a large amount of money in his pocket, and with great anxiety to avoid extra expenditure, as far as possible, he had engaged a cab for the journey from Kopergaon to Shirdi and back, promising to return in half an hour. So, the man came in a hurry to Baba and said, 'Baba, show me God, Brahman. It is for this I have come all this long way. People say that Shirdi Baba reveals Brahman very quickly.' Baba said, 'Do not fear. Immediately and clearly I will show you. This is not a matter that could be put off. It is hard to get questioners seeking illumination like you. (Here Baba's irony was hardly understood by the man). Most people seek wealth, cure of disease or trouble, honour, position, or perpetual pleasure and other earthly objects. None wants God. Oh, I long to see those who long to see God. Now, Brahman is the root cause of the Universe, That which accounts for Solar and Planetary motions, variations of seasons and division of all functions. One must know, i.e., realise Brahman before death. Else there will be an ever recurring cycle of births and deaths. Realisation gives '*Kevaia Advaita Sukham*'. A Guru gives it and only a Guru can'.

Baba then turned to some others and sent a boy out with these words: "Go, tell Nandalal Marwadi, Baba urgently wants a hand loan of Rs.5/- and bring the money". The boy went and found the marwadi absent. Baba sent more messages to absent men. The rich man was getting impatient at Baba's failure to give him *atmajnan* or sight of God, more especially because delay would mean extra payment to the tonga walla whom he had engaged for the return journey also. He saw, of course, that Baba wanted Rs.5 and he could stop the repeated requests of Baba for Rs.5 by paying it out of the Rs.250/-he had in his pocket. But he was oppressed with the fear that if he advanced the loan, it might prove irrecoverable. He asked Baba, 'Will you help me to grasp Brahman?' Baba replied, 'You see what I have been doing all this while is to enable you to see God even as you are now seated. Have you understood nothing? I want five. One must surrender the five to get at Brahman. One must surrender the five senses (*Indriyas*), the five *pranas* and *manas*, *Buddhi*, *Ahankar* (Mind, Intellect and Ego) (all of which involve *Vairagya* i.e., detachment). The road to *Brahma*

Jnana is hard to tread. All cannot tread it. When it dawns, there will be light. One who feels unattached to things terrestrial and celestial is alone competent to have *Brahmajnan*'.

The man found that Baba had read his strong attachment to the Rs.5/- which he considered more important than getting *Brahmajnana* Upadesa.

Baba taught the absolute importance of complete surrender of *Tan Man Dan*, that is, body, mind and possessions, as an essential preliminary to fitness to understand and be absorbed in God. This surrender is set out in *Srimad Bhagavata* and other works. One way of Baba's teaching people is to ask a person to go and attend the *pothy* reading of a particular passage. Once Baba asked Buty for Rs. 161/2 *dakshina*, when Buty had not that sum on hand. Buty replied that he had not the money just then. Then Baba asked him to go to H.S. Dixit, and not only ask him for this Rs.161/2 but also to be listening to the *pothy* which Dixit was reading. Accordingly Buty came to Dixit and asked for the money. Dixit had stopped his practice and had little cash on hand. So H.S. Dixit replied that he had only Re.1/- in his possession, and could not advance Rs.161/2. Buty said, "Baba asked me, however, to listen to your *pothy*". Then Dixit read his *Bhagavata*, and the first stanza that he read was—

Kayenavacha manasendriyaira Buddhyatmanava prakrutes swabhavar

Karomi yatyat sakalam parasmai Srinan narayanayeti samarpayami

This is with reference to the complete surrender of all acts to God. And Brahmins, after performing ceremonies, close all their ceremonies with *Iswararpanam* of the ceremonies gone through or mantras practised, by uttering this stanza. Now Baba had asked for Rs.161/2. What has Rs.161/2 to do with this stanza? Firstly there are seventeen phrases in this stanza. Next the objects for surrender mentioned are 16 in number, but *Chittra* has been omitted in the text. So says the *Jnaneswari* commentary. If that is added, it would make the objects to be surrendered 17. But *Chittra* is only half. So, the 16 1/2 objects mentioned there are directed to be surrendered to God. And Baba is God. So the direction of Baba was that Buty, Kaka, and all other devotees should in accordance with

this stanza give him Rs.16¹/₂ that is, *surrender their entire personality*, which are thus reckoned as 161/2 in number.

As to further steps to know God, Baba gave full details to Radha Bai Deshmukhin. She was determined to get upadesa mantra out of Baba. On that occasion Baba showed that persons who came forward with questions 'Have you seen God', 'What is God', etc, were setting about in the wrong fashion, and would get little benefit. 'God' Baba said, is not something to be grasped in a psychology or philosophy class or something to be achieved with the utterance of Vedic mantras to be got by heart in a Vedic class.

*nayamatma pravachanena tabhyo no medhaya na bahuna scrutena
yamevaisha vrunute tena labhyah tasyaisha vntnute tanoom svam*

Seeing God is a realisation by the soul that surrenders itself entirely in a particular manner to one who is capable of imparting God-realisation, and therefore, the real truth, the most precious truth of God-realisation, was revealed by Baba to just one or two of his devotees who showed themselves to be in dead earnest and who had fitted themselves for at least putting their steps on the threshold of *Brahma Jnana* or God-realisation, These two were Radha Bai Deshmukhin and Anna Saheb Dabolkar. Though an account has been given of these earlier, still the previous secret given to them may be repeated here. The reader should read it scores of time.

Radha Bai Deshmukhin had come with the determination to make Baba her Guru and to get upadesa from him in order to attain all that Baba had achieved in the matter of God-realisation. So she went and asked Baba to give her upadesa. Baba did not respond. Then, she hit upon *satyagraha*. She retired to her quarters and resolved not to eat or drink anything at all till Baba gave her upadesa, and if death should follow, she was prepared for it. Noting this severe resolve of hers, practised for three days, Shama, who was living in that wada thought it wise to go to Baba and tell him, 'Here is this woman determined to kill herself unless you give upadesa. Why not utter some God's name and make her take it as upadesa?' Then Baba sent for her and told her, "Mother, I am your child. You are my mother. Why do you think of dying and torturing yourself? Take

pity on me, your child. I am a beggar. Look here, my Guru was a great saint and highly merciful. I fatigued myself in trying to serve him and yet he did not utter any mantra in my ear. Instead he first shaved me clean and then begged of me two pice. What he wanted was not metallic coin—he did not care even for gold, but only *Nishta* and *Saburi*, i.e. *faith* and *courageous patience*. I gave these to him and at once he was pleased.

"Mother, *Saburi* is courage, do not discard it. It ferries you across to the distant goal. It gives manliness to men, eradicates sin and dejection and overcomes all fears.

"For 12 years I waited on my Guru, who is peerless and loving. How can I describe his *love* to me? When he was Dhyanaasta (in love trance) I sat and gazed at him; and we were both filled with Bliss. I cared not to turn my eye upon anything else. Night and day I pored upon his face with an ardour of love that banished hunger and thirst. The Guru's absence, even for a second, made me restless. I meditated upon nothing but the Guru and had no goal or object other than the Guru. Unceasingly fixed upon him was my mind. Wonderful indeed the art of my Guru! I wanted nothing but the Guru and he wanted nothing but my love. Apparently actionless, he never neglected me, but always protected me by his glance.

"That Guru—I tell the truth, sitting as I do in this Masjid— never blew any mantra into my ear; nor do I blow any into yours. Go thou and do likewise.

"If you make me the sole object of your thoughts and aims, you will attain Paramartha, the supreme goal. Look at me with undivided attention; so will I look at you. This is the only truth my Guru taught me. The four sadhanas and the six sastras are not necessary. With entire confidence, trust your Guru. That is enough."

The lady bowed, accepted the advice and gave up her satyagraha.

This, as we find in so many puranas, was repeated by Shama to Dabolkar. Here is again the advice given by Sai Baba to Dabolkar with words apparently different but really conveying it, Baba said to Dabolkar once, 'Give me a dakshina of Rs.15'. As he had not the money; Baba sent him to Shama to ask him for

Rs.15, and also to stay with him for a while, have a chat, and then bring the Rs.15 as dakshina which Shama would give. When Dabolkar reported this to Shama, he was puzzled. He said, 'Look at this Baba. He is sending big pandits like you to fools like me. As for the dakshina of Rs.15, I have no money, and I can only offer my namaskars. As for talking, I do not know what to tell you'. After a time, Shama told Dabolkar of the story of Radha Bai Deshmukhin. Then Dabolkar returned to Baba and narrated to him his talk with Shama. Baba then said, 'Our art is unique. Remember this. To get *Atmajnan*, *Dhyana* is needed, i.e., the *Attna Anushtana* that pacifies and carries the mind into *Samadhi*. So *give up all desires* and *dwell in your mind upon God in all*. If the mind is thus concentrated, the Goal is achieved.

'For Dhyana, meditate on me either as with form or as formless, mere Ananda. If such formless contemplation is hard, then think of my form, just as you see it here. Think of it night and day. With such meditation, the mind dissolves into unity (i.e., *attains Laya*). The difference between subject and object (me and you) and the act of contemplation will be lost. This results in *Chaitanya Ghanata*, *Brahma Samarasata*. The Guru's glance is bread and milk to the pupil'. Baba gave sugarcandy prasad to Dabolkar and said, 'If you keep this instruction in mind, it will be as sweet as this sugarcandy'. Baba recommended the study of Sravana of the Katha followed by Manana, Nidhidhyasa, Smarana, and Dhyana, all of which will lead to realisation of Ananda Ghana. Baba said 'That which is seen is the manifestation of Brahman through Maya and will dissolve again into Brahman. Look into the six sastras to see if the Atman is one or as many as there are jivas. The crown of Jnana is the realisation of the one Atman, from which everything has issued.

'By Rinanubandha, you have come to me. Have regard to Rinanubandha. Whoever or whatever creature comes to you, do not drive them away but receive with due consideration. Give food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, and clothes to the naked. Then God will be pleased. Do not bark at people. Be not pugnacious. Bear with others' reproach. Speak only gentle words. This is the way to happiness. Let others and the world turn topsy-turvy, but do not mind that.

Keep on to your own course straight. The world maintains a wall—the wall of differentiation between oneself and other, between you and me. Destroy this wall. God is the supreme Lord. Allah Malik. Wondrous, precious, and long enduring are his works. Your object will be fulfilled in due course. We shall both attain bliss by mutual love.'

Thus Baba's answer to the question 'What is God' is that the question cannot be answered in words of course, as the real truth about God is one to be felt at heart. One should grow into God and then only he knows God. It is only by developing the little spark of Love that Baba will ignite in your heart, and blowing it into a name, that you can be transformed into a mass of love. God is love, nothing but love. Everything it touches is turned into love. Even the basest creatures feel the power of the purely loving soul, and tigers and murderers give up their qualities in the presence of a fiercely loving soul. It is only when a soul gets to be so very powerful, magnetic, or dynamic with love, it understands and expresses God as love. No other answer to the question 'What is God' is worth having. So, this is Baba's answer to the question 'What is God?'

CHAPTER V

Religion and Commonsense

Some people are apt to fancy that commonsense is some special peculiar faculty with which a few people or a number of people are invested. It is just as well to correct that error at once. Commonsense is no special faculty. It is the exercise of the ordinary powers of every mind utilised in observing facts, whether facts of life, modes of behaviour, their effects, or facts of nature, etc. and the arrival at the conclusion as to the most appropriate course of conduct or the most proper inference from the facts and positions observed. Religion is found throughout the human race and therefore, the commonsense of the entire humanity dictates the course of conduct called religion. No doubt the course of religious life in various countries and at various times have differed very widely.

Some ideas underlying such conduct are found to be fit to be called systems of philosophy. These systems have been boldly declared in some cases and we find one system often opposed to another. Nothing is more often heard in

religious circles, Hindu and Christian, than the assertion that life is a vale of tears, that the best thing for a man to do is to get rid of it so that he may reach an eternal Heaven where everything is peace, bliss, and happiness. This may be called the *pessimistic religion*- The converse of it is the optimistic religion. Many people in many countries have rebelled against the idea that life is all bitter. Commonsense shows that if life is bitter, people would part with it readily and cheerfully. In fact, nobody likes to give up life whatever may be the privations, sorrows and troubles he may be put to. In spite of numerous grievances, troubles, pain and sorrow, the general drift of life is found to be on the whole bearable and happy for the majority of mankind at any rate. Therefore the optimistic religion is one of self-complacency linked with the idea of God. Without that link, it will not be religion. It will be merely barren conceit, but people who are in a mood to observe the existence of higher powers and who seek the explanation of the various phenomena around them in the existence of an all powerful, knowing, benevolent supreme power, find that the world with its preponderance of joy, especially one's own individual life is due to that Supreme Ruler, God. So, the optimist in religion is thankful to God, recognises the numerous beneficial laws and principles obtaining everywhere and he makes the best use of these laws for promoting the greatest good of himself and of humanity, not merely for the present moment but for life as a whole. Many consider that Hinduism is pessimistic, but this is an inaccurate statement. In fact, far too many here are optimistic amongst the religious in conduct and experience while uttering pessimism with lips. Some twist passages in well-known scriptures to suit their ideas. In latter day works in India, there is no doubt an abundance of pessimistic literature. Pessimism has become the fashion with many a man, and is too often assumed to be the basis of religion.

This is not a matter which one can view with complacency. To be fair to oneself and to God, and to understand Sri Sai and other great souls, one should frankly face the truth and see whether life is really a vale of tears. If any one conscientiously analyses the nature of all the experiences he has, say, within the last day or week or month or year, he will have to admit that the majority of

experiences are pleasant and joyous. Even if a man is not in good health, the few pleasures that are allowed to him give him so much joy, and the power of recuperation of health is inside each individual. One feels that there is a vast preponderance of joy and material for joy in life, and as the Giver of all things is God, one must be thankful to God for providing the existing good and the power to develop one's life so as to provide more and more of good for oneself and for his surroundings. It is not necessary to go exhaustively into the latter day pessimistic authorities. It is enough if we take the earlier authorities e.g. the Bhagawad Gita, which is the summary of the Upanishads and therefore cannot be considered to be a latter day publication. The Gita does not say that life is bitter and a thing to be eschewed. There are two sentences in the Gita, which must be examined. One sentence is—

Anityam asukam lokam

Imam prapya bhajasv mam

This means, 'Being in a world which is not happy and which is evanescent, take refuge in Me and worship Me'.

The other sentence is —

Maam tipetya punarjanma dhuhkalayam ascascvalam

Na aapnuvanti mahaatmanah samsiddhim paramam gataah.

This means, 'The great souls, who have attained the goal of their existence, seek God and escape this existence which is full of sorrow and which is evanescent'. The second sentence is but the repetition of the previous idea. Now it is well-known that a single sentence should not be taken out of a whole composition as indicating the author's ideas, especially when separated from the context. Here the context is all important. Sri Krishna addressed these two sentences towards Arjuna in a discourse which resulted from Arjuna's absolute despondency and declaration that he found nothing in life worth living for and that life was bitter to him from any aspect whether the battle he was about to start was won or lost. So Sri Krishna's words saying that life was painful referred to *Arjuna's* state and view that life was painful.

There is abundance of evidence in other parts of the Gita to show that life properly lived is not painful. Again the Gita rests upon the Upanishads. The Upanishads contain numerous views of numerous Rishis uttered at various times under various circumstances. As to the question of life being bitter, it cannot be said that the Upanishads declared it to be so. (1) Schedule of Bliss given in Taittiriya Upanishad begins with experienced human bliss of a life time of a virtuous and healthy youth; (2) When an analysis of life is given in the Upanishads, we find that there is a clear statement that the central keystone of life, its nucleus or pith of it is that life is essentially bliss. Life-human is analysed, and the human life called Jiva is resolved into Brahman, which is Satchidananda. In the Panchakosa Vidya life is analysed into five sheaths. The *Annamaya kosa*, the *Pranamaya kosa*, the *Manomaya kosa*, and the *Vignanamaya kosa*, are the first lower four sheaths of the central factor, namely, *Anandamaya kosa* or *Ananda*. Man is said to realise it everyday in his deep sleep when all other *kosas* are forgotten. (3) When asked as to what Brahman is, the pupil investigates what constitutes Brahman. The Upanishad i.e. seer says first that *Anna*.....to be Brahman but not really Brahman.

Then *prana*, then *manas*, and then *vijnana* or reason, all these thrown out, and it is only bliss or Ananda that is said to be Brahman or God. *Anando Brahmeti, Vyajanath*. That is 'He knew that Ananda was bliss or God'. The individual soul is declared to be part and parcel of or identical with Brahman or God. So with that as the central essence of the Upanishad, one cannot say that life of the individual is miserable or a mere magazine of pain. It will be so, if the laws regulating it are not properly observed. If God's ordinances are violated, then pain results, pain being the stimulus to redirect the individual to follow Dharma. So, there is no sufficient theoretical basis for the position that life is sorrow.

Theories apart, let us consider practice. Here there are Gurus and Gurus. Some merely repeat and make their pupils repeat dicta about the painfulness of life. But there are other Gurus who point out that life properly lived is full of the joy of living, the joy of performance of duty. One who is determined not to

swallow conventionalities and give up his happiness may find great solace in approaching Gurus of the latter type.

Sri Sai Baba is pre-eminent among Gurus who shook off conventional and meaningless aphorisms and shibboleths drowning people in pessimistic ideas and making them inert and unfit for life's activities. Sri Sai Baba had various devotees, large numbers of whom believed that life in samsara was painful. Only one or two seem to have had the courage to mention it to Baba, for example, Nana Saheb Chandorkar. As soon as Nana Chandorkar told Baba, 'Baba! this samsara is dreadful. I do not wish to touch it even with a pair of tongs, Let me be free from it,' Baba retorted that though there was some grain of sense or meaning in what he said, the total of what he said was absurd. Baba said, 'Your idea that the sorrows of life can be escaped by man by running away from society into the forest, etc., is absurd. Wherever you go, you have got your body and mind, and your body and mind give you your joys and sorrows in any place and every place. The body, as long as it lasts, must produce its *prarabdha karma* of sorrows and joys. Therefore the proper course would be to face facts and lead the proper life'. Rebirth is considered a terror by many. But Baba did not, even on one out of the numerable occasions when he mentioned rebirth, say that rebirth was a matter for sorrow. He mentioned numerous births of his own in the past, and said that he would be born again, and nowhere did he say that rebirth was a deplorable fact. He said that as long as any pupil of his was still undeveloped, he would be born again and again with him until he took him to God. Such a life of Baba being reborn again and again to see to the safety and success of people's lives is far from being a life of sorrow. It is a series of Avatars and no one has the hardihood to say, outside the lines of poetry, that God in undergoing Avataras is undergoing suffering.

Vishnuryene dasavaiara gahane kshipto mahan sankate,

Brahma yena kulalavat myamito brahmandabandodare

That is, Karma is addressed by the poet jocularly by saying that even Maha Vishnu was drawn by karma into ten Avataras or rebirths. This is of course poetic

flair. It is ridiculous to suppose that God takes Avatara by compulsion of karma. God takes fresh life whenever he considers fit of his own free will.

Yadayadahi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata

Abhyuttanam adharmasya tadatmanam srujamiaham

That is, 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and an uprising of unrighteousness, then I (God) incarnate myself in human form in order to help the good, curb the wicked, and establish dharma'. This free will of God to take up a human form is not considered to be any pain. Therefore, when a life modelled on such activities, for instance, the life of Sri Sai Baba, is being reborn for the benefit of devotees, it is ridiculous to suggest that rebirth is pain. In fact there is a pleasure in taking pains on behalf of others. That highest pleasure is *scanti*, mental calm, and the correct view therefore is that if one can work himself up to be free from excessive attachment and excessive repulsion and lead a life of the golden mean, to enjoy as much poise or peace as possible in this present life and ensure power control one's future lives and carry them on the same lines and promote the benefit of all, that life is a brilliant and happy period. And a series of such lives is one brilliant and happy continuous span. For these great souls remember all their previous and future births even, and their life is anything but unhappy. Therefore, Baba by his words and deeds exploded the theory that life is a vale of tears necessarily for everyone.

One form which pessimism takes in matters of religion is misanthropy and absolute seclusion from all human contacts. Timon of Athens is the Beau ideal of this class. There is an abundance of direction in spiritual books regarding shunning of *sanga* and the need for *ekanta* or solitude for a Yoga practitioner. Some people forgetting the difference between the beginner's stage and the later stages think that everyone religiously minded would be doing the best by running away from society and from all human contact and getting into a perch in some remote forest or some remote hill in order to forget his body in absolute trance for days, weeks, and months, as according to Valmiki's Ramayana Viswamitra did by way of tapas for becoming a Brahman. This notion is eminently unpractical and anyone who tries it will be quickly rewarded with severe punishment both in

body and mind, may be, even by loss of life. The miserable ending of such a life, with pain and sorrow in the mind, far away from all human help and sympathy can never be the ideal for any person with commonsense. Sri Sai Baba and several other prominent saints warned people against being carried away by such examples and trying such feats of asceticism (fit for perhaps one in a million). For persons living in society, it is absolutely absurd and even cowardly to run away from the midst of their contacts and seek calm and relief in some distant, remote, uninhabited place. Wherever we go, the mind is with us with its past traces giving us real company though unseen and imposing a number of mental fancies and feelings which one cannot escape from. The attempt is purely infructuous to avoid the physical while the physical is enshrined in the mental from which one cannot get away. As Emerson said, 'When you seek to fly from me, I am the wings with which you fly'. The mind seeks to escape from itself, but it cannot. One wants to escape from Prakriti or Nature, but one cannot do so at least instantaneously. A very, very, gradual and partial change of nature is possible, but escape from nature is an absurdity. Many people find that their present contacts with family, friends, acquaintances, social circles, etc., are the causes of much pain and that these drag them down, in their effort to attain purity of soul and ability to identify themselves with the Paramatma or be forever at the feet of Parameswar. These contacts were not created in a day and cannot be cut off in a minute. They have become part and parcel of one's nature and they have to be reckoned with. If one understands them aright and uses them properly, far from being impediments in one's spiritual progress they may be made the stepping stones of higher and higher progress.

To take one instance, let us consider *Love*. Love towards one's wife, children, parents, sisters brothers, and friends, is one of the commonest items, and many consider them even in their ordinary stale ennobling, but those intrepid souls burning with eagerness to attain the highest in a minute, find that these social shackles are an absolute bar to any attempt at thinking of the highest even for a few moments and absolute bars for absorption in the highest. Hence they desire to escape from these fetters. Now this question has been raised and

solved by great saints like Sri Sai Baba, and if we wish to make satisfactory progress, we cannot do better than seek their aid at present and follow their example and the counsels they gave and give to various persons at various times.

First let us take up theory and authorities. Even, from the point of theory and authority, the warnings against family fetters are few and of later day origin.

Kaate kaantaa kaste put rah

Samsaro uyam ateeva vichitrah

This means that, Sri Sankara says in his Moha Mudgara, "Think on this constantly: Who is 'your wife' and who is 'your son?' This samsara (family) is most surprising". These words were evidently addressed to sanyasis who have to shed their previous life and start a new ashram with new ideals, and have no application to persons who wish to achieve spiritual progress even from their present ashram, say, Grihasthasrama or Brahmacharya Asrama, take for instance, love to the wife mentioned above. This is a fairly common feature of social life, and no doubt, in the vast majority of cases, wives being what they are, having a wife proves a drag upon a man's chances of progress, except perhaps for this that the wife often gives trouble and troubles make man think of his spirit and of God. But this need not necessarily be so, and in numerous cases is not the fact and in any case thinking of God is practised by grihasthas. A wife is intended by the sastras to be a *Sahadharamacharini*, that is, a companion or helpmate to one in social and religious life enabling him to fulfil his various duties to members of his family, strangers, guests, etc. In that view, there is no necessity to have any revulsion at the idea of having a wife. Relationship towards the son is very similar. Usually a son is loved very dearly by both the parents and a son is said, according to puranic ideas, to be a necessity for saving one from going to hell (*Put Naraka*), But a son reminds one that he can continue the geneological line only through the son, and that the family's status, name, fame, and traditions require some one to carry on the work of oneself, and the son may become the prop of one's life when one gets into the last stage of life *sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* taste, *sans* all, *sans* everything.

The love of offspring is deeply implanted in nature and is perhaps best illustrated in the case of the tigress which, when lying down with a cub, will not allow persons to come even within a distance of one hundred yards for fear that safety of the cub may be endangered. The tigress is fierce when it has its cub with it and that is due to the fact of maternal love. Philoprogenitiveness is a fact of nature, and phrenologists locate a portion near the pituitary gland as its location. As for the need for the love of progenys apart from the tigress, let us go to the first tigress that begot the Universe. '*So Akamayata Bahusyam Prajayeya Iti*'. This means, 'He (Brahman) desired (this): Let me become many and have issue'. It is that same desire for issue that originated the universe that is still underlying the desire for issue and the love of issue in every being, whether feline or human. Such an urge cannot be a mistake of nature, and cannot be considered fit for absolute condemnation. There may be necessity for curbing it, moderating it, regulating it, or otherwise dealing with it. But the total extinction and abhorrence of the idea of having issue or abhorrence for the issue instead of love for the issue is not found. No doubt there are cases of parents who poison the child or children to get wealth, etc. But these are monstrous freaks of nature and not to be held as models for a religious aspirant.

Apart from all question of authority, going into the principle, we see that love is in itself a very noble idea and a human being with love is far superior to one without love. So noble indeed it is that most religions declare that *God is Love*. Love beams as bliss. God is Love and Bliss, and we find the statement that God is Love and Love is God not only in English poerty but also in other literature. What is the meaning of the term, 'God is Love?'¹ What is God in the first instance? God is conceived of as the primary source of all manifestation or put into personal language, God is treated as the father of all creatures.

Father of all in every age In every clime adored. By saint or savage or by sage, Jehovah Jove or Lord.

A father, human or divine, naturally loves his children, and God is conceived of by every religionist as loving all created beings with equal love, and yet we find persons of several religions sometimes condemning love as a fetter

and feeling a great desire to get away from love. If love is banished from the soul, then nothing is left. In fact God himself vacates the heart when love is driven away from it. Pure love being bliss, a heart without love must be as barren as a rock, and it is difficult to believe that anybody should desire to become a barren rock instead of being a person with feelings who can appreciate love and return love. The harmful working of the principle of love in actual practice can be prevented by noting how the harm comes in.

A man with limited resources having some sense is very anxious to ensure that the benefits which his worldly goods enable him to give his sons are not shared away by others as that may diminish the quantity which the sons might get. Hence he begins to be jealous of or hating other people for the sake of his sons. This is called exclusive love or more properly 'exculsive attachment' for all attachment is not love. Pure love ought to have no element of hatred in it. God's love to all his creatures is pure love. There is no element of hatred in that love and there can never be. That is the model for all persons who care to have love in their soul. To avoid the danger of love of offspring developing into hatred of others, one ought to constantly recall one's social duties and one's duties to oneself.

Harbouring hatred is harbouring poison. One's real nature is destroyed by the insertion of even a small idea of hatred in it. One gets miserable if one hates others, for when there is hatred, there is ever-present peril to one's own safety and comfort even temporal. It is the nonhater that is free from danger. "*Lokat na udviyate*". Love, i.e. pure love, leads to sacrifice. And sacrifice should never have any touch of hatred or contact with hatred in it. If I sacrifice to my God and hate the other Gods, the work I do is not the work of God but of Satan. Love can be enabled and made purer by constant watching of oneself and one's behaviour. It is perfectly possible to love one's wife and offspring without introducing elements of hatred, in spite of the limited nature of one's resources and nature. It is perfectly possible to restrain oneself from harbouring the hatred of others while living with one's family. Examples of this sort have been set by saints who lived with families. For instance, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had a wife. That did

not make him hate others. Also Mahasaya Durgacharan Nag. Numerous other instances may be mentioned from the history of saints in Europe.

There is no doubt a difficulty in reconciling one's duties towards the family with the calls made upon one by others. But the reconciliation is possible and increasing success will attend upon one's efforts, the more one tries. The most proper course for any sadhaka or any grihasta with lofty and high spiritual aims is to carry the love he has in the circle of his family to as distant lengths as possible. If I love my own children, my endeavour ought to be that I should begin to love the children of others on the sample of my love to my own children. The idea of love cannot originate in a mind unless there is the relationship of father and son and so on. Therefore, there is no meaning in condemning the very root and saying that a sadhaka must sacrifice the roots of love. The roots of love and noble feeling are in the family relation. By loving one's parents or wife or children one begins for the first time to understand what love is. Then one's duty is to purify and expand that love and see that it assumes the character of divine love. No doubt God can love millions and human beings cannot easily love even a dozen. But it is the duty of any serious sadhaka who starts on his spiritual enterprise to see how far he can go. He can surely expand his love beyond the limits of family. He can surely help his neighbours and love his neighbour's children. He can surely sympathise with the people of his clan or gotra and have love expanded to the limits of the gotra. Similarly it can be further expanded to the nation and ought finally to embrace all humanity. No doubt with the increase in the extent to which love is applied, there is a necessary tendency to diminish its intensity. Ultimately when a man says 'I love all mankind', it is apt to be a mere lip profession with very little of feeling in the heart. But one must remember that this is an ideal, and an ideal can be accomplished or nearly accomplished only by great efforts and gradually. Therefore it is pointed out in great works like the Gita that spiritually great ones are those who are '*Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah*'. that is, loving all creatures. *Ran* is love or deep interest. The direction is given that the highest bhakti or yoga should aim at sympathising with and helping on with the friendly feeling or loving heart all creatures, whether they belong to one's family

or even one's species or not. Men must love cats and dogs, ants and flies, and feel that God is in them all, and that God in those forms compels them to yield their heart as freely as possible. It is easier no doubt to love your son than to love an ant or fly, but that is no reason why you should not help a fly or an ant or a dog or a cat as much as you can. In any case, you must start by beginning with 'Ahimsa'. If you are cruel to creatures, you cannot possibly love them. Himsa and Love are the opposite poles. So to start universal love, avoid hatred of any one. '*Nirvairah sarva bhuteshu*' That is, a man who hates no creature at all is said to be the best devotee of Sri Krishna in Chapter XII of the Gita. Starting therefore by avoiding hatred, proceed next to see in what possible cases sympathy can take more positive and concrete forms than avoidance of injury. Whatever is possible for you to do to other creatures, try and do that. That will be a positive act which engenders a feeling of love and enables you to achieve love to all beings. That is, *Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah*.

Let us take concrete instances to inspire us in this course of conduct. Sri Sai Baba was the best illustration that we can have of this *Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah*. With his vast power of *Antaryatnitva*, he could get inside every creature (man, cat or dog), and make it perform any act that he wanted, and he was also feeling what happened to it as something that happened to him. When after a full meal he was seated in the Mosque or Dwarkamayi after feeding as many creatures as possible, a bitch came up hungry putting out its tongue and gazing at him wistfully as much as to say, "Lo and behold; I am hungry". Baba at once told a lady (Lakshmi Bai) who was near that he was hungry, and made that lady bring a plateful of good food intended for him. Baba at once placed the whole of it before the bitch. Lakshmi Bai was thunderstruck. "What! you said that you were hungry, and now you have given the whole thing to the bitch" she asked. Baba then said, 'I and the bitch are one. She is hungry. Dogs do not speak. But we speak. It is the same whether she eats or I eat'. This is the peak reached by one who climbs up the ladder of *samatva* and *Sarvabhuta Hite Ratah* and *Antaryatnitva*. He placed himself inside the heart of each creature, and this really shows that He is '*Sarvabhuta Atma Bhuta Atma*', that is, the soul of all creatures.

That, of course, is the position of God or one who realises himself as God. For, God is the soul of all creatures. This is the aim of religion to lose one's being in divinity, and that is done by becoming *Sarvabhuta Atma Bhuta Atma*. Many people may think that this is a hopelessly impossible task for any sane man to attempt. But Baba's example shows that it is a perfectly feasible task and that Baba accomplished it. Incidentally this shows that love to creatures may take the shape of offering material assistance whenever that is possible regardless of the low position usually assigned to many creatures such as dogs.

Love—overflowing love—naturally rebels against the idea of classification of creatures, some as low and some as high. In Narada Bhakti Sutras, Sri Narada says, 'Amongst them (that is. bhaktas), there is no high and no low. All are one'. If one's heart overflows with love to God, differences between man and man, or man and creatures, or creatures and creatures pales away into insignificance. That is the sign of true and powerful love, and the extent to which man has ripened in his love can be tested by seeing what distinctions he draws, how he treats the various creatures as they contact him and what he thinks of his own conduct in respect of all that he contacts.

Sai Baba's dealings with various creatures and persons of various types and classes gives one the impression that his was uniform love, loving everyone that came within his contact or reach. That is the example for one to copy or the ideal for one to achieve. Of course all are not Sai Baba but all should try to become Sai Babas. The world will be Heaven when this is achieved.

Thus we see that love is capable of expansion from the family on to the widest limits of existence. Sai Baba never hated family ties and never condemned them as hopeless fetters. During the period of probation of H.S. Dixit's Vanaprasta, he kept him away from contacts, family contacts as well as other contacts for a period of nine months, and then the probation ended and his contacts were resumed. Baba never condemned all contact. In the case of Upasani Baba, he tried to sever his contact with family and that was for a very high purpose to turn him into a remarkable specimen of spiritual achievement. But for Baba himself, family ties were never considered hindrances. He referred

to the fact that he had various relations, namely, father, sisters, brothers, and cousins and that he maintained a high level of duty towards everyone of them in every Janma or birth. For instance, he has in one Janma supported his brothers by undertaking contract work and helped to feed them all when the managing brother was starving them. Then on another occasion when a brother of his was excommunicated, he worked hard and got him readmitted to caste. When his father's mistress, whom he considered to be his mother, (however loose moralled she might be) was suffering, he fed her, treated and cured her, and was kind towards her because she was the wife of his father. Again when a girl playmate of his died, he went to the tomb that girl was haunting as a ghost, and brought her up to Shirdi and placed her in a position where she could listen to holy scripture and thus improved her spiritual condition. He did his very best for his friends like Veerabhadrappa, Basappa, Gauri, etc., giving them whatever help was absolutely essential. A perusal of the Gospel of Sai Baba would show that Baba valued social ties and never condemned them. The correct course therefore for any Sai devotee seems to be not to hate family ties but to honour them and see that they are worked not in a narrow spirit but in a spirit of universal love and sympathy. Our love to our friends and relations and mankind should enable us to love others and go on widening the circle of persons who would receive our help and sympathy. If we work on those lines which are the lines of Sai Baba, family ties will not be a curse but a blessing.

Religion is a very broad term and authorities on religion are varied and innumerable. Even for Hinduism there are so many books of which special sets are honoured by special groups. Yet, for practical purposes, we may take it that the Bhagavad Gita is a book on which there is practically unanimity amongst all groups and sub-sects, and there are numerous people who have resolved to make the Bhagavad Gita the guide for their conduct in everyday life, chiefly in matters of religion. The question, therefore, is whether the Gita counsels abdication of one's best in life and running away to remote forests or hills for leading an absolutely quiet self-centred life, full of the happiness of Brahman, or whether it advocates a life led in the din and bustle of life attending to hundreds

of persons with thousands of claims upon one meeting each in his own field with his own arms and in his own appropriate way.

To commonsense, it would appear that absolute desertion of society is impossible or, if possible, mad and absurd. It is like a man who, unable to cure a painful ulcer on his nose, cuts his own throat as a cure. If, therefore, the authority of the Gita on the point is wanted, that is patent. Arjuna was at the beginning of the Gita in an absolutely hopeless condition. He could not see which way he should go. Whatever he did would only result in misery, sin and trouble, and there was no happiness in view in following any course, fighting or not fighting. He, in his dejection, first declared that he would not fight and that he would run away from his duties. The Gita corrects him, and the Lord told him that he should stick to his post and do his duty, however wretched it might appear..

Screyan svadharmo vigunah paradharmat svanushtitat

Svadharme nidhanam screyah, paradharmo bhayavahah

This means, 'Even if one's duty is not charming and appears to be without merit, that is better than deserting it and adoption of others' dharmas. Death in the course of doing one's our duty is conducive to one's ultimate welfare. Adoption of others duties (by neglecting one's own) is full of terror (terror being the terrors of hell).' In the result, Arjuna gave up his dejection and his desertion of his asrama duty and resumed his original attitude of determination to do his Kshatriya's duty of battling in war.

Hence, passages should not be pieced out of Bhagavad Gita and twisted so as to bear the construction that what Sri Krishna advised was that a person be completely absorbed in the self and not attend to anything else. There are such passages in the Gita which have been sometimes so misunderstood. As an instance, we may cite one. In the sixth chapter, as elsewhere, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he must treat friend and foe alike and that he should show samatva towards all. Should this be taken to mean that Arjuna should slay his brother quite as readily as he would slay the enemies in the opposite camp? Obviously not. The passages which say that a person should be completely absorbed in the Lord are as plentiful as blackberries. Here are some.

*Alma aupamyena sarvatra samam pascyatyo arjuna,
Sukhamva yadiva dhuhkam sa yogi paramo matah:
Prascantatma vigatabhiih brahmachari vratestitah
Manas samyamya machchitto yukta aaseeta matparah
Suhritu mitrah udaasina madhyasta dveshya bandhushu
Sadhushu apicha papeshu samabhuddhiih visishyate
Yata indriya mano bhuddhiih munih moksha parayanah
Vigata icha bhaya krodho yas soda mukta eva saha.*

Like these many may be quoted which are being too literally applied and which are taken to authorise one's action of giving up the present dealings with innumerable friends and foes and simply sitting concentrating on one's own self, in whatever way that self may be understood. It is patent that the Gita is no authority for escape of duty. The Gita gives numerous directions which are useful to numerous persons in various walks of life and in various circumstances. All of them should not be taken together as one advice applicable to every one in every circumstance. In the battle field a man who mistakes friend for foe and foe for friend or for neutral will see his mistake all too quickly. He will have no more of physical life to judge the mistake of his conduct, for his head would roll on the ground all too soon. Commonsense should enable everyone to note how each piece of advice is to be applied.

There is a distinct body of counsels or advice given to a person wishing to obtain perfect bliss—*Brahmananda*. He has to begin with the practice of something like *Ashtanga Yoga* beginning with *Yama* and *Niyama* and going on with *Asana*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyanam*, *Samadhi*, including probably *Pranayama* which, however, is not mentioned expressly in *Abhyasa Yoga* of Chapter VI of the Gita, the omission being probably rectified by reference to *Pranayama Parayanah* in the other chapters of the Gita. The description given in Chapter VI of a person who goes on with *Abhyasa Yoga* is so charming and one would be tempted to adopt this *Ashtanga Yoga* perpetually as the sole business of his life. Verses 20 and 21 say that the man who is absolutely concentrated in the self will be absorbed in that alone and will find supreme delight therein.

Verses 22 and 23 say that the said delight is par excellence the one thing to obtain. Thereafter pain and sorrows cannot trouble one. The direction is given in verses 23—

*Tamvidhyat dhuhka samyoga viyogam yoga samgitam
Sa nischayena yuktavyo yogo anirvinna chetasa.*

Verse 24 says—

*Sankalpa prabhavaan kaamaan tyaktva sarvan aseshatah
Manasaiva indriva graamam viniyamyam scamantatah.*

Verses 25 and 26 say : 'After concentrating the mind, the man should not think of anything else, and even if his thoughts wander, they must be drawn back again to the self. Verse 27 says that by these efforts the self becomes peaceful, calm, and the highest bliss, born of contact with the Supreme, will come to him, and all Rajas, etc., will go away. Verse 28 says—

*Yunjannevensada aatmaanam yogi vigathakalmashah
Sukhena Brahmasamsparscam atyantam sukham Asnute.*

This means, 'The Yogi who ever concentrates on and harmonises the self will reach infinite bliss by contact with Brahman.'

These seem to advise that a man should do nothing except thinking of Brahman and being Brahman, that he should have nothing to do for instance with the question whether the shield is all right, whether his arrows are sharp, whether his horses for the chariot are in good condition, etc. This looks patently absurd, for if you are in a field of battle, your arrows or shield and horses must be in proper condition. Else you will be failing in your duty to yourself and to the side to which you belong. Death and defeat will be the consequence of such neglect. Surely unreasonable courting of death and defeat is not counselled by Lord Krishna. Hence one is obliged to infer that Sri Krishna in the field of battle was forced to teach Arjuna many a truth not applicable to him immediately, and in certain cases not applicable to him at all.

Sri Krishna was compelled to lay down general principles of conduct for all classes and various circumstances. He pointed out the need for concentration in Yoga. Is it to be supposed that he wanted Arjuna straightaway to sit up on his

chariot and lose his mind in samadhi? Obviously not. In fact, he tells him, 'Stand up and fight' which is inconsistent with sitting and concentrating. The advice of Sri Krishna on the above matter of practising Ashtanga Yoga seems to be this. Arjuna is to practise this Ashtanga Yoga after the toils of war are over and when there is time for him to practise it. The advice is not confined to Arjuna. The advice is extended to all classes, and whoever is physically and mentally able to practise Ashtanga Yoga is advised to practise it, for it leads to realisation of perfect bliss. When one is so engaged, he has reached samatva. Friend and foe, high and low, do not exist for one in that condition. Heat and cold also to the extent possible must be ignored. Of course, if there is excess cold, namely, minus 60 degrees, round the yoga practitioner, that would make an end of the yoga practice and of the practitioner. If he is lost in a trance when a sudden cold sets in, the practitioner may not regain life enough to see that he has lost life in the course of his concentration. The net result is that, paying due regard to rules of commonsense, one should carry on the Ashtanga Yoga ending in samadhi and remain in samadhi as long as possible, practicable, and desirable. Flesh and blood being what they are, there comes an end to the practice of yoga also, and a man has to get up from his yoga practice and attend to the body.

Yuktahara vihara is the stanza wherein the Gita tells him that he has to attend to food, rest, exercise, etc., in order to avoid pain and grief. Similarly in the advice about treating high and low, virtuous, dangerous and calm animals or other surroundings as the same, commonsense must enable one to see when this advice can safely be followed and to what extent. One may be able to see that at certain times he can go on practising samatva without upsetting his own life career and without disregarding the duties that are incumbent upon him. Thus, carefully restricted samatva has its application to almost every one. More and more of samatva can be worked into one's life first by avoidances. The good and bad, the virtuous and vicious, are to be treated alike, is the motto of samatva. This is not immediately practicable but to some extent one can avoid doing harm or talking ill against those that are bad. For one's own peace of mind,

the advice is given that he should not poke his nose into others' affairs and go on praising one and decrying another.

Nastuvita nanindeta kurvatah sadhu asadhuva

vadato gunadhoshabhyam varjetah samadruk munih.

'Whether others talk or behave ill or well, the Muni bent on carrying on his samatva should say nothing, should neither praise nor blame' is the advice given by Lord Krishna to Uddhava showing how to apply samatva. This may be done in many circumstances, of course not by the magistrate who is called upon to decide whether a person charged with an offence is guilty and has to be punished. Samatva can be manifested more and more by increasing our powers of endurance. If we can easily put up with persons who talk wildly or with inclement weather or with hot atmosphere, we might gradually increase our powers of endurance. As for samatva between a clod of earth, stone (precious or not) and gold, one might, if he aspires very high, try it in slight degrees. '*Samaloshita Asma Kanchanah*' is the ideal praised by Lord Krishna again and again. To carry out this idea, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa sat on the banks of the Ganges, took up a clod of earth (*loshta*) and took up some coins (*kanchana*) and exercised his mind in the faculty of belief repeating to himself "This earth and that kanchana or coin are the same", and threw them into the Ganges trying to develop equal indifference to both. Of course if clay is gone into the river, there is nothing to lose and no sorrow. Similarly if coins also go into the river, one must develop equal indifference and by repeatedly saying to oneself, 'I care a brass button whether these coins go or remain' and one might develop some degree of indifference. Even Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was struck with doubts about the correctness of this course. The thought struck him that Kanchana represents Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth, who might get angry at being treated with contempt and who might inflict as a punishment dire poverty, etc., on him. There are numerous other difficulties besides Sri Ramakrishna's difficulty in the matter of such practice. But all these can be overcome and gradually overcome and increasing success is sure to attend upon one's efforts at increasing achievement of samatva. That is certainly a gain worth having. To that extent, the Gita advice

of *Samaloshtha Asma Kanchana* may be adopted. That is, the express advice may be treated as an ideal to be worked up to, and a life may be adopted taking one nearer and neareer to that goal or ideal.

CHAPTER VI

Sai Baba and the Future of Religion

There are thousands, if not tens of thousands, who are perfectly convinced that Sai Baba was fully divine or, in the words of the orthodox, an Avatar, though, as soon as we use that term, troubles arise and dissidents come forward to differ. So the best thing to say is that Sai Baba had in him the all-round perfection of divine qualities in such a manner as to fulfil our idea of God. That is what Sri G.S. Khaparde said, and what many others have said, who are learned enough to draw distinctions between divinity and a divinely gifted human being. Metaphysics apart, let us confine ourselves to the usage of terms according to popular parlance and go on in this article with the explanation of Baba's position in respect of the future of religion.

So far as India itself is concerned, the future of religion in India is largely a question of the fusion of the two great trends which appear to be so widely different, namely, Hinduism and Islam. The differences have led frequently to the breaking of heads and burning of temples, and recently even the breaking up the political unity of the country. So the achievement of something like a basis for the unity of Hinduism and Islam is itself a very great and momentous task and may be justly viewed as affording a solution to the country's problem of fusing the two into one. So, we might first take the question of Hindu-Muslim religious differences, and see how far Sai Baba was able to draw these communities nearer so as to give some ground for hope that Islam and Hinduism might one day combine and produce a blend that will satisfy really earnest among the adherents of both religions, and form the foundation of India's main religion of the future. In India itself the Muslims are so numerous that any failure to take note of their religious needs in trying to shape the future of Indian religion must spell a failure. Happily for us, however, Sai Baba has chalked out some outlines which

give very good promise of a blending of these two. We shall see what history has to teach us about the blending of these two religions in the past.

Great souls have always existed who appreciated the advantage of fusion, and they worked hard to achieve success in this matter. Akbar's name must naturally be given the highest prominence in point of time and in point of width of views, as he was not merely an emperor with both Hindu and Muslim subjects, but one of the most liberal rulers that the world has ever seen. The idea that God is one, and therefore, people professing all religions should come together and worship Him in a common place with love and amity among them, being the children of same God, treating one another as brethren, was the noble idea of Akbar. This must always command the assent of every right thinking individual. The difficulty arises only when a thinker convinced of the above position as being right, tries to make others accept it and propound not an individual faith, but a popular formula for a popular religion that would please both these communities. Akbar did not, however, care to go into the metaphysics or the technique of this question, but did what was the most practical and best thing to do for the promotion of his object. He, as an emperor, commanded the obedience and allegiance of both the religionists and he ordered the leading followers of both religions to come together and worship God in a common place, and called the faith which he thus propounded '*Din Ilahi*' that is, God's religion. Every religion must be God's religion and the essence of all religions must be God's religion. God has no special religion.

Religion is that which binds, '*Re*' back and '*Ligo*' to bind. Religion is that which binds people back together in society for purposes of worship and other similar matters. Religion is a social phenomenon, and it necessarily includes something which will appeal to the average or even the lowest level of intellect prevalent in any society. The ideas of God that are found even in one religion, even at one age, widely vary, and the modes in which God is approached and people carry on their contact with or approach to God, are various, and it is no easy joke to unify religions even for the people of one country and one age. Yet,

Akbar attempted his task and by reason of his position and the excellence of his idea carried his point almost to success.

Unity of God is the central principle in both Hindu and Muslim religions, and the one God has always to be revered and adored by prayer for protecting oneself and one's dependants and country. For this purpose, therefore, Hindus and Muslims can always join, and in fact have often joined. In national calamities and crises, differences of opinion have not prevented people from joining together and praying to a common God for relief from great distress and peril. Similarly when an emperor ordered, people were able to join together and pray to a common father. For some time Akbar's experiment proved to be practical and successful. Unfortunately, his ideas and practice did not take root, and his successors had widely different ideas from his. Aurangzeb's policy was extremely opposite to his. Instead of promoting harmony between the two religions Aurangzeb's idea was to compel all his subjects to discard other religions to adopt one religion, namely, Islam. Historians agree that this was one of the chief causes of the collapse of the Moghul Empire in India. When we discover a mistake committed in the past, it is our duty to discover and adopt the correct policy.

"Live and let live; freedom to all people as far as possible to adopt their ideas of approach to God" must be the basis on which society must be founded. Any compulsion in religion will destroy religion and society also. This cardinal principle is noted to be one of the main features of Sai Baba's dealings with his multifarious devotees including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and others. Anything like compulsion or for that matter any attempt for conversion is absolutely destructive of the work of religion. We can have neither religion nor unity where compulsion is adopted. Conversion is very often the result of either compulsion or low motives, and Baba, who knew this fact very well, on one occasion when a Hindu convert to Islam was brought by Bade Baba to him saying, 'Baba, this man has been converted to Islam', struck him (the convert) on the cheek, and asked, 'Have you changed your father?' Changing one's father is absolutely unthinkable, and an absurd idea. Each religion makes God the father

of its followers, and when one has got a father according to accredited lines, which are useful, it looks absurd to think of changing either the physical father who begot one or the Universal Father that is adored in religion, So, Baba always dissuaded people from changing their religion either from Hinduism to Islam or from Islam to Hinduism or from Christianity to Hinduism, and *vice versa*. What is most important is not mere external conversion but conversion of the heart, which makes a man lose his sinful and bestial nature and climb up to Godhood. That real conversion is not called conversion by people because it generally has no external marks to denote it. Baba's object was that all people should be really converted and should have God in their hearts, and get firmly attached to God so that all of them- will be soaked through and through with the idea of God, and in consequence there will be no friction between one person soaked in God and another person soaked in God.

There can be no quarrel among religions so far as the essence is concerned. The quarrels are all about the externals. 'You wish to go to a temple. I wish to go to a Mosque. So, we cannot agree. You put on Namam vertically. I put on sandal or sacred ashes in parallel horizontals. So we cannot agree'. Can this be recorded as the correct attitude? Let every person sit quietly directing his mind to the greatness of God and the grand qualities of God and allow himself to be lost in them. Then there is no possibility of his quarrelling with any other person or any other person quarrelling with him. The result of contemplation of love for God is Love. If we go into the essence of religion, that is, if each tries to concentrate on God, the result will only be love and harmony and not a jarring set of crusades among people trying to trample on one another. Luckily wars of religion like the crusades are now things of the past. But what have succeeded them are wars for the sake of material aggrandizement, for getting colonies, and for conquests of population, for economic purposes, and these are quite as deadly in their effects as were of religion. If a discovery is made of a solution for the problem of difference of religions amongst mankind, it bids fair to solve also the problem of wars for pelf, for colonies, etc. We have to examine carefully into Sai's history to see what he has done, how far he was successful in promoting

harmony between individuals of the various groups that came to him, such as Hindus, Muhammadans, and Parsis, whether the solution found by him has worked well amongst his immediate followers, and whether that solution can be extended to other fields and to the entire world.

Let us now see what has been done by Baba. He was first worshipped by a handful of Hindus who treated him as God or Gurudeva, because he showed such wonderful powers over material nature. He converted water into oil and, therefore, the villagers of Shirdi were firmly convinced that he was not an ordinary human being but one gifted with divine qualities. Along with that, the exhibition of other chamatkars by Baba proved his possession of very vast powers though this was done only gradually. He, by a unique series of kind acts towards all, and especially the poor, the sick, the unfriended and the miserable, showed uniformly a golden heart of love towards all, treating every one, prince or peasant, pandit or rustic, Hindu or Muslim, on the same level. There was in him practically universal love combined with a sense of equality and equanimity, and utter absence of self. He had no family, no attachments, and the whole world was his kin.

Ayam nijah perovaiti ganana laghu chetasam

Mahatmanastu..... vasudhaiva kutumbakam

That is, it is the petty mind that considers whether any particular person is one's friend or a stranger. The great souls treat the entire world as a little family of their own. Baba was undoubtedly such a great soul from the very beginning and for this reason as well as on account of his chamatkars, increasing numbers began to worship him as God and called him their Gurudeva, their Ishta Devata. Now some would suppose this is only adding one more to the 33 crores of Gods that Hinduism recognises, and, therefore, giving more scope for difference. But luckily this "33 crores and 1st" God swallowed up all the 33 crores and showed the unity of God. He drew people to himself for granting them various reliefs and finally led them on to the one God who is nothing but Love, who is common not only to Hindus, but Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others also. He demonstrated to all that the only God that they could deal with was something visible,

something in human form, something with wonderful love and power and mercy, so that they were compelled to bow down to it and accept it for their good in every department of life. So, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and all practically worshipped him. However, as the semetic religions like Islam and Christianity forbade people from accepting any one as God barring the God that they proclaimed, Christians and Muslims mostly did not avow him to be God nor adopt the external processes of worship which the Hindus always adopt. But this really does not matter, for the essence of holding on to God is prayer to God and getting relief. This, the Christians and Muslims did not hesitate to do. They had their distresses, and because they were *Aartas*. They prayed for relief before Baba when he was in the flesh or at his tomb when he left the body and got the relief, proving to them that they were really appealing to a divine source. So in effect they treated him as God, but would not confess that they were treating him as God on account of their dogmas and doctrines. All the same, in effect and in reality, all persons bowing to him and appealing to him for aid in their extremities were adopting him practically as their God and revering him as their *Ishta Devata*. Whether they used the name *Avalia* or Guardian Saint or *Ishta Devata* does not really matter.

Unity was brought about and a common bond was created by Baba by his acting as the common Father of all. Baba said, 'I am the father of you all, so you should not say *that*'. G.G. Narke, M.A., M.Sc., an England returned scholar, said Baba was a man and not God. This was reported to Baba. Then Baba pointed out that what that learned scholar said was true from the material standpoint. That is, if you regard the Baba body as Baba, it is a human body, and, therefore, there is no mistake in saying that Baba was man. But it is a terrible mistake for people to view Baba as man, especially, if they wanted Baba's divine help. Divine help was not coming from the muscles, nerves, and bones of the human body, but was coming from the spirit, and that spirit was divine. So, Baba told them, 'You should not say *that* (that is, that I am a mere physical human being). For I am your father, and you have all to get your things from me'. It is by treating him as God that Ramasami Chetti, Abdul Kadar Saheb, Joseph Ransome and other

persons could get what they wanted; that is, it is the divinity in him that must be kept in mind, and the material body must be put aside and completely forgotten in order to get one's relief. Therefore, Baba pointed out the correct attitude to take was not that Sai Baba was the body of $3^{1/2}$ cubits height which they saw, but the divine spirit which was living within that body, and which could work at any place far away from that body. Baba exhibited such power that sitting at Shirdi he could influence men and things thousands of miles away and draw spirits to him at the moment of their death in order to give them the protection they needed, or the help they wanted. It is this Baba spirit that we call Baba, that sensible people will call Baba, and not the mere Baba body. When once this view is accepted, then the system built up by Baba, of unity among all persons approaching Baba for various sorts of relief from the common father must be regarded as a remarkable achievement, an achievement not merely for the individuals but for the entire groups, for countries and for the world. On the basis of attachment to this common father Baba, Brahmins and Sahebs, Chettis and Parsees all combine and go together and act like brethren. That is what they did when Baba's chavadi procession took place and what they do now when it takes place at Shirdi. All communities join together in paying their respects to this Mighty Master and, therefore, Baba furnished the clue to the unity of religions amongst his immediate followers. The clue is, 'Do not stress the external observances. Externals no doubt differ. But stress the essence of all religions, namely, the approach to God and the achievement thereby of the satisfaction of your various needs, and the conquest of various obstacles for the elevation of your nature gradually, further and further upward, till you lose your self by contact with the feet of God'. This is a common plank, which is furnished by Baba, which has been used time and again by various people. Hindus who have given statements to this author and others, mostly show their acceptance of this view. Even a few Muslims who have accepted Swami Vivekananda as their guide adopt the same view.

Thus Baba has furnished a basis on which Hinduism and Islam can combine. That is Hindus and Muslims must make up their minds to revere God in

essence. As God in essence cannot be seen or sensed, that divinity should be approached through human personalities exhibiting divine powers in wonderful profusion as in the case of Sai Baba. One may ask how one Sai Baba can suffice to leaven the whole world; but let us look at facts. One Sai Baba has now produced hundreds of Sai Babas. There are many Hindu and muslim saints all over the country who act upon the principles on which Baba acted, and have amongst their followers both Hindus and Muslims. In almost every District we now find Mulsim Saints who are catholic enough to allow Hindus to continue their observances, and yet approach them as their Godmen. These are slowly leavening the whole Indian society. The adoption by a few individuals of such an attitude towards such Saints may not suffice to convert the entire country to the cause of religious unity. There will always be people who will rejoice in differences and who can never rise above the existing level of thought prevalent in their particular community. But when any one says that 'No man can rise above that level', they are committing a huge mistake.

History shows us how in the past vast upheavals have often taken place and how masses themselves have been attracted and led to adopt mere doctrines, dogmas and religions. One great powerful Sai can by his perfectly divine powers stamp the entire world with the impiess of his own views. With the advance of time, the numbers that follow the great saint will be increasing largely and it will soon be so large that others will actually drift into union with them. Mankind has no power of resistance against divine currents. This is proved by the history of great saints in every land. Thus, we have a fair basis for hope that the present Sai and the future Sais that might develop out of the present Sai will furnish the entire world with a uniform religion, in some form, some shape, and some beliefs that we cannot now define or describe. There is excellent ground for hoping that this achievement may come to pass, and we may rest in confidence that Sai's spirit will accomplish the same.

CHAPTER VII

The Goal of Life, the Goal of Knowledge : What is it ?

This is one of the problems discussed by intellectual workers on purely rationalistic lines. The author of Thirukkural says that it is only true knowledge which enables you to see the Reality behind the final outward forms of things, which means the truth which remains after the analysis of the entire Triad, namely, Self, World, and God; that is Brahman. We need not enter into questions of Dvaita or Advaita though there are people who say that to deny the separate existence of a human soul is to commit suicide, that on ultimate analysis two things remain, namely, the self undestroyed and the God whom the self reaches. There are also many other divergent views. The ultimate truth is complex and not capable of a simple statement, and thus the intellectuals go on contradicting and fighting. How does Baba deal with his devotees when they are faced with this problem?

Chandorkar and other graduates who had studied philosophy, Sankara's commentary on the Gita and other works, were confronted with these problems, and sometimes they discussed these at the wada at Shirdi. Baba did not profess to be a University professor offering solutions for problems to be published to the world, but dealt with each man individually as he approached him as Guru. Baba's solution was always on the lines of getting over theoretical difficulties by adherence to practical methods. By sticking to Baba with full faith, these problems could be solved.

Unless there was the proper approach, there was no solution. Baba indicated this view in the way in which he dealt with a sceptic like the Station Master of the Valambi railway station. That man had no belief in Baba. But having been persuaded by Das Ganu that Baba was a great soul with wonderful powers, he just prepared to accept Das Ganu's invitation so that he might go and see Baba for himself before he judged about him. When the Valambi Station Master and Das Ganu came to Shirdi, the all-knowing Baba was behaving peculiarly. He took up a number of pots, washed them one after another and placed them mouth downwards, which seemed to be quite the reverse of what

one should do, and what one does usually. The Valambi Station Master was impatient and asked Das Ganu, 'What is the meaning of all this procedure of Baba?' Das Ganu asked Baba, and Baba's reply was. 'This is the way in which people approach me. Only when the vessel is placed with mouth upwards, it can receive anything. But this is the way in which people approach me, with mouth downwards'. The hit was not quite intelligible to the Valambi Station Master. Receptivity meant some degree of faith and respect for the person approached, so that the person approached could pour into the approaching person some seeds of instruction, edification or other useful teaching. But the Valambi Station Master was quite innocent of any faith or regard for Baba, and could not derive any benefit from Baba. But Baba's point was quite clear.

To solve any problems connected with one's spiritual progress, one must be in dead earnest and approach some person whom he has got regard for or faith in and then patiently wait for the solution of his intellectual or other problems. Baba occasionally used even accidental chances to furnish further illumination on this matter. After 1910, Dixit and some other friends wanted to leave Shirdi, and asked permission of Baba to go. Baba said, 'you may go'. Then a devotee asked, 'Baba, where is one to go?' Baba at once gave a new turn to the talk, and made it educative. Baba's answer was, 'Up', that is 'Above this,' which obviously meant, 'Above the present wordly level in which one is grovelling with so many attachments and repulsions, sorrows and joys, and so much of confusion, without any calm perception of the underlying reality.' Then the question was asked, 'What is the way (to go up)?' Baba's answer was, 'There are plenty of ways proceeding from each place. For you here, there is a way leading from here. But the way is rugged, there are tigers and bears on the route.' Baba was talking in symbolic language. There were no bears at Shirdi nor tigers. But what he meant was, 'There were obstructions on the way to one's spiritual progress, which are as fierce and terrible as tigers and bears.'

It was just then that H.S. Dixit intervened, and said, "But, Baba, if one has a guide with him?" Baba answered. 'If one has a guide with him, then there is no difficulty. Then the tigers and bears move aside. If there is no guide, there is also

a deep yawning pit on the way, and there is the danger of falling into it'. During the discourse Anna Saheb Dabolkar was present, and he had been debating once, whether a Guru was necessary at all for one's spirirutal progress. Dabolkar felt that this was the instruction given to him, that a Guru was essential and useful to overcome obstacles that would otherwise hamper one's spiritual progress. The word 'Guide' here meant 'Guru'. Baba's reference to the deep yawning pit meant 'hell'. So Baba drove once again the much needed lesson that unless one got a Guru, one would make no progress at all, or in the language of Kabir, '*Guru Vina Kona Bhatave Vat*' That is, 'unless there is a Guru who is to show the way?'

Baba again and again pointed out that the solution to one's intelletual riddles, conundrums and mazes, lies in the practical step of summoning up faith and reverence and love to a Guru, who will himself thereafter solve all problems, remove all difficulties, and drive off all tigers and bears from the route, and save one from falling in the yawning pit. Baba's metaphors must have been reported or in any case had far reaching results. Upasani Baba who came to Shirdi in 1911, took Baba for his guide and got his help, especially, by silent instruction through visions. In one of the visions, Upasani found that as he was passing on, there was a deep pit, which afterwards he learnt was hell, and that when he approached it, hands came out of that hell and clutched at his feet, and tried to pull him down. He had sufficient grace to remember his Guru, and said, 'Let go, let go. If you don't let go, I will tell Sai Baba'. The remembrance of the Guru knocks off all vasanas and tendencies which lead to hell. Thus Upasani's feet were released from the clutch of the hands from hell. Upasani was then told that it was a mistake to go very near the brink of that pit. It was the Guru's grace that saved him from that pit.

This is allegorical or symbolical, but, in point of fact it was this same Guru Sai Baba's grace that saved Rao Bahadur H.V. Sathe from the brink of hell, the sin of immorality with a lady of doubtful reputation at the shala at Shirdi. On that occasion Sathe felt like a thief caught red-handed. He repented immediately his stupidity and he resolved never again to call at that woman's place or to commit

such a sin. So, Baba did really save this devotee of his from falling into the yawning pit, and thus showed that he was the Guru who would take a man on to the goal of his life. If a man commits such mortal sins as adultery or debauchery, he can never be fit to receive the higher truths which alone can take him on to the purity, detachment, and love of God that ensure salvation and liberation. Thus, what Baba spoke to Dabolkar was illustrated in the case of Sathe. But this was not the only instance in which Baba helped either Sathe or others. It is not merely *kama* that degrades the soul and takes it to hell. *Kroda*, anger, or hatred does the same. Baba in the case of Sathe did another piece of signal service. Sathe had purchased a plot of land at or near Shirdi, and wanted to go and see the place. He brought a cart and wanted his wife to get into it so that they might go and see the place. But Dada Kelkar, his father-in-law, who arranged the sale, was anxious that claims to that land should not be put forward by Sathe's Jnatis or next of kin, as they would claim it if they came to know that the land was purchased by him. So, he had told his daughter not to go with her husband to see the land. So, when Sathe wanted his wife to get into the cart, she would not come. Then at once Sathe got angry, and took the horse whip in his hand, and wanted to whip his wife, for her impertinent refusal. He had lifted his hand, when Sri Sai Baba, who was watching the whole scene, unseen, from his own Mosque, sent up Megha to hurry up and bring Sathe to Baba. So, as the whip was lifted, Megha said; 'Baba wants you', and down fell the whip. Sathe went to Baba. Baba there softened Sathe, and told him that there was no necessity for him to see the land, for the land was there all the time. Sathe found how Baba had saved him once again from an act of gross cruelty to his wife, which would also be one of the sins leading to hell. Conquest of temper is essential for one's religious progress.

CHAPTER VIII

Sri Sai Baba and National Unity

The peaceful atmosphere of Shirdi (Sai Baba's village) was never disturbed by politics or other controversies, In his own quiet unostentatious way, Baba was however laying the solid foundations of Indian unity and affording both

by example and precept valuable suggestions for India's welfare. The greatest stumbling block in its way was the difficulty of yoking together the two great communities to a common cause and making them pull in unison and amity in spite of wide difference in religious observances and doctrines. Baba showed his devotees the essence of religion and gave them a common bond - regard or love - for the same Guru Deva (Sai) who was practically the great Controller—a *Botthe Chalthe Dev*, a talking and moving God.

While at Bombay and in other places heads were being broken and temples, mosques and houses were burnt down, at Shirdi each of these groups built or lent a hand in building other's temples, mosques and houses. A Hindu inspector gave Baba stones for the reconstruction of his Mosque; and Baba gifted them all away for the reconstruction of the Hindu temples in the village. The Hindus later collected thousands of rupees and reconstructed his mosque. A devotee of Sai Baba, viz., Sri Upasani Maharaj, put up at Sakori (3 miles off Shirdi) a neat little mosque, within twenty yards of the local Siva and Maruti temples without disturbing public or private peace. Hindus and Moslems have always joined together for processions and celebrations in honour of Sai Baba, and for prayer at his tomb; and both partook of the vegetarian offerings (Naivedya) brought by either to Baba, after due pronouncement of namaz and fatiah.

Sai Baba was the living emblem of Hindu Muslim unity. His life and teachings were the strongest and the most forcible exposition of the underlying unity of all communities and creeds of India. Till the last moment of his fleshy life no one could be quite sure whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim by birth or breeding or profession (Baba professed no religion). There were elements of both; so, both so closely intermixed in him that a conclusion was not easy. People nevertheless drew their conclusions and Baba laughed such conclusions to scorn.

In 1916 Dasara, when Baba was contemplating giving up his fleshy body, he threw up all his clothes into the fire and stood stark naked and then said, 'you worthless fellows, try and find out whether I am a Hindu or a Muslim', for perfect

nudity was necessary to enable a person to find out whether Baba underwent circumcision or not. Nana Chandorkar thought that he was not circumcised and some others thought he was. Having been brought up in his earliest years by a Muslim fakir, the probabilities will distinctly favour circumcision. But whether there was circumcision or not, it was to Baba perfectly irrelevant and insignificant and also an absurd matter to enquire into. The question relating to circumcision is only a question relating to a part of Baba's body. Similarly some noticed that he had bored ears. And others noticing them were perfectly sure that his ears were not bored. Whether the ears were bored or whether there was circumcision was only relevant for a discussion about his being a Hindu or Muslim. Once the question of community is shoved aside as being irrelevant or absurd, the further examination of those matters can only be done by "worthless people" as Baba called them. Baba almost up to the last did not care to give any information on the question as to the circumstances of his birth and as to the ceremonies and samskaras he underwent or did not undergo, and he evidently treated the discussion as being flippant as to whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, because that would arise only if his nature was human. Baba had perfect and clear consciousness of himself as not the body, but as the spirit, merely utilising that body for certain purposes. He had rinaubandha with many and these he drew to himself and wished to give them the greatest benefit by contact with him, and that benefit could come only if his fleshy body was ignored and his spirit was recognised as the spirit of a Samarta Sadguru or actually of Iswara or Allah. That is why Baba was saying, '*Maim Atlahhum*, I am Lakshminarayan', so as to impress particular devotees that he was the divine spirit in the particular forms they recognised as God. He also showed in his own body the forms of Vittal, Rama, Datta, Maruti and others, to convince them of his divine nature. Therefore, when this had the effect (as in the case of the South African doctor) of convincing the devotee that Baba was (and is) God, a further discussion whether he was a Hindu God or a Miihammadan God is most ridiculous. Baba wanted to prevent people's minds from running in such absurd and ruinous directions. Therefore he discouraged all investigations into the origin of the body, etc., not only about

himself, but also about saints in general. Also Kabir has a *dohra* (couplet) saying that the conditions of the saints' birth should not be enquired into. Above all there is the danger that such investigations are generally productive of more harm than good.

Notwithstanding all that has been said above, a very large number of people still felt anxious to find out whether Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim. This pernicious habit persists and hence we have to take notice of it. A particular bhakta, who was favoured highly by Baba, still believes that Baba was a Muslim, and he wonders how anybody could take him to be a Brahmin; and his association of Muhammadanism with Baba is greatly detrimental to his bhakti. This sort of classification of Baba as belonging to one caste or another is the result of one's own *dehabhimana* i.e, the idea that one is one's body, and that one is of superior Brahmin caste in Hindu religion. The absurdity of these ideas lingering in the mind of a person who aims at absorption in God (*poorna laya*) was pointed out by a very great sadhu with wonderful powers at Nanded. That sadhu told the above mentioned devotee, 'shall I point out to you what your *'abhimana'* or egotism was? Your Guru was Sai Baba. From his feet he made Ganga flow out. You had that Ganga in your hand. And what did you do with it? You barely sprinkled it on your head, and you would not put it into your mouth, look at this *abhimand*¹, To fill up the blanks in that Sadhu's statement, we may say that that devotee considered that he had the benefit of receiving Ganga from the feet of a *Muslim* Maha Vishnu, which should not, however, be allowed to taint his pure Brahminical lips. Nothing can be more absurd than such an idea, and yet the idea was entertained and perhaps continued for decades.

The fact is that prejudices die hard, and it is the fact that even enlightened devotees could not give up prejudices that makes this author proceed further in this chapter and deal with the question of Sai Baba's caste, and to point out that the answer of S. B. Dhumal as to Baba's caste to the European District Magistrate is the only answer that can be given by any person worthy of the name of a devotee of Sai Baba or even by a judge in a court of law. Dhumal answered that 'Baba is neither Hindu nor Muslim but above both'. Of course

S.B.Dhumal had no necessity to discuss further the question of what Baba did to solve the national problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Now in this chapter we have to deal with it and, therefore, we shall point out, rather against our will, the Hindu-Muslim features in Baba, and how there was a perfect blending of those features in his appearance, in his mosque, in his behaviour, in his teaching, and in everything with which he was connected.

Baba said that he was Kabir in a former janma and that Akbar, the great emperor, stood in awe of him. Baba carried out the ambition of Akbar to unite Hindus and Muslims. This he carried out to a considerable extent. And he took Akbar's work also many steps further, Kabir lived in the time of Sher Shah (15th and 16th centuries) and his ideas were not as advanced as those found in modern days. Baba fully absorbed the modern spirit, and understood the conditions of India. Baba declared that in the first great war of Indian independence, he had been in the army with the Rani of Jhansi. That is, he was a fighter for Indian independence in 1857. But in his life at Shirdi, there was no politics. He never discussed politics even when E.G. Tilak or G.S. Khaparde came to him. He always encouraged patriotism, keeping it far away from controversial politics. As to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity, any person carefully studying the subject would see that Hindu-Muslim unity is the one great desideratum to make India strong and prosperous. Baba also saw it, and so he laid the foundations of Hindu-Muslim unity. We shall show how first in his body, next in his life, thirdly in his mosque, fourthly in his teachings and lastly in all other matters, Baba brought out this unity to the fore and worked for its consummation.

Taking first his body, though Baba did not want us to discuss his body, there is not a particle of doubt that Baba's ears were bored, and this is corroborated by his statement made to Mahlsapathy that his parents were Brahmins of Patri in the Nizam's state. Baba added that when he was a tiny infant he was handed over to a fakir by his Brahmin parents. Here is the first proof that Baba's life was to be one of fusion of Hinduism with Islam. The fakir who took him appears to have been a highly advanced soul, evidently a Sufi of

the highest grade. Baba, whenever he referred to God or Guru-God, or the fakir (God), evidently meant the fakir who must have first acted as his father, Guru, and everything to him. From him he picked up his idea of God and the essential virtues of vairagya and complete dedication of life to the cause of God that characterised his entire life. After a few years the fakir died, and under his orders, his widow handed Baba over to Gopal Rao Deshmukh, a pre-eminent saint, who had vast wealth, power and military prowess. In fact he acted as the Governor of Jintur Parganna, which he wrested from Muslim hands, but at the same time, he was a great devotee of God Venkatesa at Tirupathi whom he worshipped at home also. He thoroughly merged himself in Tirupathi Venkatesa. The powers of Venkatesa flowed through this royal saint's person and his touch cured blindness. He drove away devils and Brahma Rakshasas and achieved many marvels set out earlier in this same volume. Therefore, Baba was again brought into contact with the highest spiritual perfection that a Hindu bhakta was capable of attaining which in no way differs from highest Sufism. Baba refers to this Guru as Venkusa with great affection time and again and shows that his marga with this Guru was the Universal religion of love. Beasts can also understand love and Baba was thoroughly soaked in love for the Guru. The Guru loved him intimately. This Guru bhakthi is of the essence in all religions, especially in the religion in which Baba grew, and through which he attained all the wonderful powers he had. He declared that he became what he was (with all siddhis at his command) through the grace of his Guru, and that the love he and his Guru felt for each other was intense. Therefore, from the very beginning Hindu-Muslim elements were combined so far as externals were concerned. So far as the internal state of the soul was concerned, the common factor of all religions, namely, the idea that God is love, that the human being is a spark from that God, and that he should get back to God through that love, was the thing on which he was nourished, through which he became perfect. Therefore, Sai by such a training was developed and shaped into the perfection of humanity and the perfection of Sainthood. He became one with God and a Samartha Sadguru of all those who could make use of him as such. This became pronounced only in later life.

When he parted from the Guru he was merely sent away with a brick and a cloth and also blessings of his Guru for perfection. He was mingling once again with fakirs, as a fakir among fakirs, and wandering here and there, for how long and in what places, no one can say. Shirdi became his final residence, and his earlier years at Shirdi were spent merely as a nameless fakir. But when once his powers of Siddhi and his kindness became clear to persons competent to understand them, that is, first to the Hindu sadhus who met him and later to ordinary folk also, especially by his power of giving blessings for issue, etc., people swarmed to his feet, and he was compelled to allow them to worship him as God, first individually and then collectively. His position as a Samartha Sadguru was established decades after his arrival at Shirdi. All the while, and even after this position was established, he was carrying on his mission of love, love primarily to those who were connected with him by rinanubandha and next to every one of his devotees. In his samatva, he loved all and served all, and lived merely to bless humanity with his powerful personality and the attention he could pay simultaneously to thousands of people in thousands of places. Such a person naturally was in a better position than others to carry out his mission of life.

One important aspect of the working of that love is what we are considering in this chapter, namely, the achieving of Hindu-Muslim unity. The bickering and difference between Hindus and Muslims when he first began his life at Shirdi, were as pronounced, though superficial, there as elsewhere. To unite Hindus and Muslims is a task of very great difficulty, for in externals they differed so much i.e. in dress, in personal habits and the formal practice of religion. They had a tendency to keep apart, a tendency which the Britisher who ruled the country took very good care to strengthen. To work in the face of all these and to promote Hindu-Muslim unity was a very difficult task but Baba's method of work was very subtle. Nobody could see what he was working at and how he was carrying out his aims. His method of love is unexceptionable and nobody could suspect what would be the consequences of that love. Persons loved by Baba, whether Hindus, Muslims, or Christians, came to regard each

other as brothers; they were all "Children of Dwarakamayee", as he called them, and they were all being cared for by Baba. This one fact that Hindus, Muslims, Christians and persons of all religions were loved by him equally and without difference, tended strongly in favour of establishing Hindu Muslim unity.

Baba took good care to see that there should be no such bitterness as would be caused by conversions or intolerance. He put down intolerance and conversions. On one occasion when Bade Baba (Malegaon fakir) introduced to him one Ibrahim as a recent convert to Islam, Baba slapped (Ibrahim) on the cheek and asked him 'have you changed your father?' and he would not allow him to come into the mosque, Baba brought together Hindus and Muslims in his mosque. There was Agni worship performed by the Hindus in the mosque and Baba ordered S.M. Naik to pour in his oblations of rice with ghee, which Parsis and others also worshipped, and the udhi or ashes of which were distributed to all. There was also the Tulsi Brindavan in the mantap (front hall) round which pious Hindu ladies made their circumambulation (pradakshinas). For the Muhammadans there was the central pulpit in the western well with three or four steps in it, on which the preacher would stand, if there was a preacher, and lamps would be placed to light up the place (mosque). This is called Mimbar. As for the external appearance of the building, there were small minarets conforming to ancient Muslim tradition and Saracen religious architecture. As for what went on in the building, there was the practice of both Hindu and muslim scriptures being read. During the day Hindus performed their worship with "*artis*" (waving of light) based on Pandharpur practice to the accompaniment of loud music as at Pandharpur, including the beating of drums. But there were also times when the Muslims came in for their Idga worship in front of it and the recital by zealous Muslims at night of the Kalam or Shariat and the frequent reading near the dhuni of the Koran by Abdul, Baba's bodyguard and companion. During the day after the "*arti*" there were generally Tukaram gathas, Bhagavatha, or other puranas read and bhajans carried on. Thus both communities had their desired religious readings and practices without coming into conflict with each other.

As for the more esoteric, more individual or spiritual benefit, Baba who was the antaryami (inner soul) of all, suited himself to the circumstances of each, and gave occasional direction or advice to Hindus to go on with their Rama Mantra or Guru Charitra Parayana or Bhavartha Ramayana and Bhagavata and Jnaneswari, the well known Maharatti commentary on Bhagavad Gita, following the lines of Sri Sankara's philosophy. At night arti there were special references to Jnaneswar, Tukaram, and other great Maharatta Saints. Baba was the central object of worship while the Maharatta and other saints were appealed to. Nobody felt that there was anything inconsistent or self-conflicting in these courses, for with Baba the one common principle was that all religions are true and each man should keep up conservatively to his own creed, faith, *Guru sampradaya*, i.e. Guru's tradition and practice. This is the principle on which all religions can unite. Differences there are bound to be amongst men as long as human nature continues to be what it is. The principle of variation is found in humanity as in other creatures coupled also with the principle of an underlying unity or uniformity. If due to lack of love and sympathy, the differences are allowed to poison the feelings of each towards the other, then there is conflict, individual conflict, sectarian conflict. But if there is one guiding principle of love enforced especially by a Guru who is the soul of Love like Sai Baba, then there is no chance of these natural differences creating any bitterness.

The feeling of love flourishes amidst differences just as love flourishes amidst differences of sex, temperament and unequal equipment of intellects. Sai Baba made people tolerant towards each other and prevented bickerings and conflicts not only by his words but also by his example. Thus the principle of love pervaded the atmosphere in Baba's mosque. That is the principle which can unite not only all religions but all groups. Even economic differences can be dissolved by that golden solvent of love. Mankind can become one family and achieve the socialistic ideal only on the principle of love. Baba, therefore, paved the way for the solution of the numerous differences that now tear mankind into warring groups. This unity of religions is not a new idea. Eknath, Namdev, Kabir and others had worked at it each in his own way. Guru Nanak was also in his own

way working for the same. It was left to Baba to complete their work. His admirers and worshippers in Maharashtra could not at first think that outside Maharashtra anybody would care to worship Baba. But to their astonishment, Sai worship and the admiration for his doctrines and methods are now covering the entire country from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas and from Assam to Bombay. He was thus the creator of intercommunal unity, and no doubt he was also the emblem of it. The task of uniting the highly advanced religious exponents of each religion into one is not so easy as the task of uniting the masses. The masses come in when they see that a weird and impartial God-man like Sai Baba, whether proclaimed an Avalia or an Avtar, is working for their good, and they unite easily into a harmonious group. That was how the Kabir Panthis were formed including the Hindu-Muslim elements in it and ignoring differences. Round Sai Baba also, these elements united and the number of worshippers has grown and is vigorously growing. But the ultimate work of importance would appear to be getting together the highly advanced thinkers and heads of religions to accept the idea of unity. Even here Baba was successful. Differences between religion and religion are found to be matters of doctrine and dogma. All religions must unite and do unite in adoration of one common God whose nature is love, and who with his limitless power creates all and loves all he creates equally. Baba made no distinction between Hindu, Muslim and Christian, and treated them all as his children. All religions were united before Baba. Love is a principle on which all religions must unite. That love gets identified with God and perfection in man. Baba achieved in himself that perfection, and therefore was able truly to declare that he had reached the highest *Anandam Brahmehi Vyajanath*. Baba showed that he was the Paramatma of all, that he was the Antaryami of all, and that he had in him perfect bliss, which we call Satchidananda. To Muslims Baba is the Sufi. Kabir panthis being part of the contributors to Sufism recognised Baba as the perfect Sufi. Hindus including the most advanced in Bhakti and Jnana recognised him as the perfection of divinity or Satchidananda. Therefore believers in the principle of love as embodied in Godhood found it demonstrated in Baba. No doubt, success in this is not

achieved in a day, but he has laid solid foundations for the edifice of inter-religious unity and, as time advances and as other world movements also advance, Baba's pioneering efforts will be recognised and followed by the masses and also thinkers. This is imminent; one can see glimpses of it even at present. Let none think that Baba is gone and has ceased to work. See the Chapter on latest lilas. That enables us to see that Baba is the emblem and cause of the unity of religions in India and the world. Regarding world unity, we are reminded of Abdul Bahai who attempted in 1830-40 to make people accept him as the Messiah of unity and to establish one religious, economic and social order into which all countries will fit in their systems harmoniously in accordance with his principles and directions. But history records the failure. Baba's work was similar to Bahai's, i.e. promoting love, cooperation and harmony. But Baba was preeminently practical and he saw with his wonderful prescience how limited the progress will be at the outset and for a considerable time; and Baba laid the foundations of future World Unity in all essential matters to the extent that was possible.

Chapter IX

Baba - Human and Divine - Humour

Baba's personality was always puzzling to those who made an effort to understand him fully instead of being content with accepting one part of him as Baba and ignoring the rest. The latter is the wisest course for the majority and is ordinarily adopted by most of his devotees. But the more intellectual and the more curious amongst those approaching Baba make an effort to understand him and try to grasp as much of the facets of his complete personality as is possible. There they meet with apparent contradictions and mutual inconsistencies, and they are baffled. So much so, a Parsi doctor, named Dr. Jal, told this writer not to attempt to understand or write the life of Satpurushas. He said it was simply impossible to understand them. Evidently in his own case, he had tried and failed and was impressed by his own failure as to give the kindly advice to others not to waste their mental efforts in trying to grasp a Satpurusha's personality. In point of fact when we talk of ourselves or others, we go on understanding more and more

of both and with a working knowledge of both get on in the world. Similarly in respect of a Satpurusha's personality, we must try and understand more and more, for it is our nature to desire more and more of such knowledge. When a person is attempting to place before the public a picture of the life and lilas of a great Purusha, it is incumbent on him to present all sides of the Divine Personality. The task is difficult on account of the various apparent inconsistencies that are bundled together in the personality, but all the same we shall attempt it as we have already stated in an earlier portion of the book.

Emerson has stated that the human and divine are not separate, but rather various grades of one continuous series. When qualities arrive at a certain stage and are of a certain sort, people declare, 'This is divine', for they are far above the average human. Whether the superiority is in respect of power or of kindness or other qualities, the words are uttered at once, 'These are divine qualities'. Yet it is a human person that exhibits those qualities. We are not at present concerned with the intricacies of Christian theology, and we are at liberty to take Jesus Christ as a human person and point out the divine qualities in him. Tennyson wrote of him in the opening lines of 'In Memoriam', 'Thou seemest human and divine', and many readers would certainly note the human features of Jesus Christ as beaming out of the gospel, touched not infrequently with the divine features.

Similarly those who came in contact with Sai Baba have come in contact with his human peculiarities and the divine peculiarities mixed up so very closely that the two seem to be inseparable. So, 'Thou seemest human and divine' may be applied to Sai Baba as well as to Jesus Christ. We may note in passing that this combination, far from being an undesirable mixture, is a necessary one. If some being existed with all divine perfections only, human beings would not be able to approach or appreciate him. It is the fact that this Satpurusha has his human body, human touches, and human limitations that make us feel that he is also a human being, and we draw inferences about his inner nature from knowledge of our own nature and that of our fellow beings; we have the confidence that we have understood the nature and qualities of the Satpurusha

to some extent at least, and, we, are, therefore, emboldened in approaching and dealing with such a Satpurusha. Unless there were such human features and limitations, this personality would be of no use to us. That is why, avatars are described in the Hindu scriptures as promoting human welfare. They combine human and divine features. Especially in the case of Sri Rama, the seventh Avatar, the human features come out constantly, and yet are supported by the divine features so as to enable the Rama personality to be of great service to us, spiritual and temporal. Rama dhyana, Rama smarana, and Rama Lila, in general are found very useful for spiritual and temporal purposes alike on account of the human element in Rama. Similarly in Sai Baba, who is often termed Sai Rama, (partly because Ram Navami was chosen by Baba to be the day for his Urus—annual festival—to be celebrated at Shirdi and partly because he showed himself as Rama) his human elements and divine elements are both mixed up so finely as to help to understand him and approach him. Therefore we shall proceed to set out in the following paragraphs some of his human characteristics and show how these combined with the divine elements in him, and how the two, far from being inconsistent, are harmoniously blended in our impression of the Great One. Humour is a distinct human quality. And of all Baba's human qualities, his sense of humour was the most outstanding. Baba's sense of humour was of a very peculiar kind being at first hardly intelligible to people around him. The humour consisted in there being two applications for the words he uttered, one being patent and the other often being discovered after some time and enquiry. We shall give some examples.

In the case of one G.D. Pelaspi, who approached Baba, the latter according to his custom of revealing his *antarjnana* about the visitor so as to infuse faith in him, mentioned the fact that the trouble of Pelaspi was that a debtor of his, named Bapu Saheb, was delaying and evading payment of Rs. 4,000 due from him to Pelaspi. So Baba said when Pelaspi came, 'What is Bapu Saheb doing?' Some one present said, thinking that Baba referred to Bapu Saheb Jog, 'He is sleeping'. Baba said, 'When he comes here, beat him. He owes me Rs. 4,000 and is delaying payment'. People fancied that Baba was

angry with Bapu Saheb Jog for the alleged non-payment of debt to him. But Baba was referring only to the Pandit of Pelaspi. Pelaspi understood Baba's words well enough, and took Baba's words as a good augury that pressure would be brought upon his debtor to make the payment quickly. But the others who misunderstood Baba to refer to the poojari of Baba, namely, Bapu Saheb Jog, informed him of Baba's words, and he was very much upset by Baba's statement, for he did not owe Rs. 4000 to Baba, and he said, 'The claim is unjust'. But Baba was enjoying the fun. Similarly Baba used the words, Tatyā, Bapu, Vani', etc., referring to particular persons or particular sorts of persons. People who heard him could not make out the real reference. Baba enjoyed the fun.

On one occasion, when Shama was bitten by a serpent, he was advised to go to the Bairoba temple to which people usually resorted when bitten by cobras. But he said that his temple was Baba's place, and he ran up to Baba. Baba had wonderful powers of curing cobra bite and other poisons. But when Shama came to climb up the steps of the Dwarakamayee, Baba said, 'Do not get up, Brahmin. Get back. Descend *Hat Mage, Hat Mage*'. Shama was shocked. Here was his hope in Baba, and Baba was asking him not to get up but to get down. Baba enjoyed his confusion for a moment and then asked him to get up. Baba said 'Come up. The fakir (God) is kind. You will be cured¹', He then told people to take Shama home and see that he did not go to sleep, but was kept awake for 24 hours till the poison could be completely absorbed in or expelled from the system. The humour in Baba's words was in the fact that the words 'Do not get up, Brahmin' appeared to be addressed to the Brahmin Shama, when 'Brahmin' was used in the vocative case. But that word was used by Baba in the accusative case. The words were addressed not to the Brahmin but to the cobra poison, and the cobra poison was directed by command of Baba not to go up the Brahmin, that is, go up Shama's body. 'Get down, Get down', similarly, were addressed to the poison and not to the Brahmin. So, the poison had to get down his body and get away. This siddhi is referred to in *Srimad Bhagavata*, 15th Skanda, in the verse, *Yata sankalpa Samsiddhih*, and in the Upanishidic phrase,

'*Sathyavak Satyasankalpa*', the attributes of divinity and denote the fact that words or ideas expressed by a person in the divine state, in which Baba was, would have immediate effect and so the poison did no further injury to Shama's body. But while such a potent mantra was being uttered by Baba, which is a divine characteristic, there was also the human characteristic of humour combined with it. This was peculiar to Baba.

We shall mention another occasion when Baba conferred the remarkable power of production or materialisation upon Kusa Bhav, while having some fun at his expense. Kusa Bhav, as already mentioned in a previous chapter, had developed his mantric side with the help of a low species of mantras, which resulted in the production of articles belonging to various persons and their transfer to his hands. Baba, when Kusa Bhav came to his feet, directed him to refrain from such sinful practices and the poor man was regretting that the glorious powers which he had and the fame which he obtained thereby, were all lost. One day when he approached Baba, Baba asked him, 'what did you eat to-day?' Kusa Bhav said, 'Nothing, because it is Ekadasi to-day'. Baba pretended not to know what Ekadasi was, and asked 'What does Ekadasi mean?'

Kusa Bhav said, 'It is a day for Upavasa'.

Baba (again pretending not to know): What is Upavasa?

Kusa bhav (seriously in Hindustani): *Rojas*. Upavasa is like *Rojas*.

Baba : What is *Rojas*?

Kusa Bhav : We fast, that is we do not eat anything except Kanda Moola. By 'Kanda Moola', Kusa bhav meant '*Ratalae*', that is, sweet potatoes, etc.

Baba here played a joke. '*Kanda*' if slightly lengthened in the first vowel, will become '*Kaanda*', which means, onion. Baba then said, "Oh! it is *kaanda* you are eating'. Baba, taking up a piece of onion (*kaanda*), gave it to Kusa Bhav, saying, 'Eat it', Orthodox people have strong objection to eating onions, especially on an Ekadasi day. Kusa Bhav, finding that Baba was forcing on him unorthodox food, said, 'Baba, if you eat it, I will'. Baba had no orthodoxy and no heterodoxy so, he ate some. Kusa bhav also therefore ate some. By this time visitors were arriving. Baba wanted to have some fun, and said 'Look at this

Bamnia (a corrupt and contemptuous expression for Brahmin); he eats onion on an Ekadasi day'. Kusa Bhav explained, 'Baba himself ate it and I did'. But Baba said, 'No I ate *'Kanda'*, that is sweet potatoes, *Ratalai'*. Then Baba vomited *Ratalai*. Here was the wonder. What had been eaten by Baba was onion, and what was vomited was *Ratalai*. This again is *'Yata sankalpa samsiddhi'*, a very high yogic power which is part of Baba's divine equipment of powers. Kusa Bhav was surprised to see Baba's vomiting *Ratalai*, and he fell upon it and ate the vomit. Baba beat him, saying, 'Why, do you eat the vomit?' But Kusa Bhav did not mind it. Baba's heart then melted. And he was anxious to give a blessing that would please Kusa Bhav. What Kusa Bhav wanted was power to produce materials. So, Baba said, 'I hereby give you my blessing. I give you this power. Think of me and hold forth your palm. And in your palm you will have my prasada, that is, warm udhi from the dhuni. Give it and *it will help all the people who receive it being blessings from me'*. It was a very valuable power, which did not require repetition of any mantra, but merely that he should think of Baba and hold forth his palm. But while conferring such a grand benefit on Kusa Bhav and upon others dealing with him, Baba employed his practical joke and played a pun upon the word *'Kanda'* and next vomited one thing when he had eaten another all for the purpose of the practical joke. The end of all the humour and the joke was the conferment on Kusa Bhav of a very valuable power, which he exercised right up to the end of his life. Here again, we see the human and the divine features of Baba, especially the kindness which gave power to a devotee, so closely intermixed with pun and playing tricks. At meal time, it appears he would often be joking with people and taking them eat more and eat heartily. For instance, he might say to one, 'Are you afraid you will be impoverishing Baba's Sansthan? Eat heartily'.

Again, on one occasion, when Hemad Pant (Anna Dabolkar) came to him, there was in the fold of his coat some channa, that is, fried grain, and it fell from his coat; and people were joking at him. That was a day of the fair at Shirdi, and Dabolkar had perhaps been to the fair. Baba, wanting to have a joke at him, said. "Oh! This channa shows that he is in the habit of eating things all by himself

without sharing it with others". Dabolkar was much upset and he protested that he had no such habit. But how the channa got into his dress, he could not explain. Then, Baba made further use of the occasion, and told him, 'When you eat, do you give things to me? Am I not always by your side?' thus impressing on him a very valuable lesson that Baba was present everywhere, and that they should first offer their food to him as their Gurudeva, before taking their food. This is a sacred lesson, and this teaching is divine. But it came out of Baba's humour, and fun poked at Anna Saheb Dabolkar.

On another occasion, Baba wished to impress Dixit and Rege with his wonderful powers and teach them also some humility. Rege had prepared lime syrup, and piqued himself on his cleverness in making such a fine syrup, for he had tasted it and found it excellent. So, he carried it jubilantly to Baba. H.S. Dixit was there, and Baba, when the drink was brought to him, tasted a bit of it, put on a wry face, and told Kaka Dixit, 'Arre Kaka, see how acid this squash is that is given to me.' He passed it on to Rege himself. Rege tasted it, and found it was acid. He was mortified. What, to present to his Guru such a severely acid drink! Immediately Baba smiled, and said, 'I am only *joking*. Now taste each of you. You will find it sweet'. Then Dixit and Rege both tasted the very same liquid, and they found it sweet. We cannot say whether Baba's purpose was merely to play a practical joke or teach his devotees humility. Humour, we find was only Baba's kindly way of dealing with erring human beings.

On another occasion, Baba had to impress a stranger, Kaka Mahajani's master. That man would not easily believe in saints, but was prevailed upon by Mahajani to go with him to see Baba, whose powers were reported to be wonderful, and so he was anxious to see some *chamatkars*. On the way they had purchased at a bazaar *Monakka*, i.e. dried grapes with seeds. When that packet was taken and presented to Baba, Baba took some and gave a portion of it to Kaka Mahajani and his master to taste. The boss (Thakersay Sait) put the grapes into his mouth and ate. Being in a Mosque, he could not spit the seeds. So he was obliged to spit them into his handkerchief and put that in his pocket. He was wondering how Sai Baba, who was said to be an all-knowing person, could fail to

understand this difficulty. Baba knew at once everything that passed in his mind, and immediately offered him some more of the grapes. The very grapes he had brought, namely, the grapes with seeds, were given to him, and Baba said, 'Eat'. So, he had to obey. He was annoyed at having to dirty his handkerchief. But lo! And behold! When these grapes were put into his mouth, they had become seedless grapes. He had himself purchased grapes with seeds, and here were they turned into seedless ones. Here was a *chamatkar* and he was satisfied as he wanted *chamatkars* from Baba. But Baba enjoyed this spectacle of mental puzzles with amusement and also gave him an opportunity to study His powers which is again '*Yata sankalpa samsiddhih*', a power that comes to bhaktas who concentrate their minds on the Lord and whose every wish is therefore immediately effective.

Another case of practical joke is this. This carried with it a moral lesson also showing us the combination of the human and divine elements in Baba. M.B. Rege was a devotee greatly attached to Baba. Once when he sat by Baba's side, somebody brought a bunch of red plantains to be offered to Baba. Young Rege was very fond of these fruits. He thought that Baba would, of course, distribute these plantains amongst all, and he would have an opportunity of having his share of fine red plantains to eat. Baba read his mind at once. Baba then took up the plantains, and after distributing the fruits to all, omitting Rege, he pulled off one fruit, and, having given the pulp to somebody else, threw the red skin alone on Rege saying, '*Khav, Khav*'- eat. It was the red exterior that had attracted young Rege, and the kind but jovial Baba was showing him what the red exterior was. It was no doubt unpalatable, but still Rege's bhakti rose equal to the occasion and he swallowed the skin as though he was a bull. Baba took up a second fruit and a third and went on throwing them to Rege being in a mood for jokes. But at last, he turned to Rege and said, 'Ha! have I given you no fruit?' Then, as he really loved Rege, reluming Rege's powerful love, he peeled off another fruit and asked Rege to bite it off, and then he himself bit off another portion, and thus between them, they finished the plantain. This enjoying one plantain together was a sign of great love, and the joke also had the effect of

impressing on the young devotee the important lesson that externals, which attracted, were really not worth having, the attractive redness of the skin of the red plantain would not give him joy when eaten by itself. Instances of Baba's humour and practical jokes are many.

Another instance of humor is as follows. There was a Ramadasi, who was waiting upon Baba and reading his Vishnu Sahasranama and other holy books at the Mosque. He had the whole thing by heart. And he kept up the parayanam of Vishnu Sahasranama at the Mosque. One day Baba wished to have some fun and teach him a lesson. Baba said he had some stomach trouble, and told the Ramadasi to go to the bazaar to fetch some senna leaves for him. When the Ramadasi left the premises, Baba pulled out his Vishnu Sahasranama and gave it to Shama telling him to keep it and read it. Shama protested that the man would get angry. Baba said, 'Never mind, keep it'. But soon the Ramadasi returned. Then Anna Chinchinikar, wanting to play the role of Narada, told the Ramadasi that his Vishnu Sahasranama had been taken by Baba and given to Shama. Then the Ramadasi got fiery, flared up, and vituperated against Shama for having used Baba to rob him of his sacred book. Baba then said to the Ramadasi, 'Shama is only our child. There is no reason to get angry with him'. Baba said that as far as the Ramadasi was concerned, no book was necessary, because he had the whole thing by heart, and if he was going to get angry for the loss of a book, he was not a '*Ramadasi*' but a '*Kamadasi*'. He was a slave to the sense of property attachment to earthly goods which servants of Rama ought to avoid. So, Baba gave some very sound moral lessons to the Ramadasi. Then Shama too mollified the Ramadasi saying that he would get fresh books - new books - and give them to the Ramadasi. The man was partly mollified. But Baba's practical joke and pun were impressed on the memory of everyone present showing how even for the possession of a sacred book one should not lose one's temper. One should retain equanimity under all circumstances, especially a Ramadasi, that is, a follower of God. This is a spiritual instruction of great value not merely to the Ramadasi but to all. Baba gave that instruction accompanied

with his practical joke so as to impress it on the mind of every one present and every one that reads it.

Baba sometimes used expressions which were apparently foul, abused and cursed against persons present but which were really curses against the evil influences operating on him. This process is a joke though not understood at the time as joke. The famous Gadge Bua, who built his famous and splendid chatrams at Pandharpur and Nasik, was trying to build the Nasik Dharmasala. Funds came up only sufficient for the construction of the ground floor. And then no more funds were forthcoming. His attempt appeared to have some misfortune or set back, spiritual evidently, and so Gadge Bua, who had great reverence for Sai Baba, went to him in order to appeal to him to get over the spiritual hindrances. When he went to Baba and started to tell about the matter, Baba used foul and obscene curses, and at once Gadge Bua began to laugh and Baba also laughed with him. There ended the matter. It looked as though Baba was cursing and abusing and tried to drive away Gadge Bua. But really he was cursing and swearing down the hindrance that prevented Gadge Bua from going on with the construction of his chatram. After this mystic process of abuse, Gadge Bua's obstacles were removed, and funds flowed freely and he completed his Nasik chatram. He has put up Sai Baba's picture in his Dharmasalas.

One other way in which Baba combined humour with a serious religious or spiritual performance was in connection with B. V. Dev. B.V. Dev found that on account of some poorva samskara, he could never complete any parayana or pothi of Jnaneswari. Each time he tried, the effort broke down. So, as Jnaneswari is considered to be the most important of books for pothi or parayana, he went to Baba and Baba demanded considerable dakshinas of Rs. 25 and more. Then Baba sent Dev back. Dev after returning from Baba, met Balakram Manker, and wished to learn from him more about Baba's wonderful powers and asked him for his experience. Balakram Manker promised to mention them the next day, and when next day he was about to start his narration, Baba suddenly sent for Dev, and flared up in anger. He asked Dev, 'What! You are an old man, and in spite of your grey hairs, you indulge in stealing rags! I will kill you with a hatchet'. Dev

was dumbfounded. The effect of being shocked was probably part of the mystic process, which Baba was conducting for his benefit, but Dev understood nothing. Then Baba asked him to go and fetch dakshina. Again Dev produced Rs. 25 and next Rs. 25. Baba asked him, 'What are you reading?' Dev replied, 'Nothing'. Baba asked him, 'Why do you not read pothi such as Jnaneswari?' Baba told him then to go on with that pothi, and said, 'when I am trying to present you with a full lace shawl, you are trying to steal a rag from me'. Dev went on with his Jnaneswari parayana at Shirdi and finished it. That was the first time when he could finish the pothi, and without any hindrance. It was a miracle: His former samskaras were obstructing him till then. Baba gave him a very valuable experience, and it was highly useful to him. A parayana of Jnaneswari, which is a commentary upon Bhagavad Gita, has a high spiritual value, and yet this imparting of the great spiritual benefit was accompanied by a humorous threat that Baba would kill him with a hatchet and Baba's charge against him that he was stealing rags (koupinas). Then Dev understood the point. The rag that he was said to be stealing was the second-hand and third-hand report from Manker of experiences about Baba, whereas the full lace shawl that Baba wanted to give was the direct experience by Dev himself of Baba's overcoming his poorva samskaras that prevented pothi being completed by him. Here again the humour and the pretended anger and the conferment of a great spiritual boon were so nicely intertwined as to be inseparable. It was greatly impressive and never to be forgotten.

Baba's saying 'I am not at Shirdi', when he was actually staying with them at the Mosque, was another instance of humour combined with great spiritual truth. By his statement that he was not at Shirdi, he wished to convey that he was not the physical body seen at Shirdi, but the real personality, which is a divine Force present everywhere especially in the hearts of all people. Baba meanwhile enjoyed the puzzled looks of people who thought that he was talking untruth by denying his presence at Shirdi. This was specially the case with a local lady, who could not understand what Baba meant by his words to Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad. Baba said to the latter, 'Mother, I am going thrice a day to your house in Bandra. Is it

not?' and that lady said, 'yes'. The local lady said, "We are seeing Baba everyday here, and how would he go thrice a day to Bandra, which is 100 miles away?" But Baba said, 'I go to that house'. He then gave a description of the route, there being a railway line, a wall and next the house, etc. The local lady did not understand that Baba was referring to his travelling in his *linga sarira* 10 his devotees' places and accepting the naivedyas, etc., offered there.

Another practical joke played by Baba for effecting good was the following. Kaka Mahajani was suffering from diarrhoea. He had frequent motions and so he had to carry with him a vessel (lota) of water. Along with the lota of water, he had come to the Mosque. Baba knew very well his condition, and when Kaka was there, he suddenly got into a rage and uttered words and acted in such a furious way that all people took to their heels. In the rush and bustle some one seated at the mantap eating groundnuts left the groundnuts and fled for life. Kaka Mahajani thought that he must also go away. But Baba quietly came down to him and asked him to sit. Then they took up the groundnuts left by that stranger, and both of them consumed the groundnuts, and drank water. Now groundnut and water is hardly the best treatment for diarrhoea. In ordinary cases, it would accelerate diarrhoea and make the man miserable. But in this case, Baba said, 'Your anus be closed' and the discharge ceased. Kaka Mahajani was cured. Baba had used his apparent fury for the purpose of securing groundnuts for his devotee.

Another humorous incident has already been mentioned. When Mr. Sadasiva Tarkhad who was not employed came to Baba hoping to find employment with Baba's aid, Baba suddenly ordered him to go back to Poona in company with Taty Patil and others who were going to Ahmednagar to see a film. This looked very cruel and heartless, nay horrid, to send the man back without job and asking him to go and attend to amusement, when there was no provision for him to earn his bread. But he went with them to Ahmednagar and thence to Poona. At Poona he found that a local mill was needing a manager badly, as the labourers had given trouble and a capable manager was wanted. The mill authorities had been sending telegrams to find out where Sadasiva

Tarkhad was. Baba knowing of it, yet humorously omitting to inform him sent him back in time to get the mill managership.

One day a very old goat, just on the eve of death strayed into the Mosque Mantap. Baba asked Bade Baba to cut it with a knife. Bade Baba's heart revolted against this needless cruelty, and he left the Mosque. Baba asked Shama to fetch a knife from Ayi and kill it. Ayi sent the knife, but learning that it was for killing the dying goat, recalled the knife. Again Shama professing to go out for another knife decamped. Baba was enjoying the humour all the time. Then he sent for H.S. Dixit and asked him to fetch a knife and kill it. Dixit was the soul of obedience to Baba, and he was very intimately attached to Baba. So he took up a knife in his hand and asked Baba, 'Shall I kill it?' 'Yes' said Baba. Then he still hesitated. Baba said, "Why are you hesitating?" Then Dixit determined to kill it, for with him obedience to Baba was superior to sympathy for creatures. As Dixit was just lowering his knife over the head of the animal, Baba suddenly stopped him, and said, 'Do not kill the animal, I will myself kill it.' Then he took up the animal over his shoulders and walked a few paces. The creature then breathed its last. Baba knew full well what was going to happen, and was only enjoying the fun, and also testing the mental development of devotees. This test showed the perfection of Dixit's devotion.

There are many more instances of Baba's humour but it seems to be hardly necessary to labour the point. Baba like every other human being appreciated a humorous situation and he indulged in the humour not merely because it was natural but also because the human side must be presented to devotees along with his divine side so that they may be able to have the courage to grasp the Baba personality. Without the human, the divine part of Baba's personality could not be so well grasped and utilised by the devotees. One more excellent illustration of how the two combined in another saint may be the close of this chapter.

The late Sri C.N. Kuppuswami Iyer, Judge of the High Court of Madras, in trying to recall Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, for whom he had the highest reverence, said, 'I see now before my mind's eye the smiling face and the one

protruding single solitary tooth projecting from behind his lip and his uttering valuable and sacred lessons for people to learn'. Thus, it is the physical personality with the peculiarity of one protruding tooth that constituted the human element with which the divine element of presenting holy and lofty truths was intertwined in the judge's memory. That is an excellent illustration to show how we remember clearly what seems to be irrelevant human features. The irrelevant human feature comes in just a position with which the divine is drawn and made use of. This is very frequently the case, and that is why we are asked to study Avatars and deal with Bhagavatas, before realising the nature of Bhagvan. We get at Bhagvan through the Bhagavatas. We get at God through the Saint and not otherwise, *daivam manusha rupena* is an oftquoted saying. So the human is wanted, the human in the Bhagavata and the saint. That is why there are prayers in Srimad Bhagavata (Skanda 5, Chapter 11, verse 24) in which the devotee prays to God:

*Aham hare tavapadaikamoola dasanudaso bhavitasmi bhuyah
Manasmareta asitpateh gunante grinita vak karma karotu kayah.*

This means, 'May I, O! Hari, be born again (after death) as a servant of those devotees who have solely taken refuge in Your (lotus) feet. Let my mind ponder over and my tongue celebrate the excellences of the Lord of my life, and let my body do your service'.

The highest Bhagavata who has lived in modern days and whose Ofame has reached us, is Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, always absorbed in God with "*Allah Malik*" ever on his lips and in his heart, resigning all doership to God and ever intent on serving Him in all His forms of living beings, and ever desiring service, loving service, not salvation nor annihilation, nor total merger in Brahman.

Na naka prishtam, Na cha parameshtyam, Na sarvabhowmam, Na rasadhipatyam, Na yogasiddhir apunarbhavam Va, Samanjasa Twa virahasya kankshe, which means, 'I do not long for Heaven nor Brahmaloaka, nor rulership of this entire world nor of the Rasatala world, nor all the Yoga siddhis, nor escape from Rebirth, O God! if thereby I am to be without you'.

CHAPTER X

Baba's Siddhis, Their Origin, and Their Use

When Baba first came into Shirdi, he was a totally unrecognised fakir, and when after some stay he went out for three years and returned with Chan Bai Patel's marriage party, he was still practically in the same condition, though he was reported to have shown siddhi powers to Chan Bhai Pate! in the jungles near Aurangabad. When he came into Shirdi on that occasion, he had evidently in his mind that Shirdi should be his permanent abode, and wished to find some place to rest his head. The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nest. But the son of Man hath not where to lay his head, (Math. 8-20) said Jesus, and the Gita says that the best beloved Bhakta is homeless (*Aniketana*). It was the same with Sai. There was no place that he could call his own. Everything was his and nothing was his. He had perfect vairagya and no attachment to any person or place, though, especially at Shirdi, there were numerous persons and places at that time that had relations with him by reason of rinanubandha association and the ties arising from such association.

The first place that he came to after parting with Chan Bhai Patel's marriage party was the shaded temple of Kandobha, a small mud structure surrounded by shady trees. It was an ideal spot sufficiently removed from the village with sufficient holy association to be selected by any hermit for his place of meditation. In fact, many decades after Baba came, when Upasani Maharaj came and wanted a spot for his solitary meditation and hermit life, he hit upon the identical spot and was allowed to stay there for a period of about three years, 1911-14. But when Sai Baba (a young fakir) expressed his appreciation of the site for the residence of a hermit like himself, Mahlsapathy, the person in charge, objected to Baba, whom he took to be a Muhammadan, residing there. Hence Baba had to seek some other place. Baba found the foot of the Margosa tree a suitable place to stay for some time, a place in immediate proximity to his former Guru's tomb. A tree foot being however a very uncomfortable place for human flesh and blood, especially in times of rain and wind, he had to choose the dilapidated Mosque. While he was staying under this tree or at the foot of other

trees or rambling in the woods, he did not exhibit any powers but was concentrating all attention on his Guru-God. It was a considerable time before he first exhibited his siddhi power by converting water into oil. He was provoked into it by the gracelessness of the local vanis (i.e. Oil-mongers) who thought him to be a crazy fakir, and wanted to have some fun at his expense. When Baba wanted the oil badly for lighting up the lamps at the Mosque, which would be totally dark without the lamps, they told him that they had no oil, though it was a lie. Then he went up to the Mosque and (after completely clearing off even the last drops of oil sticking to the tin or timbrel, as he called it, by putting water into it and drinking off the solution of the mixture of oil and water) filled his lamps with water, inserted wicks into them, and lighted up the wicks. To the great surprise of the villagers, the wicks not only started burning but kept on burning all night, as though they were fed by supply of very good oil. Now this is what is called a miracle, *chamatkar*, or *siddhi*.

What took place was the conversion of water into oil. Somehow oil came into the lamp in a sufficient quantity to burn all night. Now this is not explicable to ordinary men with their notions of chemistry and physics. Water is not converted into oil except through castor plants and other plants which suck up the water, mix them with their other ingredients, and produce oil in the seeds of the fruits that they give. Without any such process, Baba was able to fill his lamps with oil. What is this *siddhi* called? Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, 15th Chapter, amongst other books, give a list of *siddhis* attained by yoga processes, and what Baba did would be called '*Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhih*' and '*Apratihata Ajna*,' that is producing whatever one wants by mere will power or supreme command. There are so many complicated processes mentioned in the Yoga Sutras. Sutras 16 to 50 of Chapter 3 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras show what powers are obtained in what way.

In Chapter 15 of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, verses 5 to the end of the Chapter, a similar description is given. Mantra and Tantra books show how magicians produce articles. The question naturally would be raised by the learned as to what process Baba adopted, and how he effected his object of

replacing water by oil for his lamps: The one short answer we might give to all such questions would be that Baba was not a Mantric who got his powers for specific purposes by adopting specific processes or specific mantras so far as we know. He seems to have been concentrating his desireless attention on God always thinking of Allah and as he put it, constantly saying. *Allah Malik*, or 'Hari, Hari, Hari' till Hari at last appeared before him. The power he got to produce what he wanted may be easily classified (if classification is necessary) under the 32nd stanza of the 15th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda. That stanza says:-

*jitendriyasya dantasya jitaswasa atmano muneh
maddharanam dharayatah ka sa siddhis sudurlabhah*

This means, 'What power is beyond the reach of the sage who has controlled his mind, senses, nerve currents and disposition, and concentrates on Me (Krishna or God)? Whether it is the Krishna form or Guru form or any other form, God is one and the same. The only requisite is that the concentration should be powerful and prolonged so as to bring on the properties of the contemplated form on the contemplating soul.

So, '*Yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*', that is, 'realising whatever one wants', and '*tasya cha ajnayatha mama*', namely, 'Getting one's command obeyed everywhere like God's command', are two portions of the siddhi chapter in Srimad Bhagavata sufficient to explain all The siddhis, chamatkars, and the powers etc., exhibited by Baba throughout his life. No doubt in some cases, when he was putting it in the form of prayer to God, and his will and God's will became one and the same. In such cases, Baba said, 'I am praying to Allah, He will carry out the prayer'. If this is kept in mind, it would be easy to understand the innumerable chamatkars which are found in the life of Baba as reported by devotees and as embodied in books like the Gospel of Sai Baba, etc.

One thing is clear, that is, during the early days of his stay at Shirdi he was keen on concentrating his attention on his Guru-God or Allah, and did not wish to waste his efforts by using the siddhis.

He realised what he himself said to some of his devotees (like R.A. Tarkhad) that utilising siddhis for obtaining earthly objects produced distraction,

that is, drew one's mind away from God. This is the advice given in verse 33 of the above Chapter 15 in Srimad Bhagavata and in Mantra 35 of Chapter 3 of Patanjali's Yoga sutras. Therefore, Baba did not waste his time in trying to work miracles or *chamatkars* in his early years. After lighting the lamps in the Mosque by converting water into oil, he did not repeat his *chamatkars*. This display of power was wrung out of him on that occasion by the levity of the "Vanis". He reserved all power within himself and held his mind on to God not only from his natural love of concentration on God but also in obedience to the well known dictum of Kabir "*Jinne Paya Vnne chupaya*", that is, 'He who has achieved something keeps it a secret'. There was nothing to be gained by him by a display of powers, for his desires were all controlled, and his barest necessities were met by his going about with his begging bowl in the streets, and, from there calling out for *roti* or *dhall*, and returning to the *Masjid* which gave him shelter. There was nothing else that he wanted. Food and shelter were provided. The tattered clothes that he wore quite sufficed especially with the help of the *dhuni* or the fire which he kept up in the Mosque.

Conquest of *Indriyas* is said to be a *siddhi*, but would be better termed a perfection of the soul from within, which Baba had achieved by the grace of his Guru and by the long training he had under his foster father or first Guru, the *fakir* and under his final Guru *Venkusa*. He was desireless and unaffected by the jeers or the praise of people about him, To such a person, there was no necessity to utilise *siddhi* powers, to produce articles as *Kusa Bhav* did. *Kusa Bhav* wanted fame and emoluments, which his power of production or materialization enabled him to get. But Baba wanted nothing. Baba's *siddhi* powers, however, were not an encumbrance. They were part of his equipment. His Guru had divine powers in him, and by *Saktinipata*, at the time of parting from him, the Guru had passed them over to Baba either potentially or in full force or perhaps partly potentially and partly in full force. He could invoke the Guru's own power to raise the dead as he did about the time when he parted from his Guru. Baba said to *Kaka Dexit*, 'I can revive the dead boy and bring back his soul from the body into which it has entered, into the corpse of the cobra-bitten boy here, but that would be interfering

with the karma of that soul' and showed Dixit the impropriety of exercising such siddhis merely to gratify the sympathy of Dixit with the cries of the agonised mother of the cobra-bitten boy.

Baba Said, "Death is inevitable and when it takes place at the appointed time, the proper course for a jnani or yogi is to encourage people to face the sorrow and not to exercise his powers to bring back the departed soul from the new body into which it might have entered. On that occasion, he showed his *Pratibha*, which single term would cover the numerous instances in which Baba had shown his knowledge of things which took place far and near and of the hearts of all people including creatures like lizards. This *Pratibha* is referred to in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, verse 34, which runs thus, '*Pratibhadva sarvam*'. This means all siddhis and knowledge are attained by the development of *Pratibha*, namely, this spontaneous enlightenment or illumination that blazes out in oneself, by and as a result of perfect satwa or purity, that is, perfect concentration on God. These powers of Baba's *Pratibha* and his perfect concentration on God resulted in "*apratihata ajna*", "*yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*", "*Bhuta jaya*", "*akasa gamana*", "*manojava*", etc., and formed a full panoply and perfect equipment for his work as Samartha Sadguru for **those** whom he wished to lead on their path to God.

A Samartha Sadguru must have all powers, though he may or may not exercise them. The powers are intended to be exercised to help the sishya to grasp the real nature of his Guru and his real greatness, and to overcome numerous obstacles from time to time that may be impeding his progress. The Guru also might utilise them for the benefit of the very large class of persons approaching him not as sishyas prepared to go through the full course of a spiritual discipline, but to have some benefit at his hands, mostly temporal, and it may be partly spiritual.

Taking for instance the case of G. S. Khaparde, whose object was mainly to escape from the jaws of the foreign Government and be free from their molestation in his legal, social and political life. Baba exercised his vast powers, especially of thought control, and crushed out from Government Official minds all

ideas of prosecuting Khaparde for the speeches he made in his political activities inspired by patriotism. Baba utilised similar powers for benefiting Damia (Damodar S. Rasane) in whose case some invisible and unperceived factors were preventing his having progeny though he lived with two wives and as also for granting longevity to Narke's children born after he gave Narke the blessing 'Allah will bless' (after he learnt that all the children born to him until then died prematurely). There are mantras in Mantra Sastra for practically each one of the above objects; and specific mantras, yantras, tantras, homas, etc., are prescribed for achieving the very same objects.

For example, *Putra kameshti* would suit the object which Damodar S. Rasane had in his mind, and *Simsumara Yantra* puja was what Narke badly needed (for longevity of children). *Maha Karya Siddhi* Homa in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* speaks of controlling all thoughts of persons in the desired direction, and these would be prescribed by orthodox Sastris for G.S. Khaparde. Baba however did not adopt any of these prescribed processes, but purely by his own will power granted relief in all the above cases.

Similarly Baba mentioned frequently facts about the past, immediate or remote, the present and the future, immediate or remote of every one going to him. For example, Baba said that eight children would be born to Damia in 15 years, and also spoke of the appointment that Narke would get three or four years later. Such feats also are referred to in the above mentioned books and other books on Mantra Sastra, and also in books on Jyotisha Sastra. Baba himself said, 'Your astrologers dive into the future and say some things of which a half or so come true'. Baba added, 'I know the future, and what I say comes true'.

As for '*yatha sankalpa samsiddhihi*' Baba said, 'I say here, things happen there (in accordance with what I say)'. Baba did not proceed in accordance with Yoga Sutras or other texts to achieve these objects. By his contemplation of the Supreme, the power of the Supreme were inherent in him. This is what Srimad Bhagavata says:

Maddaranam dharayatah ka sa siddhih sudurlabah?

This means, 'When one gets laya in God, all powers, all knowledge, all wisdom, all perfection, that are termed divine, shine forth from such a person'. Baba was perfect in his concentration on God. Therefore in the above quoted instances as in the other innumerable instances to be found in the Gospel of Sai Baba (i.e. BCS) or other books on Baba, the powers exercised by Baba were the result of his laya in God, that is, they were *really divine powers*.

In many, if not all, cases, the object of Baba was that a devotee should not merely get relief but also a full belief in him (Baba) that he was the Guru-God for the devotee so that the devotee might attach himself firmly to Sai Baba, and develop his life thereafter with his help. This is the great object with which siddhis were utilised by Baba. Temporal help was given by means of these *chamatkars*, but there was always a string attached to the temporal help. The man who got a temporal benefit had at the same time a push in the spiritual direction. When Baba was going to give Damia four fruits he started by saying, 'Damia, people are crying, "Give, give". Here are the fruits; eat and die'. Damia was very much puzzled. He came in order to get issue, but here death was mentioned. Then Baba smiled and told him that the fruits were not for him but for his second wife to eat. And that she would bear eight children for him. Now eight children are a very large portion of *samsara*. *Samsara* makes a man thoroughly absorbed in the world and thus he gets in *Pramada*, that is, forgetting God completely and thinking only of the world and worldly objects as the be-all and end-all of existence. Thus, this *Samsara pramada* is death said Sanatkumara in Sanatsujatiya and Baba gave him an inkling of that danger of *pramada* before pushing him into *samsara*,

Similarly when Baba was asked to give help on other occasions, he gave the help and with it faith in him. For instance, in the case of Narke, Dhumal, and Buty, who all felt that Baba was a person armed with divine powers and was, therefore, *Acharya devo bhava*, the proper person to be treated by them as a Guru, as Upanishads say 'Treat Guru as GOD'. Dhumal got perfect confidence that he was looked after by Baba, when Baba assured him 'Bhav, the whole of last night I had no sleep; I was thinking and thinking of you'. Dhumal noticed how

to prevent his thoughts from running away with him into harmful and sinful directions. Baba was spending his entire night in controlling those thoughts. He could not but get the impression that Baba was omnipotent and omniscient and that Baba was his Guardian Angel so that ever afterwards he could simply place himself in Baba's guardianship under all circumstances and be safe. Such a use of his omniscience was shown also in the protection he extended to Dhumal during times of plague, when Dhumal continued to live in plague-rat-ridden bungalows under Baba's care getting no harm thereby. Cases like this not only increased Dhumal's own confidence in Baba, but helped other people, who noticed Dhumal's immunity from plague, to know about the divine nature of Baba and his fitness to be a Guru to all persons who could summon up courage to surrender to Him and make themselves his disciples or devotees. This is the great use that Baba made of his siddhis from time to time that while granting Dhumal benefits he attached to them spiritual adjuncts. There were cases of great complexity coming before Baba in his dealings with hundreds of persons, if not thousands, in the course of the 40 or 50 years that he spent in Shirdi before he left his fleshy body.

The most striking difference between Baba's siddhis and use of them and others, (i. e, magicians' and *mantravadis'*) siddhis and their use may be briefly summarised thus:

(1) Baba's powers were part of his high nature and resulted from his concentration with love and intensity on his Guru-God. The powers of magicians are expressly sought and acquired by them by trance, japa or puja of petty deities conducted only for the purpose of acquiring the siddhis.

(2) The latter class of persons are not desireless yogis but persons desiring to acquire power for the love of power and all the worldly name, fame, wealth and control, etc., that siddhis produce.

(3) The siddhis they acquire are limited in extent and require the repetition of Japa, trance, etc., as they will soon end; and exercise of siddhis diminishes the supply of power with the indulgence in worldly desires while resorting to Siddhis buries them deeper in samsara.

(4) There might be danger in contacting magicians to the persons resorting to them while there is none in resorting to Samartha Sadgurus like Sai Baba who are intent on the welfare (temporal and spiritual) of those approaching them.

(5) Questions of payment arise with magicians, mantravadis but not with Samartha Sadgurus.

(6) The powers of magicians, mantravadis etc., are strictly limited and cannot have the wide operation of Samartha Sadguru Sai's powers. So, not infrequently the mantravadi's and magician's efforts and statements especially as to the future fail in a considerable proportion of cases. With Sai there is no failure of power to do or to see and speak out the future, etc.

(7) Where powers are acquired and used with the help of spirits, the magician's life and welfare are at the mercy of the spirits and so they use iron bangles, talismans etc.. and some of them are killed or maimed by the spirits. Sai Baba ran no such risk.

The problems get extremely complicated by the egotism and other evil tendencies of various persons. Baba himself remarked from time to time that the times were getting bad, that people were prone to look on the evil side of things and develop their evil side, that he had been praying to God for the removal of these evil things and for betterment, and that God had not granted his prayer but that he had not given up his prayer and that he was determined to push on and see that the evil was removed. This referred to persons who were in very close contact with him. Some of them had dedicated their entire lives to him and still retained vices or evil ways.

Some of them were too egotistic to yield to him unless he resorted to extreme measures which, of course, he was not prepared to resort to. Some of them could never make up their minds to fully surrender. Luckily a few surrendered and obtained perfect calm like H.S. Dixit, Bala Saheb Bhate and Balakram Manker. But the number of these people was small. The unregenerate and the obdurate were the many. They were of both sexes. Some of them were rendering very useful service to him and still were sticking on to evil ways. It was his self inflicted duty or prerogative to correct them and put them in the right way.

People are always attracted by things uncommon and many persons jump to conclusions that an unusual thing is produced by superhuman power, and if the power, which is superhuman, is divine, that is, that of a saint, they call it a miracle (for example Jesus's miracles). If not that of a saint, it might be the working of unseen spirit, elves, ghosts, spirits, pitrus, etc. Mohamad Bay employed his brother's deceased spirit to know the minds of others (his visitors) and used unseen spirits to scribble on paper (when pencil was placed on paper at their disposal) to write out those thoughts. He was considered a marvellous man and piled money (See Paul Brunton's book, 'Search in Secret India'). For one Mohamad Bay that Paul Brunton came across, we have hundreds of similar persons whose motive is the same, viz, fame and money, and who employed mantra, elves, and trance, power, etc., to read thoughts and hazard answers to mental questions of their visitors about the future and the readings of the past of the mass of persons (both men and women) are generally found correct and their predictions about the future are found almost invariably worthless though occasionally they hit the mark by chance.

Some of these persons combine palmistry, clairvoyance, necromancy, etc., with their own cleverness and make a name, acquire fame and wealth. And several of them are employing written books or palm leaves purporting to have been written long ages back and containing accounts of their visitors, past experiences, with sometimes remarkable accuracy. As a rule these leaves called *Nodi grantham* can be read only by their owners and not by others, and some of them are comically inclusive of the very time of consultation of the visitor and other present day detail which may be near effect of thought reading or plain knowledge of the so-called thought reader. Those which are based on astrological calculations do come out correct in a percentage of cases. But mostly they are remarkable failures as to the future, for their writers, or at least their exponents, though mentioning the exact moment of consultation and other details attendant on it, are unable to understand the future. Stories are told as to how great Sages have failed to understand the future, e.g.

Yada vyasah cha dasah cha yamena mrutyna saha

Kalosya gruham aayanthi tada daso marishyati

'Dasa, the pupil, asked Vyasa, his Guru, when dasa would meet with his death; (that being a future event). Vyasa could not say, and the two went to Yama and enquired of him, who also could not fix the time without asking Mrithyu, who also could not fix the time of death without asking Kala. Hence, all the four went to Kala to ask about the time of Dasa's death and at that time Dasa died. The above stanza was found written in Kala's book saying that Dasa would die when he, with Vyasa, Yama and Mrithyu, visited the house of Kala.'

This is but a story and is not part of any Sastra or result of yogic experience. The time of death is stated to be found by a person himself in Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Part III, verse 23 - *sopakramam nirupakramamcha karma tat samyamaadaparanta jnanam arishtebhyava*.

Karma is of two kinds, namely (1) fructifying immediately (2) fructifying later. By making *samyama* on these or by the signs called *arishta*, *portents*, the Yogis know the exact time of separation from their bodies.

This may correctly describe the psychological process in the mind of the Siddha, but the fact is well known that in a good number of people, the processes are quickly conducted to amount to an intuition and some holy persons or even apparently ordinary persons derive an impression that the death of a person whose face they see is very near. In the case of a blind man who went to Sai Baba for restoration of his eye sight, and who was given no encouragement by Baba for getting his eye sight, he went to Upasani Maharaj at Khandoba temple, who, when he saw him, derived the impression that death was not far off and in fact, within a month the man died.

Other instances of such intuition about others' death and about one's own death are fairly well known, though they are of course scarce. This siddhi of knowing the time of death is not after all so important as it looks. It is chiefly valuable to enable a person to spend his last moments in the thought of God. But to a very large number of persons the time when death approaches is fairly easily understood though not exactly fixed by noting the condition of the body with or without medical advice, and above all to ensure that the last thought should be

about God is done by adopting Sri Krishna's advice in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VIII.

*tasmat sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhyacha
mayi arpitha manobuddhih maamevaishyasi asamscayam*

This means, 'Therefore, at all times, remember Me and then do your duty of fighting; when you have surrendered your mind and reasoning power unto Me, you will surely come to Me'. There is a Tamil song, which means, "*I have told now itself what I have to say then (at the time of death)*". This is based upon the stanza in Mukunda Mala, in which the following lines occur:

*krishna twadeeya pada pankaja pancharaantah
adyaiva me visatu maanasa raja hamsah
prana prayaana samaye kapavatapithaih
kantavarodhana vidhou smaranam kutaste*

This means, 'O, Krishna, into the lotus of Thy feet may the Swan (Rajahamsa) of my mind enter now alone. For at the time of death when the three humours (phlegm, wind, and bile) are holding the throat and oppressing the Soul, how is one to think of You?' The idea of these lines that we must immediately surrender to Lord Krishna, is right. Though there is no guarantee at the last moment, one can think of Krishna as advised in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VIII.

Still there are a number of cases in which persons have died with clear consciousness upto the last, and have kept in mind their Ishta Devata or Guru Devata at that time. H.S. Dixit is a notable instance of this sort. There are several other cases also which might be known to the readers and might encourage hope in the reader that he might adopt the way of Sai Baba and his Guru, Noolkar, Vijayananda and others of spending their entire days before death amidst holy and inspiring studies, sights, and sounds, and thus pass on to God. Above all, firm Sai devotees with *drida bhakti* in him are assured by Baba in his Charters & Sayings that at the time of their death, Baba (B.C.&S, 95 and 96) would draw his devotees to himself even though they might die 1,000 miles away from Shirdi. Baba added, 'I will not allow my devotee to be lost. I will account to

God all those devotees drawn to Me.' Those with firm faith in Baba, as Guru God, will thus be drawn to God, who is identical with Baba. Baba said that the wife of Upasani Maharaj and the child of M.B. Rege thus came to him at the time of their deaths, and that they would be eternally with him. It would be ridiculous to ask which of the siddhis mentioned in Patanjali Yoga Sutras or Bhagavata, Ekadasa Skanda, Chapter 15, enabled Baba to do so. It is not a siddhi in the ordinary sense that gives this power. Sai Baba had by the grace of his Guru and by his prolonged and continuous Dhyana, Dharana Samadhi on God, Guru-God, attained laya in Him and all the powers flowing from God are found in such a devotee who had got poorna laya in God. In verses 31 and 32 of the XV Chapter of the 11th Skanda of Srimad Bhagavata, it is stated,.

*upasakasya mamevam yoga dharanaya muneh
siddayah poorva kathita upatishtanthi asceshatah
jitendriyasya daantasya jitasvasaan mano muneh
maddharanam dharayatah kaa saa siddhih sudurlabha*

This means, To the sage who worships Me in the foregoing ways through yogic concentration, the above mentioned powers come in their full measure. No power is beyond the reach of the sage who has controlled his mind, senses, nerve currents and disposition, and concentrates on Me'.

These confirm Patanjali Yoga Sutras in Chapter III, especially those about *Pratibha* and *Sarva Bhava Athreshta Trithva* and *Sarve Jnathruthva*. Patanjali has said therein that by concentrating on the *Purusha* and developing *Suddhasatva* one attains *pratibha* (knowledge of everything), and one can do everything, i.e., achieve omnipotence and omniscience. Patanjali proceeds to point out that the seed of desire may still be there and if that is overcome, *Kaivalya* is attained. With Sai Baba, there was no seed of desire, and his reaching the *kaivalya* state is expressed by his words '*Maim Allahum*' and the other words found in Charters 66 to 68 prove that he had a Cosmic personality and not an individual personality. Being a person possessed of all siddhis and undertaking to look after devotees' temporal and spiritual welfare to lead them on to God, he had to exercise all these divine powers in him. When a theosophical

lady entered his Mosque with a doubt in her mind, whether his powers, *chamatkars*, etc., were instances of black magic, he spoke out (B. C. &S. 57), 'This (referring to himself) is a Brahmin, a white Brahmin; a pure (Subhra) Brahmin. This Brahmin will lead lakhs of people to *subhra marga* and take them to the goal right up to the end (the end, of course, is reaching God)'. It is hardly necessary to enquire into each particular case of his exercising this extraordinary power and see whether he adopted any of the processes mentioned in the Yoga Sutras or in the 15th chapter cited above or in the Mantra Sastras. Being merged in the Supreme especially by intense prayer and concentration, all power was with him. Yet the curious reader would like to analyse the various sorts of power he exercised on particular occasions, and see whether he achieved the so-called miracles. Whether we take his first achievement at Selu of reviving the dead man with no other remedy or mantras than the throwing of his Guru's *pada duti* on the corpse with a prayer for revival, or his taking water at his Shirdi Masjid and filling his lamps with that water for feeding the wicks with a prayer, we find his concentration on his Guru God is the only means.

The Mantra books are full of various mantras, tantras, and *oushadas* with a full detail of varied processes for *Mohanam*, *Vasikaranain*, *Akarshanam*, *Vidveshanam*, *Maaranam*, *Uchatanam*, etc., and these have absolutely no application to what Baba did. When Upasani Maharaj was trying to run away from him and Shirdi fully determined not to return in 8 days as promised, in June 1911, Baba fully gripped his mind and the minds of all those that he (U) came across and made him return within the 8th day without understanding or remembering his determination to return back home to Satana to be with his wife and mother. The force employed by Baba was mere will power i.e., *yata sankalpa samsiddhih* and did not require the usual tantric devices employed of drawing a line of water, addressing Indra, etc., to stop the passage of the runaway. As mentioned in the last stanza, for one resting in God with perfect *laya ka sa siddhih sudurlabhah*, what is the accomplishment or achievement that is unattainable? Baba knew everything that took place everywhere, every moment in connection with his devotees and could boldly give assurances even about the

future (which is stated in the stanzas quoted previously as being impossible for any except Kala).

Baba said about Nana Chandorkar when he was threatened with imminent death, 'Nana is about to die, but will I let him die?' The tonga in which Nana and Lele Sastri were seated was upset, and Baba, knowing the grave danger they were in, exercised his power of saving them "with four, four hands stretched out (unseen) to support them" and Nana was thus really saved from death. When Nandram Marvadi of Shirdi, from whose house also Baba begged for bread, caught the infection of plague, which was rife and rampant at Shirdi, and when he wanted to run away, Baba told him that he would not die and Baba would not allow him to die at any rate, until Baba's own body perished. This Nandram Marvadi was saved from death and continued to live for several decades. When an astrologer told Buty that there was a '*Ganda*¹' or danger of death to him, on a particular day, Baba Said, 'What! Does he say that Death will attack you? Strike. Let me see how you strike and kill". Later in the day a snake came near Buty, but did not bite him or kill him. The ability or power to say that death shall not come to a person is diastinctly divine.

Baba's powers, therefore, are seen to be divine powes and no curious readers or explorers can trace the origin of his powers to the employment of Mantra Sastra, Tantra or Yantra. Quite right were the devotees who identified Baba with God and treated him as their Guru Deva, or as Shama used to call him merely 'Deva". The distinction between the Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman or Personal God and his agents armed with "vast and practically unlimited powers" is of no use to the Bhakta and proves to be a mere cause of confusion. In the presence of Baba devotees like Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiv Tarkhad and others felt nothing could hurt them so long as they were in his presence, not even death. And besides the protection (*Abhaya*) there was the feeling of Bliss radiating from Baba and permeating the devotees for hours and hours, such as that experienced by Narayanasram, G.S. Khaparde, the South African doctor and others. These fully justify the conclusion that Sai Baba, from whom such

illimitable Paramananda came, must himself be full of Pure Sat Chit Ananda, i.e., himself was (and is) God, whatever Narke and others might think.

Let us take the question of Swetcha Marana, which pertains to the human side of Baba, and consider what light might be thrown on the three occasions on which the problem arose. In 1886 Baba told Mahlsapathy that he was going to meet Allah, and might not return again, and if he did not return within three days, his body was to be interred near the sweet margosa tree, and if he returned, he might take up the body and live again. Then within a very short time of leaving the body, the body turned into a corpse. In the inquest he was declared dead, and the officers wanted the body to be buried. But the burial was prevented by Mahlsapathy and other devotees. Three days later, Baba came back to life and lived for 32 years thereafter. In 1916, it looked as though Baba would pass away, and Baba declared that his *simolanganam* (crossing the border) was the Dasara day. In 1918, he fully anticipated his departure on Dasara, 15th October. He had Hari Vijaya read at his Mosque and sent up money (Rs. 250/- or so) to a Muslim Saint Shamsuddin for the performance of Davalu, etc., and sent word to another Saint Bannemea that on the 9th day of the 9th month, God was taking away the light which he had himself lit (meaning, of course, the life of Sai Baba). Banne Mea shed tears on receipt of this information. Baba passed away calmly leaning on the body of Bagoji conscious to the last moment. This was just like the sage of Narayanapuram (*Surakka Paradesi*) at Narayanavanam near Puttur, Renigunta, and like Parikshit passing away in the Bhagavata. That one must always be in a detached state and must be thinking of God (which is the direction given in Bhagavad Gita) was exactly what was done by Baba. He was always thinking of God. Serving God is serving man and serving creation. He had evidently no need to determine the time of his death by noting the Arishta or omens or ripeness of his karma according to Patanjali Yoga Sutra No. 23, for all knowledge to him was an open book. His undertaking on behalf of his devotees to give them happy and blessed deaths, e.g., his promise to H. S. Dixit to carry him in a vimana, were fulfilled by him with remarkable accuracy through his divine power. His drawing devotees to himself at the time of their deaths even though they might be

thousands of miles away from Shirdi and his placing them in the best situations for their next birth, for instance, placing Pishya, Rohilla, Galwankar, Sapatnekar's child, and Baba Pradhan each in his mother's womb are all very remarkable and are not described in any of the Sutras of Patanjali or any of the Mantra Sastras, but are simply evidence of the omnipotence and omniscience and vast kindness to look after every devotee's interests, as our God and Guru Deva. Further analysis of his powers to trace their origin is absolutely unnecessary.

The way in which he used his powers, especially his omnipotence and omniscience are all clearly set out in the Gospel of Sai Baba or Charters & Sayings under properly arranged heads and in other books on Baba without such arrangements. A careful study of these will fill one with full appreciation of Baba's divine powers. It is mere idle curiosity or impertinence to go beyond the above and try to trace out the source of Baba's powers to Mantra Sastra etc.

The question, however, arises especially to metaphysical minded persons whether the doctrine of karma places a limit on the powers of Sai or God, whether there is a free will at all, or whether destiny has fixed up every item to occur in the future. Questions like these have perplexed and will perplex men to the end of time perhaps. Whatever may be the metaphysical solution of this problem, it is the best, wisest and the safest course for the main mass of readers to seek their safety and advantage by pinning firm faith with full bhakti in Baba and leaving it to him to deal with these questions.

There are passages in Charters and Sayings, for instance, where -from widely divergent and opposite inferences on the above matter may be drawn. But the safest course for a bhakta is to fix his faith firmly at Baba's feet, leave it to him to decide, and to guide us in every particular. This is Baba's own advice and many devotees have profited by adopting that course, and the reader cannot have any advice better than the above.

If any reader wishes to know what were the various ways in which Baba used his divine siddhis and the reasons for them, an exhaustive answer is, of course, impossible. Even a fairly full answer will take many pages. But as the

subject is one of vast importance and interest, a few paragraphs may be given here giving a very brief and very incomplete list of the above.

Of the siddhis which are said to be Ashta Mahasiddhis, directly inherent in God and God alone, according to verse 5 Chapter 15 of Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, there are *Anima*, *Mahitna*, *Laghima*, *Prapthi*, *Prakamyam*, *Eeshitwam*, *vashitvam*, and *Kamavasayita* (or *Paramananda*). These are found inextricably mixed up with the next succeeding ten, and the later five siddhis which are mentioned in verses 6 to 8. Hence some degree of intermixture of terms is inevitable, but substantially the power referred to under any head of the Bhagavata must in the case of Baba be attributed solely to his concentration on his God (Allah or Hari), and to his perfect laya resultant in the flow of divine powers to his surrendered soul. Hence in a very rough way we shall proceed to pick up, arrange, and bundle some of the reported manifestation of Baba's siddhis with a view solely to show how he utilised them for his benign purposes.

About *Anima*, one recalls what he said to Mrs. T. of Bandra and her son when they were with him at puja time. Baba said that he visited (by *Akasagamana*) in his *Leghima* body, their Bandra house to partake of the Naivedya, if any, offered there and that the usual naivedya (sugarcandy) had not been offered that day, a fact which he discovered by entering into that closed puja ;:x>m, (which means, by the exercise of *Anima* power). This fact of the omission to offer sugarcandy as naivedaya was discovered by Mr. T. only at the time of noon meal, and then he repented. The mention of the omission of sugarcandy in the naivedya was confirmed by Mr. T's letter written to Shirdi and showed the truth of Baba's visit to Bandra to that lady's house. There may be thousands of other cases, but this one will suffice to illustrate the points of *Leghima*, *Anima* and *Akasa Gamana*, and also to illustrate the more important truth that Baba, as the Guru God of his devotees, was observing the Gita dictum,

Patram pushpam phatam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachati

Tadaham bhakti upahrutam ashnam i prayatatmanah.

This means, 'When any bhakta offers a flower, fruit or water, with full bhakti or faith, that article offered with faith I accept and enjoy'. In the above

case, Baba told Mrs. T. on the day in question that he returned from her house on that occasion with unappeased hunger. Baba like Sri Krishna and other forms of God appreciates Prema or love and takes immense trouble to keep watch over his bhaktas, their puja, offering, and conduct with a view to ensure their welfare. As stated in B.C. & S.2, his eye of vigilant supervision is ever on those who love him. This loving universal watch at all times and places can only be termed divine. Similarly another instance is this. When H.S. Dixit was doing his puja at his Shirdi quarters and forgot to place betel and nut as part of the prescribed offering, and when later Dixit approached Baba at the Mosque Dwarakamayee, Baba asked him for the betel and nut to make his puja complete. Instances of this sort can be multiplied innumerable but the above would suffice.

His watchful eyes exposed attempts at wrong or fraudulent efforts of the devotees when they approached him. When N.V., a printer, knowing that Baba would ask for dakshina, handed over his coins to D.V. Sambhare, who accompanied him to see Baba, exposed his device by telling N.V. 'Give dakshina, and take it from D.V.S'. Similarly when persons intending to give certain amounts gave only a part and took away the remainder, Baba asked for the remainder. A woman intending to give eight annas gave only four annas, and kept away the other four annas. Baba said to her, 'Why cheat me, a poor Brahmin? Pay me the remaining four annas also.'

All these are instances of Baba's use of power to help devotees to complete their puja or vows. Proceeding next to *Mahima*, i.e., immensity and *Prapthi*, i.e., enjoyment through the sense of others, and also *Pmkamyam*, there are no particular cases to record. *Ishatvam*, the next item of the Ashta, i.e., exercise of power over all this includes "*Aparajaya apratihata aajnya*," "*yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*", *Aparajayam* means not being overcome; "*Apratihata ajnya*" means supremacy of orders, and *Yatha sankalpa Samsiddhih*, means the very thought becoming translated into fact and becoming effective.

Of these many hundreds of cases are recorded in Baba's Charters & Sayings and Devotees' Experiences. It is better to refer to these instances under the minor headings that we shall take up in succeeding paragraphs.

The seventh of the Ashta Mahasiddhis as given in Srimad Bhagavata is *Vashitwa* (i.e. non-attachment to sense objects, through self-control). This is a pronounced characteristic of Baba and may be easily understood by all as a saintly value. No one has pointed out even a single instance in which Baba was attached to any sense object. He told Nana, Jog etc., one day "prepare Pooran poli, *sanja* (kesari) etc." These were asked by Baba because these were considered delicacies and not because Baba had any liking for them or for Mangoes, Sitaphal, Guavas, etc. Baba was never a slave to sense attachment. As stated by him, his Guru Mourshed had taken him away from the *Dehatma Buddhi*, the delusion that a person is his body. Hence we can understand why there was no attachment in his case to sense objects.

The eighth siddhi which is the crown of all is stated in Srimad Bhagavata to be *Yat Kamah Tat Avapsyati* that is, the end of all desires. It may be interpreted negatively as the absence of all desires. But it is also interpreted positively as a state of *Parama Ananda*, i.e., the highest happiness described in the table of happiness, mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad.

The same terms are used in various books and by various people in different senses or suggesting shades of difference. These may cause some difficulty for a person who is anxious to have one definite sense always attached to every word. In the case of "Paramananda", or "Ramaswaminayudu", it is impossible for us to have a good grip of what is connoted unless we ourselves are in that state. As no writer, so far as we know, on these subjects has given us a definite description or definition of Paramananda, we shall take it that the highest conceivable happiness is included in this as the eighth of the Ashta Maha Siddhis which belong to Iswara according to Srimad Bhagavata 11 (35) 8. We may say a word or about that before proceeding to deal with other siddhis.

Sometimes people raise puzzling questions as to whether Baba is a *Gunatita*, a *Sthita Prajna*, a *Parama Jnani*, a *Parama bhakta*, etc., or whether he is in the absolute *kaivalya* stage. Without a grasp of the exact connotation of all those terms and a complete knowledge of Baba's state, it is impossible for one to give definite answers to these conundrums. Luckily for us, it is unnecessary to

furnish an answer to every question which may be raised. We might just note a fact or two about this Paramananda. This term was first used by a South African doctor, who first approached Sai Baba without full faith in him. Being conscious of his high Brahmin birth, he did not wish even to enter into Baba's Mosque or Dwarakamayee for fear of being polluted; but, contrary to his agreement with his Mamlatdar friend who took him there, he suddenly rushed into the Mosque and fell at Baba's feet and when asked for the reason, stated, 'This Baba is a *Yoga Sampoorna Avatar*. I am a Rama bhakta, having spent years with Rama bhakti but have had no Sakshatkar of Rama. And now for the first time I see Sri Rama with all his *chinhas* in the Mosque in the figure of Sai Baba. When I looked on Sai, I found he was Neelamegha Shyama Rama, my Ishta Devata, and hence I bowed to him.' He then made up his mind that as Baba was Rama and knew everything in his heart he would not go to the Mosque again till Baba should grant the highest desire of his heart, namely the perfect bliss of Satchidananda. Therefore for three days he abstained from going to the Mosque, though he was at Shirdi. On the last day an old chum of his came up and talking with him, he forgot all about his vow, and both together came and fell at the feet of Baba. Baba kindly asked him, 'Did any one send for you?' He felt ashamed' but seeing that Baba knew the secrets of his heart, hoped that Baba would grant his highest desire. And Baba did. During the succeeding days when he stayed at Shirdi, Baba filled him with the strange feeling of bliss which the South African doctor called "Paramananda", that is, a feeling of bliss not resulting from external or internal contact with any objects of the senses, but which filled the heart completely and gave it its highest satisfaction. This is our idea of Paramananda or Atmananda. The doctor was quite happy at having Paramananda or Atmananda with the help of Sai who to him was Rama being recognised by every real Hindu as God. If the question should be asked of that doctor whether Sai was a *Gunatita*, a *Parama Jnani*, or a *Parama Bhakta*, he would certainly answer that he was all these and more, namely, Satchidananda Himself.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. If a person could grant another Paramananda, he must have Paramananda in himself. That must be his nature.

Baba being perfectly free from desires, thoroughly self-controlled and ever dwelling upon God (Satchit Ananda) must certainly be soaked in Satchidananda. Therefore, of the eight divine 'Ashta Maha siddhis". if the eighth is treated as sufficiently expressed by the word Taramananda\ Baba had it. There was ample proof of it to those who were capable of drawing that Ananda on to themselves. The above mentioned doctor called Baba VI *Yoga sampoorna Avatar*', because he could at will display the Rama form over himself and show that he was having Godhead, Satchidananda.

This yogic power of displaying any and every form will be referred to later on as one of the siddhis, namely, *Kamarupa*, though this is much inferior to Satchidananda, which is just now being discussed. About Ananda itself, others who have practised yoga and who live up to Satchidananda and are competent to talk about it, have described Baba as 'A Yoga sampoorna Avatar¹ that is, one who had the fullness of the Satchidananda derived by yoga and that this Ananda came out from him at will.

Amongst the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, in the third chapter, the last verse of the Siddhi Chapter refers to *Kaivalyam*, the ultimate state of pure bliss. When they reach Atman or Brahman, Yogis are said to have the power of imparting what power they please to persons who come to them in a condition fit to receive the gift of bliss. G.S. Khaparde was a highly cultured Sanskrit scholar and had evidently read yoga sastra. He has referred to certain instances and experiences of his in his diary in the year 1911-12, while he stayed at Shirdi. Therein repeatedly he mentions that Baba cast Yogic glances at certain persons who were immediately filled with a wave of bliss, which overpowered all their other mental activities and kept them immersed in bliss for hours without break. Khaparde kept on for three hours or four hours enjoying such bliss after a yogic glance from Baba, and he has noted this in his diary. On some days, he says, 'Baba cast no yogic glance to-day'. This would imply that Baba himself was *Ananda sampoorna*, and could at will give a taste of that Ananda, a sort of foretaste at least (a Pisgah site of the Promised Land) to those who are competent to receive it. Others also have noted such a power in Baba.

The power to thoroughly grip one's entire mind has been set out already, and will be again set out amongst his siddhis. He had the power to completely black out some lines of thought, e.g., that of returning home from Upasani's mind for eight days after his first visit to Baba. This yogic power which blacks out completely unwanted thoughts would also evidently imply the power to give positive bliss to persons fit to receive it. If a person is comparatively free from sin and vice and could keep his mind sufficiently blank or sufficiently pure even for a while, any ordinary or sufficiently experienced hypnotist with a command of blissful thought could fill his mind with blissful thoughts over a considerable period, and Baba's yoga sampurna state enabled him to keep several people in such happy state, as they themselves have recorded in their experiences. Mrs. Tarabai Sadasiva Tarkhad says that though she had physical pains in her body and mental worries all making life quite miserable, yet when she went and sat before Baba, that very moment she felt steeped in Lethe, and all her anxieties, pains, cares, physical and mental, vanished. Till her departure from Dwarakamayee, she was enjoying a happy state.

A similar record is made by Mr Jehangir, who is called in the 'Devotees¹ Experiences', a Blerk. This Jehangir, a Parsi, though not acquainted with the holy books that Mrs. Tarabai and Khaparde had read, and though he had no ideas on the subject of yoga, still enjoyed this state mentioned by Mrs. Tarabai. When he went to Baba, he had his miseries and anxieties about the difficulty of getting his sister married, and the difficulty of getting his insane brother cured. As he sat before Baba for hours, all these thoughts completely left him. He was in Lethe and bathed in Baba's aura, the sense of perfect safety, and the feeling of happiness overcame him. This has been recorded in his statement, and he says that even after Baba left the body, he appeared in his dreams, and he had the same experience. All these go to show that Baba's powers over the mentality of others, which may be included in his yoga sampath, were used by him to confer happiness of the highest sort known to us, namely, freedom from all anxieties and physical pains.

Thus far we have dealt with the Ashta Maha siddhis. Proceeding to deal next with the ten major and five minor siddhis recited in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda XI, Chapter 15, stanzas 6 to 8, we shall take up *Anurmimatrvam*.

Anurmimatrvam means freedom from hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death, etc. Baba exercised various powers, and he had no delusions and sorrows so far as we know and never suffered from the pangs of thirst or hunger. As for old age and death this was inevitable in his physical existence, as also to Avatars like Rama and Krishna. In Srimad Bhagavata, Krishna is said to have been attacked by *jara* (old age) at the age of 125. and according to the well established law that all things that have a beginning must have an end, bodies which have had their commencement must have their end. and so death and decay being the end, are the necessary consequence of physical existence.

The next siddhis are *Durasravana darsanam*, ability to see or hear things at very great distances in spite of obstacles hiding the view, etc. This can be called, when exercised by petty human beings, clairvoyance. When exercised by Baba, these are the results of his laya in God to whom there was nothing like *dura* or distance or space limitation. At the same moment Baba could be at Bombay and also at Shirdi, and Machendragad and Jejuri. Therefore, there was no question of distances for him. It was not necessary for him to see or hear. Without seeing or hearing he had the power to know, for his nature was pure *Chit*; and his *Pratibha*, the power of illumination, unrestricted by the ordinary limitations that bind other men, enabled him to see or hear at the same time what went on at different places and make use of that knowledge for the benefit of his devotees.

For instance, when the son of Thakersay Sait, the master of Kaka Mahajani, was talking to him at Bombay about the necessity of Kaka Mahajani going straightaway to Shirdi to ask Baba for his advice whether the Sait should or should not continue at Nasik for his health, Kaka Mahajani replied that Dixit was at Shirdi, that he could be written to, and that he would get Baba's answer. The son's reply was that would not suffice, and that the Sait would be satisfied by

nothing short of Mahajani's personal questioning of Baba. Baba knew the whole of this talk and told Dixit at that time at Shirdi, 'What talk is going on there? What deliberation?' When the next day Mahajani came, Baba informed Dixit that he was referring to this particular visit of Mahajani when he made his remarks the previous day. Dixit and Mahajani compared notes and found how Baba could simultaneously see and hear what went on at Bombay and Shirdi. So, this is referred to as a case of *Durasravana darsanam*. But as stated already, it is hardly worthwhile to try and classify Baba's powers under the heading we find in books like one mentioned above, or the Mantra Sastras. Baba is one vast mass of power, and, therefore, there is no use in analysing further. Still as there may be persons not convinced of the uselessness of such classification, we shall give some more instances of Baba's exercise of powers and see whether they can be brought under any of the headings mentioned in the above stanzas.

Leaving *Manojava* aside, we shall proceed to *Kamarupam*, that is, taking on any form or body, and also *Apratihata gati*, that is ability to go anywhere and ability to assume any form that one wants. Baba had undoubtedly all these powers. Baba appeared before Nachne's brother in the hospital in one form, at his house in another form, and at Shirdi, when Nachne saw him first, in a third form. Yet, Baba at Shirdi said, 'I went to this man's house. He did not give me *Eendibaji*'. That convinced Nachne that though the rupa or form that he saw at his house on the occasion of his brother's medical operation was different from Sai Baba's Shirdi rupa or form, it was still his. *kamarupa*, a form assumed by Baba at will. Similarly Baba assumed various other forms with various other people. Balakrishna Upasani states in his experience that at the Tapovan near Haridwar, he met a Sadhu who showed his rinanubandha with his family and used certain Hindustani phrases, meaning that there were two persons on the same tree or branch, one went up and the other came down. Baba, when he (Balakrishna Sastri) met him at Shirdi, used the same phrases to remind him of his identity with the Tapovan Sadhu. Thus, Balakrishna Sastri who found that the figure of the two was *the same, though the dress was different*, concluded that

Baba, who said never to have left Shirdi to go to Tapovan, could assume *Kamarupa*, that is, any shape in any place.

There are other occasions also in which Baba took up forms, suiting the occasion. The best instance, perhaps, of this taking up a form was that which is mentioned by himself, on the occasion of B.V. Dev's udyapana dinner, samaradhana, which he got up, after finishing a study. Dev had written to Shama and invited Baba for the dinner to be held at his place. Baba agreed. Later, not finding Baba at the dinner, he wrote to Shama complaining of Baba's breach of promise. When the letter came, even before it was read, Baba exclaimed, 'What! He complains that I did not go and attend the dinner? Tell him that I did come along with two others, and that I told him that I came not for money'but only for the dinner'. Then Dev remembered how a Sanyasi with two sishyas attended his dinner, and how he had said exactly the same thing and realised that Baba had appeared in the form of that Sanyasi to partake of his dinner.

These will suffice for the present to show that Baba could take *Kamarupa*. In fact, his visiting Mrs. T's house at Bandra to take the naivedya in *laghima* form or *Anitna* form, entering into the puja room to taste the naivedya. is another instance of *kamarupa*.

Amongst the 10 powers noted next in Srimad Bhagavata, 11th Skanda, Chapter XV, the 6th is *Parakaya pravesanam*, i.e., actually entering into the bodies, living or dead, of other creatures. We have no information of this power being exercised by Baba, and that may be due to the fact that there was no necessity for Baba to enter into others' bodies. As he declared, he was not the mere body called 'Sai', but the *Antaryami*, the innermost soul of every creature, especially of his bhaktas. As stated in Sainatha Manana,

Ahamatma his chandorkar, sarabhutascaya stitah,

Pipilikamukhena aaddmi, makshikasya mukhenacha.

which means, 'O, Chandorkar! I am the Atman or Antaryami residing in the heart of all creatures. I eat through the mouth of the ant that eats and the fly that eats'. Sai Baba is the Antaryami of all. To teach Chandorkar this, Baba once asked Chandorkar to bring 'polis' as Naivedya. When "polis" were brought to Baba, and

placed before him, flies and ants settled on the "polis". Baba then said that he had eaten the polis and that Chandorkar might remove the plates. Chandorkar could not believe that Baba had eaten the naivedya, because the polis kept on the plate before Baba were not even touched by Baba. Baba declared that he was the Antaryami of ants and flies that settled on the polis, and he had taken the polis as ants and flies. This statement appeared to Chandorkar as something out of scriptural text or a philosophical doctrine, and not an actual fact. Nana Chandorkar asked Baba, therefore, to enable him (Chandorkar) to perceive Baba's *Antaryamitva*. And Baba raised his hands and made some gestures, which revealed to Chandorkar that Baba knew the innermost secrets of Chandorkar's heart, and therefore, must be his Antaryami, and consequently the Antaryami of every creature in the Universe. It is this same Antaryamitva that Baba was meaning, when he said that Hansraj had beaten him, when he went as a cat to drink away his curds in order to save Hansraj from his disease, Asthma, (for which Baba had asked him not to take curds). Baba showed a weal on his shoulder corresponding to the stroke on the cat's shoulder by Hansraj. This must also be the meaning when Baba said that he went on the first day as a sickly Sudra to Khandoba temple seeking food from Upasani Maharaj who, however, did not give food but drove away both. Upasani Maharaj asked Baba whether he could be a sickly Sudra. Baba's answer was that he was in *all these and beyond*, a statement reminiscent of Purusha Sukta, *Sa bhumim viscvato avrutva, atyatishat dascangulam*. That is, 'He the Supreme (God) premeates the Universe and stands beyond by 10 inches'. This refers to God's *immanence* in and *transcendence* of the Universe.

That must therefore be the meaning of Baba who said, '*Maim Allahum, I am God*'.

The seventh item in the list of 10 siddhis is *Swachanda Mrityu*, i.e. power to depart from the world and one's mortal body at will. In 1886, Baba exercised this power and left the body. For three days, his body lay as a corpse as proved by a judicial document (the inquest report). Thereafter, like Sankaracharya, he returned to the body and lived for 32 years, i.e. upto 1918, which power to return

may be included in the 9th or 10th of the above list of siddhis. The 9th is called *yatha sankalpa samsiddhih*, i.e., achievement of everything at one's will.

The 10th item is *Aajna Apratihata Gatih*, i.e., having one's command carried out everywhere without fail. Almost ever)' one of Baba's mystic achievements, which does not come under any other heading, may be brought under these two. Baba himself said when he saved Balwant Khaparde from plague, 'My orders are supreme'. Similarly, he said to Nandram Marwadi in 1917 that he would not be allowed to die. BCS clearly shows Baba's sankalpa or will was supreme. Also when the danger of (B.C. & S.I-3) being killed by a cobra was awaiting Buty or Mirikar, Baba said, 'Strike, let me see how you can strike and kill!'. Baba's will was supreme notwithstanding all the '*ganda*' astrologers could read from his horoscope, notwithstanding all the cobras that approached the devotees (the children of Dwarakamayee).

Taking up the final list of 5 minor siddhis, the first is said to be "*Traikalika Jnana*" knowledge of the past, present, and future, and the third is *Parachithabhijnata* i.e., knowing the contents of other people's minds in which the past and present are sure to be included. This power of reading thought from others' minds has become very common, and many persons are able now to exercise this power to a smaller or greater extent.

The further power not merely to note the contents of somebody's mind but to note the state of things at any particular place at the present time or at any previous time, which is called the power of "*clairvoyance*," is also to be found widely prevalent though not to the extent that thought-reading is prevalent. That may be the reason why these siddhis are assigned a lower position in Srimad Bhagavata and included in a minor list. Any person with a sufficient degree of calmness getting into a trance intentionally or unintentionally not infrequently discovers that he has a capacity to reflect, like a mirror, the minds of other persons and not infrequently the state of things in any particular place at that particular time or at previous times. So many persons calling themselves 'thought readers', "astrologers", "mantravadis", and "nadi yogis", make use of this knowledge and not infrequently they read into their nadi granthams what they

have recently discovered about the past or present. In the Madras City, for instance, there appear to be numerous persons with Nadi Granthams now. These facts show that very probably these faculties may develop in man more and more till they become a common accomplishment with the coming race. At present the performances of these have defects, and they are mostly failures when they venture into the future and try to foresee coming things. Sometimes people are tempted to compare these performers with great saints like Sri Sai Baba, who have *Trikalajnatva* and *parachittadabhijnata*. But this is like comparing fireflies or glowworms with the SUN.

The best performer that has exhibited these powers in recent times under these headings to Sai bhaktas is found to be very petty, very weak, very low and limited when compared to Sai. If they dare to compare themselves with Sai, one feels that one should address them thus, '*Jyoti Rinkana Na Kirn nu manyase, Yat tvam eva timireshu lakshyase*'. This means, 'O, glow worm, do you not know that your light in darkness serves merely to show where you are? Can man make use of its light?' One thing with these professional practitioners or incipient sadhus is that they make an effort to get into a trance, and while in the state of trance and only then they can reveal the past or present, or know of things, and that too, to a very limited extent. While they are in their trance, their normal consciousness cannot work and after some time the trance ends and their normal consciousness resumes its sway, and in their normal consciousness, they can exercise no power.

In the case of Sri Sai Baba, his *Trikalajnatva* and *parachita-abhijnata* were there all the time when he was normally conscious and required no effort, and the extent to which he could see and know was unlimited. It was not merely the minds of persons present that he knew, it was also of persons, thousands of miles away. It was not only places near him that he could view with clairvoyant powers; he could see things hundreds of miles away. What is more, he can appear there with material form and also do things necessary for the benefit of devotees there, such as, applying udhi to Babalkar's son and assuring Babalkar himself that the boy would recover in the morning, and should be brought over to

Shirdi later, and then to disappear at will. He could also reveal the past 2000 or 10,000 years back and reveal the future that is to operate fifteen years later.

These powers of *Tirodana* or *Avirbhava*, i.e., disappearance or appearance, referred to in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra are stated by Patanjali to be the ordinary result of adoption of a certain procedure, though, of course, in Sutra 50, Patanjali states that *Samyama* or concentration on the *Purusha* (with a difference) will give one any power he wants, i.e., omnipotence and any knowledge he wants, omniscience.

This is practically the same as *yatha sankalpa samsiddhih* and *Trikalajnatva*. For knowledge in the phenomenal world is knowledge always of things or events at some time, past, present or future, and at some place, near or remote. Therefore, *Trikalajnatvam* (Verse 8) for practical purposes would be the same as Omniscience and *Yatha Sankalpa Samsiddhih* and '*Ajna apratihata gati*' in verse 7 of Chapter XV of Bhagavata, would be the same as omnipotence practically.

The third of the minor powers is what is known as *Sthambana* in mantric books and what verse 8 describes as, *Agni arka ambu vishaadinam pratishthambhah*. This means, arresting the force of (1) fire, (2) the Sun (3) water, (4) Visha (poison), etc. Baba's wide exercise of powers has included many cases that can be brought under each of these heads. He specifically ordered the flames of the dhuni within Dwarakamayee which once shot up so high as almost to catch up and burn the rafters above to come down. He then took his little stick and struck a pillar near the fire uttering the words, '*Sabur, Sabur - Hat Mage, Hat Mage*', that is, 'Moderate yourself, get back, get back'. The fire within a very short time moderated itself and got back, There was no further danger to the building. This can be brought under the minor head or under the above words of verse 7, *Yathasankalpa Samsiddhih • Ajna apratihata gatih*. He ordered Agni (fire) and the winds that were fiercely blowing not to spread the fire from Kondaji's stack of hay to the neighbouring stack in the village hay yard. And nothing but Kondaji stack was burnt.

The following is a very interesting incident of *arkasthambhan*. On a hot summer noon, the atmospheric heat became unbearable, and as soon as puja arti was over, the devotees left the Dwarakamayee, where the puja was done and only 3 or 4 were left behind. Baba told them to remain and sit near the fire. Within a very short time, a cool breeze was felt to be blowing where the men sat. This is the *Sthambanam* of, (*agni, arka, vayu*) Sun, Fire and also Vayu included in *aadhinaam*, i.e. etc".

As for control of water, water might be in the cloud as rain or in a vessel, and Baba controlled both these. Once when Megha was to take only a little of Godavari water brought by him in a pot all the way from Godavari for Baba's bath and to sprinkle just a few drops on the head, as the chief organ of the body, Megha in his over-enthusiasm turned down the whole of the pot on the head of Baba. But wonder of wonders, the water wetted his head only and fell on the ground without touching his clothes or body. This is *jala sthambanam*.

When M.W. Pradhan wished to start from Shirdi, the sky was cloudy, and it was drizzling. There was a downpour near Shirdi and on the Shirdi Kopergaon road the streamlets on the roads were sure to be filled with flood water and prevent the passage of tongas. When Pradhan feared that Baba would consequently not give him permission to start, Baba uttered the following words, '*Allah! barsati pura kar, Mere bache garko jane wallai hai, Vsko sukse janede*'. This means, 'O, God. Stop the rain. My children wish to go home. Allow them to go home safely and easily'. Accordingly in a very short time the rains stopped and Pradhan and party to whom permission was given to go to Kopergaon on their way to Bombay, had no difficulty. This is obviously *sthambanam* of a storm-wind and rain put together. On another occasion a fierce storm with thunder and rain filled the Shirdi lanes with water and the villagers ran to Baba to pray for safety. Baba spoke fierce words and bade the storm cease. In a few minutes, it ceased.

About arresting poison, there are numerous cases when Baba arrested the poison of snakes and scorpions. Even now his udhi is used effectively in the case of scorpion and other poison. But the following is a striking instance of

Visha Sthambana. Shama was bitten by a snake of the venomous class (which is in plenty at Shirdi). He was advised to go to Biroba's temple as was the usual custom in those parts to get rid of the poison. Biroba and all Gods to him were in Sri Sai, and so he came up to the Mosque. But as he approached the three steps leading up to the Dwarakamayee, Baba in a furious tone threatened and swore and uttered the following words in Hidustani:- '*Brahminvar Mat Aav, hat mage, hat mage*'. This meant 'Do not get up Brahmin, get down'. The furious face of Baba made Shama think at first that these words were addressed to him and that Baba meant that he should not get up the Dwarakamayee and that he should go back to his house. He was shocked and perplexed at being so treated by his only resource and Palladium, His God, Deva Sai. But in a minute Baba calmed down and said, 'Come up. That fakir (God) is kind. You will be cured'. Baba then told Shama's companions, Tatyā and others, to take him home and see that he was kept awake and moving and not allowed to go to sleep for 24 hours. On their following that advice, the poison was arrested, and Shama was cured. The words in the above sentence were addressed to the poison, and it was the poison that was not to go up the Brahmin, but to get down, (*brahminvar-mat Aav, hat mage*).

Under the heading *Sthamban* sub item (5) above referred to, any number of cases may be cited, but we shall just refer to the following and stop.

'*Lagudo Uddhrita Rohilla Sthambhanath dharpanasakah*\ mentioned in Sai Sahasranama refers to the following facts. A hefty, and strong fanatic whom people at Shirdi called Rohilla (Muslim Jat of Rohilkand) was reciting *Kalam* at nights before Baba's Masjid and carrying on other orthodox Muslim practices. He was greatly puzzled about Baba. On the one hand, Baba's vast knowledge and power made him think that Baba was Parvadhigar, God on Earth. But Baba's permitting himself to be worshipped at the Mosque to the accompaniment of the noisy drums, pipes, and the recital of Mantras, and his acceptance of offerings made to Vittal, Datta, and other Gods, whom orthodox Muslims regarded as Satan, this Rohilla thought to be opposed to Islam. He felt shocked by Baba's saying that all these i.e. Vittal, Datta, etc., were all Allah. In accordance with the

Islamic traditions that the destroyer of Religion should be destroyed, he determined to kill Baba who was in his view destroying Islamic religion by such irreligious practices. Therefore, one day he came behind Baba with uplifted club in his hand and determined to end with a single stroke Baba and all his heterodoxy. Baba, who, of course, knew everything, knew this man's mind and power also. Baba suddenly turned and faced this Rohilla, and fixing him with a glance, touched his left wrist (the right one was held aloft with the cudgel). The effect was immediate. The man lost all power to hold his cudgel or stand. He fell down all of a heap. Baba left him there and went away. For several minutes the Rohilla lay there. When asked to get up by others he declared that Baba had robbed him of all his powers. So he had to be lifted up. This was an excellent instance of *Sthambanam* or *Pratistamba* mentioned above.

Instances of sthambana may take various shapes. When boys from Bombay tried to take a photograph of Baba, they found that the photo showed only his feet and not his body.

Perhaps the prevention of Upasani Baba for the seven or eight days after his first visit from thinking of going home and making him return on the eighth day, (though he had declared that was impossible) might be treated as a case of *sthambana* coupled with *Akarshana* and *Mohana*, which are minor siddhis mentioned in the Mantra Sastra.

The above classification has followed Srimad Bhagavata. But many of our readers would probably be familiar with the miracles of Jesus and would like to see how Sai's miracles are to be viewed in the light of Jesus's sayings about miracles and his performing them.

One common feature of both Sai's and Jesus' lives is that people always had to be convinced of the divine nature of the two only through the miracles they performed. Miracles are a concession that divinity allows for human blindness. When Jesus said to Nilko... 'I saw you under the fig tree before Thomas talked to you there,' the conclusion was at once drawn by the addressee, 'Surely thou art the Son of God'. Jesus said that he would see more wonderful things indicative of divine power. Again when Jesus cured a person stricken with palsy and unable to

rise from his bed, saying 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk', and the man with palsy rose up and walked, the conclusion was drawn that the miracle was a token of Jesus's divinity as also when Jesus cured a man of leprosy.

Some reader might desire to know whether similar incidents happened in Sai's history. First about palsy, a Marwadi had a young daughter of eight years or so with palsied legs. She could not walk to Baba, and therefore had to be carried in a chair, palki or stretcher. She remained with Baba for three days. Suddenly her legs which she could not bend at all till then were stretched out and the second day she could stand. Thereafter, before she left Shirdi on the third day she could walk back. No application, medical or surgical, was made to her. This cure was purely by Baba's will power with his blessings offered with udhi applied to her. Again there was a patient who was suffering for years from inflammation of ulcer in his stomach or bowels, and he could not eat any food. He was brought to Baba. Baba ordered sweetmeats to be purchased and brought and placed before the patient. Strange to say, the man was able to eat them.

Bagoji who was suffering from *leprosy*, was allowed by Baba to shampoo his leg. People were afraid that Baba would be infected by his leprosy. On the other hand, Bagoji's advanced leprosy left him with only scars and marks. In the presence of both Sai and Jesus, evil spirits, obsessions (*abhicharas*) were terror-stricken. The devils said that Baba would beat them. Persons like Mrs. Tipnis, Mrs. Mantri, etc., overcame their spirit obsessions purely by Baba's blessings. In all these cases it was pure divine blessings that operated, while we see in Kusa Bhav's statement that he could overcome these evil spirits with yantras, mantras, tantras, etc., the process known to Mantra Sastra as *Uchchatana*.

Proceeding to *Aparajaya*, the 5th of the minor siddhis, mentioned in the said verse, any one reading Baba's Charters would note how his powers are supreme, not only in his curing Balwant Khaparde of .plague but also in so many other cases.

In Srimad Bhagavata itself, after mentioning 23 powers, verse 9 of Chapter XV says, "what is there impossible for one who has perfectly surrendered and got absorbed in God?" Baba's powers are innumerable; we have

here given only a brief outline. Any student of Sai's life and leelas can learn about his other leelas in detail.

Therefore it is hardly necessary to further lengthen this already long chapter; and we shall close it by saying that Sainath was a *Yoga Sampurna Avatar* (as the South African doctor declared) and a *Samartha Sadguru* and that when he is pleased he draws all of us to him, not merely by his ancient leelas but also by his recent leelas such as those at Ramachandrapuram, Thotapalli Hills, Shanti Ashram and Ahmedabad. We should no longer ignore this splendid opportunity and the splendid messages, especially that which was addressed to this very author through the Ahmadabad wakil for the purpose of this book itself in the following words, 'Write and tell him Narasimhaswamiji that / *am always looking after my devotees*'.

CHAPTER XI

Baba's Recent Lilas in the South and Their Purpose

After 1935-36, that is, after the broadcasting of Baba's wondrous nature, powers and lilas - through Madras 'Sunday Times' and through many books and booklets, etc., faith in Sai Baba spread like wildfire throughout the country, especially in South India. Numerous persons were anxious to start their contact with Sai Baba and were helped on therein by remarkable experiences gained by them or occurring in their neighbourhood. The single experience of an instant cure of fits, for instance, in Velampatti, a village near Vellore, converted the entire village to Sai faith. Instances of this sort abound, the earliest of which in the South was perhaps that of Nagabhairva Venkataratnam of *Ventrpragada* near Vijayawada. He and his wife had been married seventeen years and all that time she had not conceived even once. By making vows to Baba and visiting Shirdi they obtained the blessing for issue in the shape of a daughter whom they gratefully named Sai Prasada (i.e., gift of Baba). To further immortalize the fame of Baba and his wondrous lilas, with the help of friends they constructed at Ventrpragada a pucca Sai Mandir with Dhuni (ever burning fire as at Shirdi in front of Baba) and accommodation for guests, and this has been attracting crowds all these dozen years and more. This and the Tenali Mandir at Tenali

built by the exertion of the veteran bhakta Dr. Ramana Ammal, (whose methods of curing patients were not always medical, but included also prayers to Baba) were the main big Sai Mandirs till three years ago in Andhra Desa. Then the star-shaped Kurnool Sai Mandir was built by Veeraswami, a bus contractor at a cost of over Rs.2 lakhs.

In 1942, Coimbatore, famous for its salubrious climate and numerous mills became yet more famous by reason of the development of, and its becoming the chief centre for, Sai bhakti. Captain Devaraj, a Military Medical Captain, a native of Coimbatore, had to serve in the Mediterranean during the War on board a ship, which was bombed by the enemy. Though the ship suffered damage by the bombing, this Sai bhakta was perfectly safe, and returned safe to his country and home. Sundararajan, a fellow townsman of his, built a small cottage (temporary hut) as a Sai Mandir, and had Sai bhajan conducted there as also at his house in R.S. Puram. In January 1943, Baba began to show his lilas there at the Mandir. One evening at about 5 p.m. Sai bhajan was going on there and a snake moved up fairly near the assembled crowd and was facing the picture of Sai Baba and remained listening to the music of the bhajan. From 5 p.m. it continued to be there frightening none and harming none, neither frightened nor harmed by any. After 9 p.m. the bhaktas went back to their homes, and when they arrived in the morning, they were surprised to see that the snake was still there near Baba's picture. Knowing full well that Baba appeared in various forms including serpents, they got a thousand chrisanthemum flowers, and standing on all sides close to the Snake (cobra) Baba, did their Ashtotra puja, showering the flowers on the cobra. This went on for a time and all the while the cobra did not budge. Then they prayed that the Baba snake should not move until a photographer came and took a photo of the Snake Baba in the midst of the flower heaps to immortalize his (Baba's) visit to Coimbatore in the form of a snake. After some hours, a photographer turned up and had an excellent snap of the cobra with uplifted hood in the midst of the puja flowers. Then the Snake Baba was given milk naivedya, which was tasted, and camphor light also was offered. It was only at 11 a.m. next day, that the cobra that had arrived at 5 p.m. the previous day, left

the premises. During these 18 hours the news of Naga Sai's visit to the shrine went round the town and a great number of people came and had darsan of Sainath, and thus Coimbatore town, with its tens of thousands of population, drank deep the Sai faith. On the above mentioned spot, a building costing over Rs.40,000/- has been built, and further lands and structures have been added thereto, the total cost running up to six figures. All journals, including Sai journals, spread this Naga Sai manifestation throughout India, and the local earnestness of devotion was strong enough to support the Sai Baba mission with a Girls' school accommodated in a grand building with vast grounds.

Baba's lilas abound throughout India, and our selecting only a few of them for mention here, especially South Indian places, might appear invidious but in view of recent messages of Baba, mention of a few lilas seems to be necessary. In any case, after mentioning two more Andhra Desa lilas, specially attractive to the curious and scientific mind, we shall wind up this chapter with a lila in the North, that is, north of Andhra Desa.

Let us take *Ramachandrapuram*, a place 24 miles away from Rajahmundry in East Godavari District. There Srimati Krishnabai, the wife of Sri K. Seshagtri Rao, Superintendent of the office of the Accountant General, Posts and Telegraphs, Simla, had very extraordinary experiences and special favour granted by Baba. She had studied only up to I Form. When she and her husband were living at Nagpur, he had remarkable experiences. He was in charge of the special treasury keys, which he kept locked up in a drawer in his office, and the key of that drawer alone was taken away and kept by him. One morning when he came, the keys were missing, and despite hectic searches by himself and his peons, he could not trace the keys. Then he suddenly prayed to Baba to save him from the effect of such loss, and he once again went to the drawer and opened, when lo and behold! Right in front of him in the drawer were the very keys he was searching for all the time, and which could not have escaped his sight if they were there earlier. How they disappeared and reappeared Baba alone knows, but the main favour and lilas of Baba relate to his wife.

Srimati Krishnabai's father, a retired station master (Hanumantha Rao by name) was living at Ramachandrapuram. When her husband came from Nagpur to Ramachandrapuram, and was starting back to Nagpur, the lady suddenly took ill. What the illness was could not be discovered. But she was positively apprehensive of death and pointed to some invisible figure in the room saying that that person was the Yamaduta, and so there was no use giving her medicines. Yet some medicine was given, and the husband placed Sai Baba's picture beneath her pillow. Suddenly she awoke at night and cried that she was being dragged away. Her father found that a part of her body was dragged away and her legs were dangling. He restored the body back to the cot, and later she told her father that Sri Raghavendraswami, the family deity, and Sri Sai Baba were protecting her, and that they had left under the pillow a packet that would save her. The father looking under the pillow discovered that there were tulsi leaves of large size and sacred earth (like that at Mantralaya, Raghavendraswami's place). These were applied to her. Again when her husband was downstairs, and she was alone in her room, she was found talking, and she declared that Sri Raghavendraswami and Sai Baba had given her advice and teachings. Sai Baba began to protect her as they could easily see.

At her puja of Baba, miraculous events were taking place. At the close of the puja, she would deliver for more than 45 minutes pravachanams far beyond the capacity of a first form student. Again the plantains and flowers, that were offered to Baba, were covered over with inscriptions. For instance, when the Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Sri G.V. Chetty, took a *Nilamala* (a huge garland of about a thousand roses) and placed the same on Sai's picture, thousands of 'Sai' in Telugu or 'Om Sai' were found on all the petals in a very short time written by some invisible hand. The naivedya she placed before Baba were accepted and consumed by Baba, a fact evidenced by a part of the offerings missing after puja. On the plantain fruits placed before Baba, inscriptions appeared in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi or Gujarati or English and these were mostly answers to questions by bhaktas visiting her puja room. The

inscriptions included Sanskrit verses from Yoga Vasishtha, Gita, etc., which were far beyond the capacity of that lady to understand or repeat.

A most remarkable fact is that Baba appeared and said that she had eight more births to take, and that he would exhaust the karma of those births by making her die and get back to life eight times in this very life. So during her periods, she turned a vivid blue, and persons near her thought her dead. On each of these occasions, the *Kolam* marks, (i.e. border lines) around her cot with Baba's udhi would mysteriously appear, disappear and then reappear after Baba's reviving her. Baba invariably revived her, and he enabled her to develop *clairvoyance* and power to read the past lives of herself and other bhaktas that came there, and report Sai's reply to people's questions. She is adopted as the Guru or Sadguru by a number of people from far and near, from places like Nagpur, etc. She not merely gives them instructions and upadesa but also manifests *chamatkars* for protecting them.

One Ramachandra Rao of Nagpur came along with Seshagin Rao and lectured at the All India Sai Samaj during 1953 giving a full account of all the above. The mounting bhakti roused by that lady has helped in the construction of a Sai Mandir at Ramachandrapuram with a marble idol of Baba with Radha and Krishna installed on the occasion of the last Ram Navami (1954).

We may next proceed briefly to Baba's lilas at *Shanti Ashram*, Thotapalli Hills, which had long been famous as the residence of His Holiness Sri Omkar Swami who toured America and other places and is conducting two Ashrams, one at the foot of the hills and the other at Visakhapatnam town, and publishing the organs of the Ashrams, 'Peace' in English and 'Shanti' in Telugu. This Swamiji has written valuable works, like 'Cosmic Flashes' etc. While the Swamiji was largely believed to be interested in and developing the philosophical side, suddenly from March last a wave of Sai bhakti began to manifest itself in his Ashram. By Sai's Grace his Ashram at the foot of the Thotapalli Hills, when visited by Srimati Ratnamma Garu of Rajahmundry (Mother of Kaku Rama Rao) and her friends, became a place of great bhakti development. In March last these ladies with others were conducting 'Sai puja' with intense devotion in the

Thotapalli Shanti Ashram. Noticing their earnestness, and the miracles of Sai, His Holiness Sri Omkar Swami devoted his own meditation room for Sai puja and called it 'Sai Mandir'. At first it was a weekly puja on Thursdays to Sri Sai's pictures, and on the first two puja days, Baba accepted (consumed) pan of the coconut offering placed before him. But this was not sufficiently impressive. Ratnamma Garu and others prayed to Baba to write his name on the offerings made. Accordingly when flowers and other things were placed before Baba, and the door of the room was closed as per custom, Baba's writings or inscriptions in Telugu of the letters 'Sai' appeared on the flowers, fruits, and coconuts that were there and also on cashewnuts. Sri Rajaji, who was taking a very active part at the Ashram, offered his gold ring and prayed to Baba that 'Sai Nama' should appear on the ring also. (That ring is now with His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore). Others offered their chains, watches, and other jewels and placed them before Baba. The Telugu letters 'Sai' appeared on all these. The Sai Pracharaka P. Viswanatham from Rajahmundry went up to Thotapalli Hills Shanti Ashram and placed his silver watch and prayed that Baba might write his name clearly so that he may show the same to others and thus intensify his pracharak work. By Baba's grace, 'Sai', appeared on the lid of the watch in Telugu. Then at the request of an ardent bhakta who placed before Baba a ball of udhi, Baba's writing appeared as 'Sai Mandu' (Medicine of Sai Baba) on the udhi. A bit of this was administered to a patient who was suffering from high fever. He was immediately cured. There was a cow in the Ashram with udder disease yielding brackish milk. After the udhi was smeared on the body of the cow, the milk given by the cow was no more brackish. It became sweet. *Sai Mandu* has been used at various places with good results.

His Holiness Sri Omkar Swami himself was so much impressed with Sai's lilas that he determined to have a picture of Sai Baba, and began worshipping it, as Sai is only a form of God. In his own private worship also Baba's lilas were exhibited. Once he placed an Australian apple before Baba in the cupboard and a good portion of the apple was found eaten up. When he placed a bottle of honey tightly corked before Baba and retired from the room, he found on his

return that the cork had been extracted and that about 2 ounces of honey were not found there evidently accepted by Baba.

The Ashram inmates began to have great faith in Baba. When a lady was returning from Swami's chamber to her own quarters, on the way she trod on a snake, and at once cried out 'Om Sai'. The snake did not hurt her, but quietly moved away and disappeared. The Swami on Rama Navami day dictated an article in which he explained to his devotees and the public the phenomena that were taking place in his Ashram and gave a general invitation to any one who had Sai bhakti to go to the Shanti Ashram² and have their communion with Baba. He appears to have issued subsequently a second invitation (both of which appeared in the Telugu 'Shanti' dealing with Sai lilas at Thotapalli Shanti Ashram). What is the purpose of the Sai lilas in these places in Andhra Desa? One marked feature of Andhra Desa is that it is full of social and political ferment, and easily catches up new ideas and gets them widely circulated and absorbed. Sri Sai Baba has evidently found just a few places suitable here to respond to his call which may act as nerve centres from which all surrounding parts could receive quickening of life. Not only the above places, but Kurnool and Repalle have quickly responded by building Sai Mandirs, and sent abroad messages of inspiration and faith to even distant places. That is sure to have a very gratifying response in the near future.

There is a very simple indication of the effect of the stimuli given in South India and Andhra Desa, Mysore and adjoining parts, and that is a tide of passengers in the trains proceeding to Shirdi, Kopergaon, and the daily crowd visiting the Sai Mandir at Shirdi, Abdulla Jan in 1939, when he gave his statement, said 'There was usually vast crowd at Shirdi preventing people from approaching Dwarakamayee, and all that has gone now'. Obviously he implied that even Baba's splendour like that of so many Maharajas had faded away and

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- ² The address of the Ashram is: "Shanti Ashram, Shanti Ashram Sankhavaram-533 446, E.G. District. The Manager Sri Rajaji kindly undertakes to send replies either for udhi or for other information.

could not endure. Now, if Abdulla Jan visited Shirdi on any day, especially a Thursday, he would find that the crowds are again there. This time the crowds are in thousands and include persons from distant South India and Andhra Desa, who form probably the majority of the crowds of every day. This fact may give the clue to Baba's display of his lilas in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Desa as stated above. It was a Tamilian that was chiefly used by Baba for starting the huge wave of Sai bhakti that State after State in India covered so many towns and villages.

The Southerners' bhakti to Baba has evidently still an important part to play in moulding the future of Sai faith and in the progress of the spiritual field. It is Madrasis, Andhraites and Mysoreans, Southerners as a whole, who have carried the 'Leaven of Sai bhakti' to all distant corners of the country such as Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, etc., and have even carried it across the seas to Rangoon, Singapore, Aden, West Africa, South Africa, Europe and America.

There is very probably an important part for Southerners to play in getting Sai movement more extensively and intensively carried forward everywhere. Though one cannot be dogmatic in these matters, one may presume that there may be such a purpose for Sai in his choice of places in his manifestation of the lilas in Andhra Desa and Tamil Nadu. None should draw the conclusion that other parts of India have not been favoured with Baba's chamatkars and lilas. Ahmedabad, which is far north of Madras, about a thousand miles away, has been the scene of Baba's bhakti spreading and lilas manifesting. Sri Ratilal Shah and other bhaktas, who have also their contact with Adoni Sai devotees (Adoni is in Andhra Desa) have established Sai bhakti in and around Ahmedabad. They have published books in Gujarati dealing with Sai, and they have also built a Sai Mandir at Ahmedabad.

CHAPTER XII

Baba's Teaching as to Siddhis

Baba had bhaktas at various stages of advancement, and he certainly knew at what stage and in what manner siddhis appeared. Baba gave some

advice to his bhaktas which might be recorded here. In the course of concentration on one's Guru or God or any other form of God, one gets more and more calm, placid, and in a certain number of cases, the latent powers of reflecting the minds of others, and the light of objects is spontaneously acquired. The first effect of such powers is to make a man proud and next full of desires for use of the powers to achieve earthly ends, and consequently tends to dip him deeper in the world of samsara and take him farther away from the main object of all sadhana, namely, God.

This is well known to students of Mahabharata Shanti Parva, where a certain sadhaka named Konganava acquired the power to use his glance as a terrible weapon by which he could burn up creatures or objects. Another acquired the immobility of body whereby birds in the air were induced to use tufted hair on his head as a place for building their nests. The latter was highly elated and jumped with joy that birds could nest in his head, and had to be taught later that this species of pride could only tend to degrade him and take him away from God. As for the former, Konganava, it is narrated that when he went under a tree to practise yoga, he saw a bird, up above him, and by darting a glance at it killed it and it fell down dead. Thinking no worse of himself for this performance, he proceeded as advised by a teacher, to two great jnanis so that he might learn jnana. One of these was a lady living with her husband and her children. When this Konganava arrived at her house, she took no note of him except bidding him 'be seated', and continued her anxious attendance on her husband and daily household duties. The man considered himself slighted and thinking very highly of himself on account of his powers, felt it was extremely improper on the part of that lady to treat him with such scant respect. While he was thinking so, the lady came near and he darted a fierce glance at her. At once the lady calmly asked 'O, Konganava, do you think I am the crane in the forest, that is, the crane which you killed in the forest?' The man was aghast. He could not imagine that a lady in a household could have the powers of knowing what happened to him and to the crane far away from her ken. He was duly humiliated by her utterance and then learnt that the duty a woman owed to her husband was primary, and those due to

guests, beggars, etc., were only secondary, and that a man who indulged in anger was far inferior to those who were able to keep their temper, and that the real end of life was to attain calmness by concentrating on God and one's primary duties with *anasakti* in a detached manner.

Corresponding to this there was a teaching by Baba, which we find in Baba's Charters & Sayings 338. A sishya of his, by pranayama and concentration, had developed clairvoyance. While he was in his puja room, he could see distinctly that his distant mill hidden away from his room by so many walls, streets, etc., was aflame. Naturally he felt exultant at the acquisition of this power. When his peon on his opening the door broke the news that his mill was on fire, he answered, 'Yes, I know it'. Some time later, this devotee went up to Shirdi along with his wife. Baba then addressed him 'Why are you gazing at the strumpet's performance? I can never exhibit tricks. It does not behove us to dally with a strumpet'. The wife understood nothing about Baba's references which were really to the meretricious attractions of siddhis acquired by pranayama. She thought that Baba referred to a fleshy concubine or a woman of the town. But the devotee fully understood that Baba referred to his being charmed by the acquisition of clairvoyant powers by the use of pranayama, and that Baba was giving him the warning which Gurus, as a rule, gave against people being carried away by Siddhis. In Patanjali's Yoga Sutra 52 and Sutra 38 the advice is given by the author of the Yoga Sutras that the ordinary worldly use of siddhi powers are really obstacles to Samadhi (which must of course be on God), though these powers are useful in the worldly state. This is expressed in Sutra 38, *Te samadhow Upasargah Vyuttane Siddhayah*.

Baba's Teaching as to Siddhis

Sutra 52 runs thus —

Sthanyupa nimantrane sanga smayakarnam punah anishtaprasangat.

This means, 'The yogi should not feel allured or flattered by the overtures of celestial beings for fear of evil again'. Sutra 52 has special reference to siddhis one of which says that a person having a particular siddhi can enjoy the pleasures of Gods in their celestial regions. Hence it is easy to see from both the

Sutras and in Baba's advice, the use of siddhis may be good or bad and both are referred to not only in Bhagavata, Skanda XI, but also in Baba's advice and actions. Baba gave a warning to a devotee who was just beginning to develop powers, which is just the stage at which curiosity, ambition and other worldly motives or desires arise from the appearance of siddhis within the grasp of the sadhaka or devotee. As for Baba's action, any one who has gone through this book would note that Baba made ample use of innumerable siddhi powers and, therefore, there is nothing wrong in the use of siddhi powers. All great ones including Sri Krishna have used their divine powers or siddhis. It is wrong to suppose that the use of superhuman powers by those is condemned as worthy of condemnation. But it is their use possessing them in such a way as to promote worldiness or cause degradation to the soul that is objected to. A man like Konganava or like the man on whose hair birds sat, gets elated and angry and thus loses his soul. That is the result of gazing at the meretricious attractions of siddhis with a worldly heart. Only in that case siddhis are strumpets and not in any other case. This is the chief point of Baba's teaching.

A man has a Guru; and he may be his Kula Guru without any siddhi powers. When the man finds other Gurus possessed of siddhi powers, he is often tempted to give up his former Guru and resort to the latter. Baba's advice on this matter is 'Do not give up your Guru whatever may be the attractions of other Gurus.' If one has implicit faith in one's Guru and an earnest desire to pull oneself upward with that Guru, free from worldly attachments, one will have siddhi and satisfactory progress. Therefore, to a man called Pant, who came to Baba, having already a Guru (who had objected to his going to Baba because of the fact of his already having a Guru), Baba said, 'Pant, do not give up your Guru. Whatever may be the merits of other Gurus, we must never give up our own'. There are a few people who have studied the lives of great saints who led holy lives and have given the warning that meretricious attractions of siddhis should not be heeded. Their sishyas are sometimes apt to draw the conclusion that saints who exhibit powers and magicians who exhibit such powers for worldly objects are both in the same class, and that the saints mentioned above are not

worthy of regard. This is due to a confusion of ideas. Unfortunately a certain number of educated, even amongst Sanyasis, have not escaped this fallacy, and some of them occasionally asked this author whether Sai Baba who exhibited these *chamatkars* could be a *Parama Jnani*. The answer is *Parama Jnana* is not taken away when the *Parama Jnani* happens to be a *Samartha Sadguru* and has to use his divine powers for promoting the interests of his sishyas and other devotees. It is hardly necessary to labour this point, but the author has met a few well intentioned devotees of good saints who fell into this error, and that is why this has been written. There is no question of inferiority or superiority amongst saints merely by reference to the possession of siddhis. Possession of siddhis merely indicates advancement in concentration and sometimes they are an indication of *poorna laya* in Parabrahman. Therefore it is safest to avoid drawing hasty conclusions from their mere presence or absence in a saint.

Thinking that it would enhance the glories of Baba to put forward fantastic notions about his being an *ayonija*, that is, one who came into this world without entering into the womb of a woman, some people fall into the unfortunate habit of creating stories about Baba. The *Ayonija* theory, as already stated, has no shadow of support for it amongst the statements made by Baba himself in respect of his parents either in this Janma or any previous Janma.

Coming to siddhis also some people have circulated stories about Baba's use of various forms of siddhis. For instance, it is said that he performed *Kandayoga*, that is, separated the various parts of his body and kept them far apart and appeared as a dead body, and later on reunited those parts. It is unnecessary to discuss whether *kandayoga* is a case of mass hypnotism or individual hypnotism creating the impression in the mind of the beholder that the body is in pieces. Physiologically the body cannot be cut into a dozen pieces and kept apart for a long time and reunited at pleasure so as to form one organic whole, and hence the probabilities are very much in favour of this siddhi being the same as or similar to the obstruction to seeing - *antardhana* - following which heading, Patanjali says, a similar *antardhana* of ideas takes place. That is, a yogi

can make his entire body invisible to people or he can black out their ideas about his body.

We have seen magicians performing these tricks by mass hypnotism and suggestion, for example, the rope trick and stabbing the boy in the box. These are all cases of mass hypnotism and suggestion. But whether in the case of Baba there was really any kadayoga and what exactly it represented, are matters about which definite information is not available. Again it is said that Baba performed other yogic feats, that is, that he took out his entire entrails and placed them on a tree for drying up. These confound our notions of physiology and serve no useful purpose. We shall not discuss these further. About Ashtanga Yoga, it is not known whether Baba performed pranayama, etc., but very probably these would have come to him easily by faith in his All-powerful Guru. Various siddhis or mystic powers are shown by various sadhakas or Siddhas or magicians who use disembodied spiritis or evil spirits or petty elves, etc., for their purposes. The question has been raised what Baba's views were on this subject, and what Baba said about spirits at all. A young devotee asked Baba, 'Are there evil spirits that would harm us?' Baba's answer was that there were spirits but we had nothing to do with them. Those who are under the care of Baba or leading proper lives have nothing to fear from these unseen spirits. Baba has mentioned not infrequently several things about disembodied bodies, that is, *pretax*. That is, those recently died pass into a linga sarira and keep on life in that state for a certain time. Such spirits are not infrequently used by magicians like Mohamad Bay for giving them information about the contents of the minds of those they meet for their own worldly purposes. Baba referred to the existence of the spirits of disembodied persons, that is, spirits of those who recently died, and mentioned interesting facts about them.

The spirits of deceased people who are his bhaktas or who belong to his bhaktas families were drawn to Baba at the time of death, even though they may be dying very far away from Shirdi, where he lived when in the flesh. All the same, he drew them to himself, and he said of Sri M.B. Rege's child, 'That child is here (pointing to his heart), and it shall live here eternally'.

He said of Sri Upasanai Baba's third wife, who died about the beginning of February 1912, that she had come to him, and there was no necessity to do anything further to give her *sadgati*, as Upasani Baba was offering some Rs.10 for some ceremonies to be done by Baba to give her Sadgati, following evidently his usual Vaidiki ideas of funeral rites. Baba declined to receive the amount saying that she had already come to him and that all that had to be taken from Upasani, had already been taken. As for Mrs. S.B. Dhumal, some months after she died, Baba advised Mr. Dhumal to perform her Masik at Shirdi and promised to give her Sadgati on that occasion. That was accordingly done.

As for other spirits, Baba said that some spirits haunted tombs. There was a young girl, a playmate of Baba, who had died and who was haunting her tomb. Baba passed by that side and found her spirit there. Then he said that he spent some time by the side of the tomb, and then took her away with him to a pipal tree at or near Shirdi and placed her spirit there evidently for purposes of betterment of her soul.

As for evil spirits, fiends, etc., Baba knew of their existence and kept them at bay. No fiend could approach him, and persons possessed by fiends got released from such possession by being near Baba. Baba therefore advised his bhaktas to be free from all fear of spirits of any sort. When Baba was near, what had his children, the children of Dwarakamayee, to fear, whether from the living or from the spirits of the dead or from evil spirits like elves, Brahma Rakshas, etc.? His own Guru Gopal Rao Deshmukh had given salvation to a Brahma Rakshas that had formerly been a Brahmin miser, and Baba's vast powers and charity should have certainly enabled him to render similar help to any of his devotees who may have been placed in that same predicament.

Jai Sri Sai Ram

APPENDICES

(Referred to in Part-1)

APPENDIX I

Baba is inscrutable—a sphynx

More Babaku marma na Janare Koi (More)

1. Koi Kahe donge Koi pakhandi
koi kahe divaana re (More)
2. Koi kahe lobhi koi kahe bhogi
koi kahe bade syana re (More)
3. Koi kahe yogi koi kahe Tyagi
koi sadhu janare (More)
4. Koi Guru sadguru Vako
koi Iswara jaana re (More)
5. Sri Babaki Siddhavasta
Koi Virala pahchana re (More)
6. Apana Apana sab phala pave
jisne jaisa jaana re (More)
7. Mehbub, Sabaki suni para,
Turn mat dhoka khanare (More)

Which means

None knows the inwardness or secret of my Baba

1. Some called him hypocrite; some, heterodox; some called him mad
2. Some called him greedy, some sensualist; some called him a wise sage
3. Some termed him a yogi, some a self sacrificer, some a sadhu
4. Some called him a Guru, a Sadguru, some knew him to be (Iswara) (.Divine.
5. Sri Baba's state is that of the siddha. Some alone see him as different (from all)
6. Each gets a reward suiting his own idea (of Baba)
7. Oh Mehbub (author of this song). Do not get confounded by listening to (i.e. accepting) the views of all.

APPENDIX II

The Bhikshu's Ways of facing insult and trouble

In Srimad Bhagavata, Bhikshu Gita, Chapter XXIII we find the rationale or the intellectual basis of one's equanimity in the face of insult, trouble, etc., set out

in great detail. We may refer to the essence of what is said therein. A rich Brahmin miser, on account of miserliness, got into bitter terms with his relations, friends, and almost every one and his property also was lost. Then he began to realise the absurdity of relying upon riches for happiness and determined to adopt a monk's role, and he took up his danda (staff), kamandalu (begging bowl), etc., and went about. But several people recognised who he was originally and began to give him trouble in various ways. Some mocked at him, some others plucked away his staff, begging bowl, etc. and professing to return them plucked them back. Some passed water in his begging bowl and took delight in tormenting him in various ways. But these tapatrayas, troubles of all three sorts, coming from the animal kingdom or from the body or from finer forces, he was able to endure philosophically being assured in his mind that they were all the *result of his karma* and so inescapable by him. He convinced himself that the pains he endured just like the pleasures he had were *all due to his mentality* and not to any other causes. Therefore he resolved that his only course was bravely to appeal to God, completely surrender to him, and face all pain and pleasure with thorough indifference based on surrender to God. He found that the persons who gave him trouble, who were considered to be the cause of his pain, were really not the cause of his pain. He analysed the situation thus: the causes of the trouble given may be stated to be one of six things, namely, (1) the body of the troublesome persons, (2) the finer forces, Gods, etc. presiding over the organs with which they gave trouble, (3) the Atma or the spirit that ensouled those people, (4) the trouble might be due to planetary positions in his horoscope, (5) previous karma, and (6) to Kala or Time. He thus dealt with each of these six causes. (1) So far as their bodies were concerned, they were insentient and it was the bodies of the troublers that troubled his body; and if the troublers were treated to be mere bodies and he also should be treated as a mere insentient body, then there was nothing to complain. It is one part of insentient nature troubling another part, though both together form one nature. In a particular organism sometimes the teeth bite the tongue, and his present trouble was in no way different. If the teeth bite the tongue, what is the person to do? Whom is he

to blame? (2) Again, if their organs which trouble his organs be considered to be the movement or action of the Gods presiding over their organs, for example, Indra presiding over the hand or the Moon presiding over the mind, what does that matter? He himself was not an organ but the Pure Atman. The hand of those persons was striking his hand. So it is Indra striking Indra, Sometimes even our own hand may beat the other hand in our own body. Who is to complain against whom? All together form one. (3) As for the third consideration that the troublers should be treated neither as their bodies nor as the Gods presiding over their organs, but as the Pure Atma alone, what is there to complain of? Atma cannot injure itself. There is nothing besides Atman to hurt the Atman. Therefore, there is no matter for complaint. (4) Taking up the fourth cause of trouble, namely, planetary action, that is the position of the planets at the time the injured or suffering person was born, this also is inapplicable. The planets can only affect that which is born, namely the body. But I am not born. I am the soul and so the planets cannot give me pleasure or pain. Besides books on astrology say that some planets fight with others by *Padavikshanyam*, *Ardha Vikshanyam*, etc., and they take the position of the Sun, etc., in the 8th or 12th house from the Lagna. If one planet fights against another, what is that to me, the Atman? (5) Next, if karma is the cause of all pleasure and pain, who does what karma? The body cannot perform any Karma. It is insentient. The Atma being Pure Intelligence cannot do karma either. Therefore there is no cause for pleasure and pain to me, the Atman, who is independent. (6) Taking the last, that is the question of Kala or Time, I, as the Atman, am the soul of Kala or Time. Does fire burn itself or ice chill itself? So, there is no reason for anger or discontent. So, the fully realised person, that is, the person who has fully surrendered himself at the feet of God, has no one to blame because his mind is not turning to the question of troubler or blamer but sees only the Supreme Person, Iswara in every one including the Troubler. Hence full faith in and surrender to God is the best basis for *titiksha* (endurance) and the wise man must control his mind by concentrating it upon the feet of God.

APPENDIX III

Derivation of Guru

- I. Guru means 'Great', or Mahan,
- II. Guru Gita stanza 44

*Gukaarascha andhakaro hi Rukaras teja uchyate
Ajnaanagraasakam brahtna Gurureva Na Samscayah*

This means: *Gu* means darkness and *Ru* is light. As light swallows up darkness, Guru is Brahman, the Swallower of darkness, without doubt.

Stanza 46

*Gukaarascha gunaatito, Rupaatito Rukarakah
Gunarupa vihinatvat Gururityabhidiyate.*

This means: *Gu* means Gunatita, that is, beyond the senses, *Ru* means Rupaatita, that is beyond all form.

As the Guru is beyond all gunas and forms, the Guru is so termed.

Stanza 47

*Gukaarah Pratamo varno Maayadi Gunaabhasakh
Rukaro Asti param Brahma Maayabhranti Vimochakam.*

This means, *Gu* is the first letter, and that is Maya appearing as Gunas. The next *Ru* is Param Brahman, which removes Maya bhranti, that is, the delusions of Maya.

Sanza 91

*Gukaaram Cha gunaatitam Rukaaram Rupavarjitam
Gunatitam arupam cha yo dadyat sa Guru smritah*

This means, *Gu* is Gunatita (beyond the gunas) *Ru* is Rupa Varjita, (that is free from form). Guru is so called because he is Gunatita and Arupa and enables us to be Gunatita and Arupa i.e. to realise our self as beyond form and all attributes.

APPENDIX IV

Question of Caste

It has been noticed in Chapter XV (Part I) that amongst the objections raised to Sai Baba's worship, one is based upon caste. Some objectors say that Baba is not a Brahmin but a Muslim, and so he should not be taken for a Guru nor worshipped by Brahmins and other Hindus. Such objections have generally

been driven out by personal approach to Sai Baba even apart from B.C.S. 57 & 505, 506. His very darsan has made sensitive or suitable people feel that Sai Baba is a divine agent to show a way out of all temporal and spiritual difficulties. Feeling thus, the visitors to Baba bowed, prostrated and surrendered their Tan-Man-Dhan to Baba. This was *prapatti*. To such a person a discussion about Baba's caste would be absurd, for he has already followed the direction in Srimad Bhagavata, Skanda Purana, Brahma Vidyopanishad 334 and Guru Gita, that the Guru must be treated as all the Gods put together (*Sarvadevamayo Guruh*) including Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and all the pantheon of Hindu Gods. Even after His Mahasamadhi some have had such contact. It is those who have not been fortunate enough to have such contact, mental or physical with Baba, that have to struggle with the question of caste, and for their benefit, we mention the following:—

Even supposing that they do not feel that Baba is God, still there is no basis for the assumption that Baba is not a Brahmin. Baba himself said that he was a Brahmin, that his masjid was a Brahmin's Masjid (BCS 57) and he also said that his parents were Brahmins of Patri and that his Guru was also a Brahmin (Venkusa or Gopal Rao Deshmukh of Selu). This is enough to prove Baba's Brahmin birth and initiation or Brahminism according to ordinary ideas. But, as a child, for four or five years he was brought up by a Fakir and lived all his adult life in a Mosque at Shirdi, and so he passed for a Muslim. He was totally indifferent whether people called him a Hindu or Muslim. But some would-be Bhaktas are making enquiries, and therefore the question seems to be important.

The authorities are very clear that about Parama Jnanai or a Parama Bhagavata or saint, especially with remarkable siddhis, psychic powers and spending all his time and energy for the benefit of mankind, the question of origin, i.e., whether he is a Hindu or Muslim by caste, is not permissible. For instance, verse 14 of the Guru Gita says—

Sva asramam cha Sva jatim cha

Sva Kinitn pushti vardhanam

Etat sarvam Parityajya

Gurum eva samascrayet

This means, 'Brush aside your ashrama, your caste, your reputation and all glory and take refuge with a Guru'. There are many more authorities of the same sort. The feeling of this caste or kulam in a disciple is false *pascam* or bond, one of the eight which the Guru in his kindness cut off (See G. Gita verse 129). The enquiry into the origin is generally discouraged, for example, by the motto—

Rishi mulam nadi mulam na vicharyam

Kabir also gives the same direction.

Sant *Ka Jat Mat pucho. i.e.* 'Do not ask for the caste of a saint'

Narada Bhakti Sutra 72 says, (Among them prevails no distinction of caste, erudition, beauty) lineage, wealth, profession.

Anyhow, what is the definition of a Brahman? Is it a question of birth or parentage? The answer is, 'No'. Manu is a great authority, and Mahabharata is another great authority. Both say 'No'. Manusmriti, X, 65 says—

Sudra brahmanatam eti brahmanaschaiva sudratam

Kshatriyat jatam evamtu vidyat vaiscyat tathaiva cha

Manusmriti, II, 157, 168 say—

Yatha kashtamayo hasti yatha charma mayo mrigha

Yashcha vipro anadhiyanath trayaste namadharakash

Yo anadhitya dvijo vedam anyatra kurute scamam

Sa jivan eva sudratvam ascu gachhati sanvayah

This means, (Manusmriti, X 65) 'The Sudra becomes a Brahmana and a Brahmana a Sudra (by conduct). Know this same (rule to apply) to him who is bom of a Kshatriya or of a Vaiscya'.

Manusmriti, II 157, 168 mean 'A wooden elephant, as a leather patched deer (of the Taxidermist), such is an unlearned Brahmana; the three are but Nominal Brahmins etc., Only in name are they Brahmins etc.'

'The Brahmana who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere, becomes a sudra in that very life together with his descendants.'

In Mahabharata, Vana parva, Chapter 313, verse 108 say— 'It is not birth nor samskaras nor Vedic studies nor one's kulam nor ancestry that form the cause or basis of one's being a Brahmin or Dvija or twice-born. M.B.V.P. ch (80) v-21, 25, 26 say that the cause or basis is mere *vrittam* i.e. behaviour or conduct. A Brahmin's conduct should be (1) *truth* (2) a disposition to give (*daana*), (3) *Kshama*, (forgiveness), (4) *sceelam* or virtue (5) gentlemanliness, (6) *tapas*, and (7) mercy. These make a man a Brahmin. If these are seen in a man, whatever his birth may be, he is a Brahmin, and if these are not seen in one, whatever his birth may be, he is not Brahmin. Vishnu Bhagavata says that *Bhakti* makes a man a Brahmin and only *Bhakti*. Other authorities say Brahma Jnana, God-realization makes a man a Brahmin.

As to Truth, Chandogya Upanishad IV (4) says that truth speaking to one's own disadvantage indicates Brahminhood. Baba was the soul of Truth

The question is, 'Was Baba a Jnani? 'Baba who said '*Maim Allah hum*'—I am God and I *am all* - was undoubtedly a Jnani of the highest order and he had all siddhis resulting from concentration on God, and he was always remembering God. So undoubtedly Baba was Brahmin and necessarily a Brahmin.

Manu, Vishnu Bhagavata VII (II) 35, reads:

Yasya yallakshanam proktam, pumso vArnabhi vyanjakam

Yad anyatrapī driscyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiscet.

This means, 'Whatever qualities are said to be indicative of a caste will, if found in any person, entitle that person to be considered of that caste'. Sridhara's comment on the above is, 'Brahmins and other dvijas are recognised by *Scama* (peace) chiefly—and not by birth'.

Brahmavidyopanishad, verses, 2, 3, and 4, are as follows:

2. *Hamsa vidyam imam labdhva Guru scuscruhaya Narah,*

3. *Atmanam Atmana Sakshat Brahma Budhva Sunischalam*

Dehajatyadi sambandhan varnascrama samanvitam

4. *Vedasscastrani chanyani padapamsumiva tyajet. Gurubhaktim soda kuryat screyase bhuyase Narah. Gurureva Harih Sakshat Na anya iti abravīt scrutih.*

These mean:—

2. By service to the Guru, Hamsa Vidya is obtained.
3. (Thereby) one realises oneself as Brahman steadily. Let one ignore the body, its caste; etc., varnas and asramas, etc., and
4. The injunctions of Vedas and Sastras and others treat them as the dust of his feet. Let him have devotion to the Guru. That will benefit him greatly. The Guru is no other than God—the Vedas declare.