

In 1795 Madras Presidency was under British rule and the collector of Changleput at that time was Colonel Lionel Place. Behind Rama's temple at Madurantakam there is a big lake extending an area of thirteen sq. miles. This place is accustomed to heavy rainfall due to monsoon and every year there is always the danger of rain water flooding the lake causing breaches in the walls. In spite of the annual maintenance, this danger could not be overcome. As usual in the year 1795 there was heavy down pouring of rain water in the season. There was the danger of the whole town and the adjoining villages being submerged if breaches occur in the lake. If it happens there will be heavy loss of lives and properties. But the collector found the local people least bothered about the danger. When he questioned them, they said that Lord Rama would protect them. At this most critical situation the collector had no other way except to depend on Lord Rama. He prayed to Him sincerely if He protects the whole area from the danger of breaches occurring in the lake, he would build a shrine for Sita Devi. The heavy rain continued and in spite of it the collector found the town, the adjoining villages and the people safe. Out of curiosity he went near the lake, and was dumbfounded to see two celestial beings with bows and arrows standing near the lake and guarding it. The collector understood that those two persons were none other than Lord Rama and Lakshmana. He was deeply moved by the mercy of the Lord and his commitment to protect His devotees. As promised by him he built a shrine for Sita Devi and the edict at this shrine (one can see it even now) is the proof of this incident.

In these days of acute drought at Madras city and other places, Changleput Dt. where Madurantakam is situated is comparatively free from water scarcity. Let us pray to Eari Katha Karunakaran to save us from all kinds of scarcities, of water, food, power, wealth etc.

Glory to Lord Rama.

Kulasekara Ramayana

Kulasekara Alwar, one of the twelve Alwars or renowned Vishnu Bhaktas has sung briefly the whole of Ramayana in ten beautiful verses in Tamil. It is called 'Tiru Chitrakuta Patikam'. It is a part of 'Perumal Tirumozhi' (Verses in praise of Lord Vishnu) composed by Kulasekara Alwar. The whole of Perumal Tirumozhi is found in 'Nalayera Divya Prabandam' (Four thousand verses sung in praise of Lord Vishnu in Tamil by all twelve Alwars. The ten verses delineating the whole of Ramayana written by Kulasekara Alwar in Tamil is here translated into English.

1. Ayodhya a renowned city on the banks of Sarayu surrounded by long defensive walls and abounded with beautiful places

Was ruled over by Dasaratha belonging to the Solar dynasty.

In this holy city, the Divine Light Srimad Narayana was born as the son of Dasaratha.

He had charming face with red eyes and black complexion.

In accordance with His name 'Rama' He delighted the people by His lovely form.

He is the Lord Supreme seen at Tiruchitrakutam,

I long for His darshan and I don't know when I can have it.

2. As a boy Rama mastered all Vedas from His Guru Visvamisra,

Killed Tadaka, the female fiend who obstructed the sacrifice of Visvamisra,

Also killed Subahu, drove away Mareecha and protected the sacrifice,

This Divine Lord, protector of the entire universe,

Is seated on the throne of Chitrakuta surrounded by gardens with sparkling flowers,

At His court multitude of Vedic brahmins,

Are always singing songs in praise of Him.

3. The Valourous Rama bent the renowned bow of Lord Siva,

Married the black eyed beautiful Sita, daughter of King Janaka.

Subdued the proud Parasurama who came to fight with Him,

Being a great warrior His enemies were afraid of Him,

But His pleasing nature attracted everyone towards Him,

Let us all worship those who sing the glory of Lord Rama,

Seated at Chitrakuta surrounded by high walls and towers.

4. Bound by the demand of Kaikeyi whose hair was adorned with flowers,

The dutiful Rama left Ayodhya to spend fourteen long years in exile.

On His way to the wild forest He crossed the holy river Ganges,

With the help of Guha, a boatman with fervent devotion to Rama,

Reached Chitrakuta, blessed Bharata by bestowing His Paduka and kingdom,

Those who worship this Sita Rama seated at Chitrakuta,

Will be esteemed greater than all Devas.

7. After churning the ocean with His bow,

Rama built the dam across the ocean at Aadi Setu,

Crossed the ocean, reached Lanka, vanquished Ravana, the demon king of Lanka,

Crowned his brother Vibhishana, full of Satvaguna as the king of Lanka,

As far as I am concerned I cannot accept any other God,

Except my beloved Rama who is seated at Chitrakuta with Sita Devi.

8. After putting an end to the atrocities of the demons and

Restoring Sita from their clutches, Rama triumphantly

returned to Ayodhya in Pushpaka Vimana.

The kind hearted Rama was crowned king by Vasishtha and ruled over Ayodhya righteously for many years.

Rama happened to hear the biography of Ravana from Agastya,

Was thrilled to listen to His own Satcharita from His sons Lava and Kusa.

Those who constantly meditate on the life of Rama will never long for nectar.

9. As destined Rama killed Chambuka and rescued the brahmin,

Made His brother Satrugna kill Vanasura,

Was separated from Lakshmana by Durvasa's curse,

As we never forget our beloved Rama of Tillai Chitrakuta.

We will never suffer from any pain, distress or sorrow.

10. When the time came for Rama to shed off His mortal coil and ascend Paramapada,

With Him He took all the people of Ayodhya to His heavenly abode.

5. The mighty Rama killed Virata whose shoulders were as strong as mountains,

Received the bow of Lord Vishnu from sage Agastya of the south,

Killed Khara and Dushana, cut off the ears and nose of Surapanakha, the revengeful demoness,

Killed Maricha the demon who assumed the form of a golden deer.

Those who worship the righteous Rama of Chitrakuta,

Will make the world blessed.

6. Jatayu struggling for life revealed to Rama the shocking news,

Of the abduction of Sita by the demon King Ravana,

Grief stricken Rama performed the last rites to Jatayu and gave him salvation.

Got the friendship of the monkey chief Sugriva,

Killed Vali, the king of Kishkindha and made Sugriva the ruler,

Sent Hanuman as His messenger to Lanka and made him burn the city.

I will fall on the feet of those devotees who worship the Lord of Chitrakuta.

Devas and Nityasuris welcomed Him with songs of praise and flowers.

Such is the greatness of Rama that His devotees will worship Him,

Forever and forever at Chitrakuta.

Those who read these ten verses of Ramayana delineated by Kulasekara

In Chitrakuta Patikam from the time of Rama's Avatar at Ayodhya,

Till His ascending to Sri Vaikunta,

Will beyond any doubt reach Paramapada

And will ever be seated at the lotus feet of Sri Rama

- Dr. R. Rukmani

New No. 13 Sixth Street,

Ramnagar, Nanganallur,

Chennai.



SWAMI SAMARTHA IN SAI CHARITRA

A well-known saint, named Anandnath, had predicted for Sai that He would perform miraculous deeds.

This famous Anandnath had established a *math* in Yeola. He came to Shirdi once, along with some of the dwellers of Shirdi (who had gone to Yeola, for Anandnath's *darshan*. They were Madhavrao Balwant Deshpande, Nandram Shivram Marwadi and Bhagchand Marwadi. It is said that Anandnath Maharaj unexpectedly and forcibly joined them on their bullock cart, going to Shirdi. This Anandnath originally hailed from South Konkan district, and belonged to the Kudaldeshkar Gowda *brahmin* sect. He had lived for a fairly long time in Mumbai also).

Anandnath, who was the disciple of the great saint of Akkalkot, when he saw Sai, exclaimed : "This is indeed a Diamond, a Real Diamond.

Though to-day He is lying on the garbage heap (i.e. neglected), it is not just a flint but a Diamond." These were the words of Anandnath when Baba was a youngster.

"Mark my words carefully. Later on you will recall them." After prophesying thus, he returned to Yeola.....

Swami Samartha of Akkalkot was the chosen deity of Bhai (Bhai Krishnaji Alibagkar), who worshipped his portrait regularly with devotion.

He thought of going to Akkalkot to have the *darshan* of the *padukas* and to offer worship to them with his heart and soul.

He got ready to start from Mumbai the next day. But that decision remained unfulfilled and instead he left for Shirdi.

One day before his departure he saw a vision. Akkalkot Swami commanded him : "At present Shirdi is my abode. You go there."

Obeying the command with reverence, Bhai left Mumbai. He lived in Shirdi for six months and was at peace and happy.

Bhai was full of devotion. So, to commemorate the vision he installed the Swami's *padukas* under the neem tree.

In *Shake* 1834 (AD 1912), in the bright half of the month of *Shravan*, on an auspicious day, the *padukas* were installed under the neem tree with the singing of *bhajans* and with great devotion.

At the auspicious *muhurat* (hour-choosen astrologically) the installation ceremony was done by Dada Kelkar, while the rites and rituals were performed by Upasani (Kashinath Govind Upasani Maharaj of Sakori) according to the *Shastras*.

For the future, arrangements were entrusted to a *brahmin* named Dixit (Govind Kamlakar Dixit) who would perform the *puja* and a devotee by the name Sagun (Sagun Meru Naik) looked after the management.....

A gentleman called Harishchandra, resident of Mumbai, was greatly troubled on account of his son who suffered from epilepsy.

He tried many allopathic and *ayurvedic* doctors, but there was no cure. All efforts were in vain. The only remedy was to resort to the *sadhus* and saints.



In 1910, Das Ganu's *kirtans* started and spread the fame of Sree Sainath. A large number of people took to visiting Shirdi.

Though a tiny village, it had a great destiny. Shirdi became another Pandharpur and many pilgrims visited it.

Many people experienced that sicknesses were cured by mere *darshan*, or the touch of Baba's hand, or with a merciful glance.

The devotee, having surrendered completely, obtained his welfare. Knowing everybody's minds, Baba fulfilled the desires of all.

People hurried to visit Him, as evil spirits fled at the touch of the *udi*, blessings cured diseases, and a kind glance from His eyes pushed away all obstacles.

Having heard of such greatness from the *kirtans* and the books of Das Ganu, from one mouth to another, the desire for *darshan* arose in Harishchandra Pitale.

Pitale came to Shirdi village bringing family and children, presents and fruits, for the *darshan* due to the merits of his past births.

The son was placed at Baba's feet and he prostrated before Baba. Then something extraordinary happened, which very much disturbed Pitale.

No sooner than the boy's eyes met Sai's eyes, the boy became unconscious, rolled up his eyes, and fell down all of a sudden. The parents became frantically worried.

The boy fell unconscious on the ground. A lot of froth came out from his mouth. The parents were greatly disturbed and wondered what was their fortune.

It seemed as if there was no breath; the froth continued from the mouth; the whole body was soaked with perspiration and there seemed to be no hope for his life.

These fits had happened frequently to the boy but never had there been one of this intensity or duration.

An attack of this kind had never happened before and would never happen again. It was as if he was about to die. The mother was unable to control the flow of tears, seeing the condition of her child.

"With what purpose did we come here and what has happened ! The remedy has aggravated the condition. These feet (Sainath's) have proved ruinous. All our troubles in coming here have been in vain.

Coming here has been like running into a house to escape from the pursuit of thieves, only to have the house collapse over our heads", that lady said.

"Our condition is like that of a cow running away from a tiger to save her life only to run into the hands of a butcher !

Or a traveller, tormented by the heat of the sun, who takes refuge under a tree which uproots and falls upon him.

Or having faith in God one goes to the temple which itself collapses on one's body. Similar is the case."

Baba then assured them : "Have a little courage and patience. Pick up the boy carefully. He will regain consciousness.

Take the boy to your lodgings. And in about half-an-hour he will return to life. Do not be unnecessarily flurried."

So be it. Later, they acted accordingly. Baba's words came true. Pitale and his family rejoiced and all their doubts disappeared.

On being taken to the *wada*, the young boy came immediately to his senses. The worries of the parents disappeared. There was a lot of joy.

The Pitale came with his wife for Baba's *darshan* and performed the eight-fold salutation with great humility.

Seeing the son's recovery, he sat pressing Baba's feet with mind full of gratitude and happiness. Baba asked with a smile :

"Have the waves of doubt and desires ebbed now ? Sree Hari will protect him who has faith and patience."

Pitale was a wealthy man from birth. He came from a good and well-known family. He lavishly distributed sweets and dry fruits and even offered fruits, betel-leaves etc. to Baba.

His wife was of a very *satvik* nature - loving, having faith and devotion. She would sit near the pillar, gazing at Baba.

As she gazed, her eyes would fill with tears. She did this daily. Seeing her novel way of showing affection, Baba was won over by her.

Saints are like God - they are ever at the service of the devotees. They are very gracious to those who worship them whole-heartedly.

May it be whatsoever. Then, this family desired to leave. They came to the *Masjid* for *darshan*, and took Baba's permission and the *udi*; and made preparations to leave.

At that time, Baba took out three rupees from His pocket and called Pitale close to Him. Hear what He said :

"Bapu, earlier I had given you two rupees. Add these three to them and worship them. You will be benefitted."

Pitale took the rupees in his hands and accepted them with joy as *prasad*. He prostrated at Baba's feet and said : "Grant me Your grace, *Maharaja*."

Waves of thoughts arose in his mind : 'This is my first visit. So what is it that Baba is saying ? I am definitely not able to understand.

As I had not seen Baba earlier, how could He have given me two rupees earlier ?' He could not at all understand the meaning or the advice. Pitale was bewildered.

'How do I get the meaning explained ?' His curiosity increased. Baba did not give any indication and remained silent.

Any words spoken by saints, however casually, are bound to prove true. Pitale was fully aware of this, so he was puzzled.

But later when he went to Mumbai and his home, there was an old woman at home who satisfied his curiosity.

The old woman was Pitale's mother. When she enquired about what had transpired at Shirdi, as a matter of course, the topic about the three rupees cropped up. Even she was unable to correlate it.

After thinking it over she remembered and the old lady said to Pitale : "Now I recall completely. What Baba said is true.

As you took your son now to Shirdi for Sai's *darshan*, similarly your father had earlier taken you to Akkalkot.

The *Maharaj* there was a *Siddha*, Benevolent, Very Famous, Omniscient, *Yogi*, Very Wise. Your father was also a very moral man.

He accepted your father's worship and the *Yogiraja* was pleased with it. As *prasad* he gave him two rupees, in order to perform *puja*.

These earlier two rupees too, Swami gave to you, my son, as *prasad* in order to worship.

These two rupees were kept in the shrine and your father daily worshipped them with great faith.

I alone know about his faith. He acted according to his faith. After his death, the *puja* and the articles for performing it became children's playthings.

There was no faith in God; and even shame was felt to do *puja*. The children were appointed, in turns, to do the *puja*. Who would take care of the rupees ?

Many years passed thus. The importance of those rupees was lost. All memory of them faded away. The two rupees disappeared.

So be it. You are really blessed. Not only have you met *Maharaj*, in the form of Sai, to remind you of a forgotten duty but to ward off dangers.

Therefore, from now onwards leave off all doubts and bad thoughts. Follow in the footsteps of your ancestors and do not slip into bad habits.

Go on worshipping the rupees. Consider the Saint's *prasad* as a jewel. *Samartha* Sai has convinced you of this significance and revived a life of *bhakti*."

Hearing this story from his mother, Pitale was full of bliss and joy. He realised Sai's all-pervasiveness and the significance of His *darshan*.

That nectar of his mother's words awakened his former feelings. He repented and atoned paving the way for his future welfare.



So be it. Whatever had to happen, happened ! The Saint had awakened in him the future obligations. Gratefully and conscientiously he, thereafter, carried out his duties.

Gopal Narayan Ambdekar, was a great devotee of Baba from Pune. Listen to his story.

He was in service in the excise department of the British regime. After completing service for ten years, he left it and stayed at home.

Fortune changed and turned its back on him. All the days of one's life are not the same. The stars rotated and brought a bad spell. Who is there who can avoid these changes ?

In the beginning he was in service in Thane district and later his luck brought him to Javhar, where he was an officer. It is there that he became jobless.

To regain a job is not easy. Where could he get it again ? He tried his level best at that time.

But he did not succeed. So he decided to follow an independent trade but here too troubles beset him until he finally lost all hope.

Year after year, his financial condition worsened till he hit rock bottom. Calamities followed one after the other and the household condition became unbearable.

Seven years passed this way. Each year he went to Shirdi and related his grievances to Baba, imploring Him with prostrations day and night.

In 1916, he was so utterly disgusted that he felt like committing suicide after going to Shirdi.

So this time he stayed for two months at Shirdi with his wife. Listen to the story of what happened one night.

While sitting in a bullock-cart, in front of Dixit's *wada*, Ambdekar was in deep thoughts.

Fed up with life and very depressed, he thought 'enough now ! No more of this trouble.' He lost the desire to live.

Thinking thus and having lost interest in life. Ambdekar got ready to throw himself immediately into the well.

'Availing of a quiet time when there would be nobody around, I will carry out my purpose and rid myself of all the troubles.'

He knew that committing suicide was a great sin. Yet he determined to act upon his thought. But Baba Sai, being the Puppeteer, He averted this folly.

At a very short distance, there was the residence of a hotel owner, who also had Baba's support, being one of the persons who served Baba.

Sagun came to the threshold of his house, at that time, and asked Ambdekar : "Have you ever read this book on the life of Akkalkot Maharaj ?"

"Let me see, let me see. What is that book ?" Saying that Ambdekar took it in his hand. Turning the pages at random, he began to read here and there.

By wonderful coincidence, the subject which he came across was worth reading as it related to his inner thoughts. He was deeply impressed.

I will relate for all the listeners the story that he came across by chance, giving the sum and substance of the story very briefly, for fear of lengthening this book.

There was a great saint at Akkalkot. Maharaj used to be absorbed in meditation. A devotee, who was grievously ill, was undergoing unbearable suffering.

He had served for a long time hoping to be rid of the disease. He was unable to bear the pain any more. He became very dejected.

He determined to commit suicide, and choosing a time in the night, going to a well he threw himself in it.

Maharaj came there at that time and pulled him out with his own hands. "Whatever is destined has to be fully borne", he advised him.

"All physical tribulations, diseases, even leprosy and all other problems, which we have because of our actions in the previous birth, unless they are fully borne, we cannot be free from them, even by committing suicide.

If this suffering remains unfinished, you have to be born again. Therefore, try to bear up with this trouble a little longer. Do not kill yourself."

Reading this story, which was apt for the occasion, Ambdekar was surprised and felt ashamed on the spot, understanding Baba's all-pervasiveness.

Ambdekar realised that the fare due to previous birth must be endured. He was made to understand this at the right time and it was good that he had not attempted the reckless deed.

This illustrative story was like a voice from outer space. It strengthened his faith at Sai's feet. Sai's deeds are unimaginable.

'Sai's warning guided through Sagun's words. If there had been some delay in getting this unexpected book, my life would have been ruined.

I would have lost my own life, and would have caused utter destruction of the family. My wife would have had to undergo a lot of suffering and I would not have achieved my own good nor attained my spiritual goal.

Baba inspired Sagun and made the book an instrument to divert my mind from committing suicide.'

If such an incident had not occurred, the poor man would have unnecessarily lost his life. But where there is a Saviour like Sai, who would be able to kill ?

This devotee's father had faith in Akkalkot Swami. Baba made him understand that he should follow in his father's footsteps.

So be it. Later everything was well. Those days passed. He studied astrology, putting in a lot of efforts, and that was rewarding.

He got Sai's grace and blessings. Fortune smiled upon him, later on. He became well-versed in astrology and his earlier adverse circumstances ended.

His love for the Guru increased, and he achieved happiness and health. He had ease and happiness in family life. He became very happy.

IS BABA LIVING AND HELPING NOW ?



DEVOTEES EXPERIENCES AFTER BABA'S MAHASAMADHI ON 15TH OCTOBER, 1918 FROM BOOK ENTITLED 'AMBROSIA IN SHIRDI' WRITTEN BY SHRI RAMALINGAM SWAMI, INSPIRED BY SRI SIVANESAN SWAMIJI OF SHIRDI

(Contd. from Jan.-Feb., 2004 issue)

70) BABA DROVE AWAY THE SPIRIT WHICH HAD POSSESSED A LEARNED WOMAN.....

The learned wife of a doctor had been ailing from a disease which doctors were unable to diagnose and cure. The lady would lock her teeth tight and remain unconscious for hours together.

As a last recourse, the doctor's father asked him to take his wife to Shirdi. "Just take a trial", he said. To satisfy the father, both of them went to Shirdi; but the wife would not go to Baba's *Samadhi Mandir*. So, with the help of a friend, she was dragged to the *Samadhi* and made to prostrate herself before the *Samadhi*. Baba's *udi* and *Samadhi abhishek* water (*teertha*) were thrust into her mouth.

The next evening, after bowing before the *Samadhi*, she fell on the ground and the spirit within started speaking, "I had pounced on this lady and possessed her while she was returning from her parental house and standing under a tree. I am a female bhil ghost. The *teertha* and *udi* sprinkled over me have vanquished me. So I am leaving this body and going away for ever." Thus ended the lady's sickness and she returned home safe and sound.

71) BABA FREED SMT. SUSHILADEVI, WIFE OF SHRI BABUSAHEB SAKHARAM BABLE FROM THE CLUTCHES OF AN EVIL SPIRIT.....

Three months after Shri Babusaheb Sakharam Bable's marriage, his wife used to fall unconscious, clenching her teeth. He and his family were very learned and hence did not pay heed to other people's advice that this occurrence may be due to the action of some evil spirits. They spent a large amount of money on various treatments; but in vain.

She used to remain unconscious for 18 hours daily and that increased to 23-24 hours in October, 1952. She was brought to Shirdi on 25th October, 1952. She was made to attend *arati* on 25th and 26th October by force. She was given *udi* and *abhishek teertha* to drink and made to prostrate before Baba's *Samadhi*. In the evening, she fell down unconscious after the *arati* at the *Samadhi Mandir*. One of Baba's devotees, Shri Y. B. Pradhan, told them to sprinkle Baba's *teertha* on her always. They did so accordingly.

Later, the evil spirit in her began to talk and said that it had caught her whilst she was returning from her mother's house to her father-in-law's house, near a tree at the Belgaum bus stand. When asked if the spirit was prepared to leave the body, it replied that Baba was beating it often and it would leave the body for good. So saying, she collapsed.

Later, Sushiladevi woke up as usual and made *pradakshina* of Baba's *Samadhi*. She went home happily and everyone thanked Baba.

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