- Lakshman Mama was a staunch brahmin and uncle of Madhavrao. After taking a bath in the morning and putting on clean washed clothes, he would take Baba's darshan. Il166II He would wash Baba's feet, apply sandalwood paste with consecrated rice, offered flowers, leaves and tulsi and afterwards burnt incense, lit the lamp and offered *naivedya*. Then he offered ll167ll After dakshina. offering eight-fold obeisance with prayers, he took Baba's blessings. Then he would apply the sandalwood paste tilak to all and distribute prasad. Then he would leave. II168II
- He would bring the bel from long distances, get together all the puja paraphernalia completely, and then worship all the village deities, one by one. He would offer to all according to the proper rituals. II153II After that, he would come immediately to the Masjid, lovingly bow to Baba's seat, wash His feet etc. and then drink the water as tirth. II154II Till Megha was in Shirdi, he performed the noon arati regularly. But, before that he worshipped all the village deities and then went to the Masjid. II156II He worshipped Khanderaya and Megha also got rid of his uneasiness. Then Baba allowed Megha to do His puja. Il162II Then, he did the *puja* with great reverence with sandalwood paste, flowers and the other eight offerings. He offered dakshina, garlands, fruits etc. according to his means. II163II

- C.

28

Sixth Step - Vandan Bhakti

1 Sai Maharaj, Ocean of Mercy, Veritable Incarnation of God. Absolute *Brahman*, Great Lord of *Yoga* - I do my eightfold obeisance before Him! ||1|| - C. 25

- When you surrender to the powerful Sai, body and soul, virtue, wealth, love and deliverance are attained without striving and unasked. II14II C. 6
- 3 He embraces and holds near His heart those who prostrate themselves before Him with no sense of duality and unconditionally surrender to Him. II3II C. 40
- 4 Hearing this, I hurriedly ran to the spot where Baba was and prostrated in the dust at His feet. My joy knew no bounds. Il137II
- When I heard this, I ceased to have any doubts. I bowed at the feet of Sai and then relying on my memory, I started to write this biography. II5II "..... Once having prostrated, past sins born of speech and hearing will be destroyed." II20II C. 3
- The collyrium of knowledge that He puts in the eyes, removes the ignorance and takes you to His own abode. To Sai, whose greatness is such, I prostrate myself fully. II158II

C. 10

- 7 "Oh! Why so often do you do *namaskar* after *namaskar*? It is enough to do it once, with reverence and honour." II156II
- 8 "Convey to him My salutations and request him to have mercy and grace towards this humble one. Do not forget Me and let your love for Me grow uninterruptedly." Il133Il "As a rule, we *swamis* are forbidden and do not bow to any one else. But, breaking this rule, in the present context, can only be beneficent." Il135Il C. 51
- Baba, this Shamrao is here. He is giving namaskar in place of dakshina and says consider them as fifteen rupees only. Offer these to Baba. Il92II Then I paid my respects to Baba and said: Your blessings are enough for me. Only grant me this favour. Take care of me. Il119II C. 19

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Seventh Step - Dasya Bhakti

Lote Shri Bhaguji Shinde

<u>Bhagoji</u>

Shinde

It was always Bhagoji who served Him. It was only Bhagoji who would massage the hand. Then, after some time the hand healed and everyone was happy. 119011 In this way, although the hand was completely cured, one doesn't know what was in Baba's mind in allowing Bhagoji, every morning, early in the day, to carry out the ceremony of tying the bandages. II91II Although there was no pain, regularly and for no reason, with the help of ghee a massage was done and the hand was cared for till death. II92II These services were for the sake of Bhagoji. Siddha Sai never needed them. He made Bhagoji render regular service with love, as a devotee should. II93II Because of the sins of his previous birth, Bhagoji was suffering from leprosy. But, it was his good fortune that he came in touch with Sai. II94II Whenever Baba started on His round to Lendi, Bhagoji held the umbrella over Baba's head. Though his body was covered with black leprosy sores, he was the foremost in his service. II95II Whenever, early in the morning, Baba was seated restfully against the pillar, near the dhuni it was his good fortune to be there to serve Him. II96II He would remove the bandage, massage the respective muscles, apply ghee to those parts, and thus be fortunate to serve Him. II97II His fingers had become stumps because of leprosy and his whole body emanated a nauseating smell. Thus, the one with such a great misfortune, derived four-fold happines from his services. II99II Bhagoji Shinde was a great sinner in his past lives. His whole body was bleeding with sores. He was greatly affected by this deadly disease. But, he was a matchless devotee of Baba, II98II - C. 7

Radhakrishnamai

The tradition of the service was continued after him by Radhakrishnabai. She was excellent in this work. II177II By caste a *Brahmin*, respected by all, she never in her innocent heart had the wicked thought that this was a lowly task. II178II Getting up early in the morning, taking the broom in her hand, she would sweep all the paths used by Baba. Blessed was her service! II179II Her work was clean and quick, who else would be able to compete with her? After some time, Abdul came forward. II180II – C. 35

- 0

Abdul Baba



Baba said: "Nana is mad. Remove the bandage, otherwise you will die. Now a crow will come and peck. Then you will get well." II73II Enough. While this conversation was in progress, Abdul came up immediately, to pour oil in the lamps. See what happened all of a sudden. II74II Abdulla was concentrating on his work and had his attention on

the lamps. Thereby, he did not notice Pillai. Something unusual happened! II76II What could Abdulla do? What is destined to happen will happen. Unknowingly his foot fell on the leg which Pillai had stretched out. II77II "Did he not already come? He is the same one who trod on your leg. He is the crow who pecked and ran away. He squeezed out the worms." II84II What crow! It had only been a figure of speech! Whatever had to happen was got done in front of all. He fulfilled the prediction. II85II

- C. 34

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Balaji Patil Nevaskar

Balaji Patil Nevaskar was a great devotee. He rendered excellent and disinterested service and wore away his body for Baba. II175II Nevaskar's regular task was to sweep all the passages and streets in Shirdi through which Baba passed in His daily routine, including the round to the Lendi. II176II That Patil (Nevaskar) was very fortunate. Though he lived in the world, he was not attached to it. How unselfish he was! Listen to that part of the story. II181II After harvesting, He brought all the grain to the Masjid and making a pile of it in the open space, he offered it at Baba's feet. II182II Firmly believing that Baba was the owner of everything, he lived on whatever Baba gave to him out of it, taking that much only back home. II183II Bala drank only the water that came from the channel after Maharai had his bath or washed His hands and feet. **II184II** 35

Balaram Mankar

A householder, named Balaram Mankar, was a great devotee of Baba. II65II But, later, his wife died and there was an interruption in the performance of his duties as a householder. He lost peace of mind; but he progressed towards highest bliss. II66II Because of the accumulation of good deeds in the previous births, he got attached to Sai's feet. He faith there and developed unfailing completely detached from his worldly ties. II67II Breaking all his ties with hopes, desires, children and family, Mankar due to his uncommon fate, left the worldly existence. II68II The main obstacle in entering the gate of spirituality is the desire to earn a livelihood and care for others. He placed this burden on his son and locked himself away from worldly concerns (and went to Shirdi). Il69II The devotee Balakaramaji stayed in Shirdi, buzzing around the dust particles at the lotus feet of Sai, constantly humming the name of Sai. II115II - C. 31

Eighth Step – Sakhya Bhakti

Madhavrao Balwant Deshpande *alias* Shama



"This Masjid is my mother's home. I am Sai's own child. This being so, why is the mother so furious with the child to-day?" II48II As a child is to the mother, so was Madhavrao to Baba. When such a relationship always existed, why should it happen

this way to-day ? II50II When the mother kicks who will take care of the child ? Madhavrao lost all hope of survival, at that time. II51II $\,$ - C. $\,$ - C.

They always indulged in loving disputes and addressed each other in familiar terms. Baba loved him exceptionally, like His own son..... II53IIand nobody could get around Baba as he could. II52II - C. 30

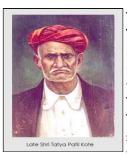
"My Shama may be mad but I am fond of him. He has an unusual affection towards Me. I am greatly concerned about him." | II83|| - C. 27

In a burst of affection, Baba then pinched Madhavrao's cheek. Listen then to the loving conversation between God and His devotee at that opportune time. II137II Then Baba started to speak: "Yes, indeed, I have come for that and that is why I started giving you food and got fondly attached to you." II143II Shama was His favourite devotee; and the saint fulfilled the devotee's wish, which was asked for in ignorance and fondness, whether it was proper or not. This was his own vow. II162II

- C. 36

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Tatya Ganpat Patil Kote



addressed Tatya Baba 'Mama' (mother's brother or maternal uncle). Such was their reciprocal love and affinity. It was beyond compare. II131II Though Baba was ready, until Tatya arrived He would remain seated in His own waiting for Tatya's arrival.

II129II Until Tatya Patil made Baba stand up, putting his hand under Baba's arm, then only Baba made ready to go to the *Chavadi* from there. II130II When Tatyaba took Baba's permission to leave for his home, after offering *chillum*, *attar* and rose water, Baba used to say. "Take care of Me." II213II "Go if you are going. But, during the night from time to time, inquire about Me." Saying, "very well", Tatyaji would leave the *Chavadi* and go home. II214II — C. 37

People say that Baba averted Tatya's death by giving His own life. He alone knows the truth. | 168|| - C.

Lakshmibai Shinde



The same Lakshmi, with great love, daily sent vegetables and bhakaris for Baba, at the right time. How can this service be adequately praised! Il94II If there was a delay in getting the bhakar from Lakshmi, though it was past meal time, He would not put a morsel in the mouth.

Il110II The food served in the plates would get cold. He would wait though hungry; but till Lakshmi's *bhakar* came, he would not eat any food. Il11III From that time onwards, according to the advice, started Lakshmi's *bhakari*, crushed into milk and offered with love daily. Il108II Later Baba began to eat that *bhakar* offered with love and devotion, daily. When there was a delay, He was uneasy and He did not feel like eating. Il109II

Bade Baba

How important Bade Baba was ! His usual seat was on the right hand (of Baba). Baba smoked the *chillum* only after Bade Baba had partaken of it. II112II Bade Baba was that person without whom Baba did not take a step. If he did not eat anything, Baba did not partake of food. II113II

Bayjabai Kote Patil



Tatya Kote's mother, whose name was Bayjabai, would put some *bhakaris* in a basket and carry it on her head and go into the woods in the afternoon. II106II She would walk for miles, searching in the woods for the mad *Fakir*, trampling upon the thick

foliage and bow down to His feet on finding Him. II107II How can one describe the strength of her devotion? Dry or curried vegetables and bhakari she fed Baba with her hands, in the woods, in the noon or late afternoon. II108II This austere devotion of hers was also not forgotten by Baba during His lifetime. Keeping the past in mind He blessed her son with good fortune. II109II Both the husband and wife had great faith in the Fakir indeed. The Fakir only was their God; God lives in the faith of the devotee, doesn't He? II110II

– C. 8

Khushalchandshet Marwadi

One afternoon Baba told Dixit: "Take a *tonga* and go to Rahata and bring back Khushalbhau." II95II "Tell him that it has been a long time since I met him, so I have a desire to see him. Tell him that Baba is calling you to meet Him." II96II – C. 30

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Sow. Khapardeaai

Many other *naivedyas* came, far superior to this one. Often they remained untouched. What was the greatly impelling reason to eat this only? II155II "You keep aside all the other platters. Even if some are made of silver, you hurl them far away. But, only when this lady's platter came, you got up immediately and started eating. This is surprising!" II157II After saying this, He did full justice to the meal, washed His hands and mouth, belched to show His satisfaction and resumed His seat. II162II Such was Sree Samartha the compassionate! Sainath, the protector of all who have surrendered! He always fulfils the devotees' cherished desires and works for their welfar. II169II

- C. 27

Kakasaheb Dixit



"I too was waiting for you, Then I sent Shama to meet you, all the way to Nagar", spoke Sai clearly to him. II91II His body trembled; his mind was engrossed in Self Bliss; his eyes were half closed and he was immersed in a cloud of joy. II93II – C. 51

Megha

When Megha died see the importance given by Baba for his cremation, and Baba's affection towards the devotee. Megha was already gratified. ||120|| Accom-panied by devotees, the villagers went in procession to the cremation ground. Baba also went to the cremation ground, showering flowers on Megha. II121II After Megha's last rites Baba's eyes also filled with tears. Like an ordinary being, with all attachments, He was full of grief. II122II With love, Baba covered the body, with His own hands, with plentiful flowers. After lamenting the death with pitiful tones, He returned. II123II C. 31

Radhakrishnamai

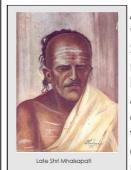
After some time had passed, Baba asked daily for vermicelli made by Lakshmi in the afternoons, and would eat with her sitting beside Him. II112II Baba ate very little and sent what remained, with Lakshmi to Radhakrishna, who savoured the leftovers with great love. II113II – C. 42

Actually, the ladder was put against Waman Gondkar's house and Sree Sai climbed up the ladder to the roof, Himself, very swiftly. II238II The houses were adjoining and He crossed over quickly to Radhakrishni's roof. Nobody could understand the mystery. II239II At that time, Radhakrishni was suffering from severe malaria and she was very restless. II240II – C. 19

Nineth Step -

Atmanivedan Bhakti

Bhagat Mhalsapati Sonar



A devotee like Mhalsapati, who was always attached at Sai's feet, and could hardly make both ends meet, even he was not allowed to make any money. Il61II Sai Himself distributed to people, many times, the monies that had come as dakshina; but He did not give a farthing to him who

was always in difficulties. II62II Mhalsapati too was a man of self respect. Though Sai was so generous, he never extended his hand to ask Him for it. II63II Though his financial situation was dire, but he was very, very detached. He bore the difficulties of poverty always content with the little he had. II64II He was not a worshipper of money. He only yearned for spirituality. He had surrendered to Sai with body and mind, unselfishly and with a loving heart. II70II Hansraj entreated Sai; but Sai did not touch a farthing and said : "Even My devotees are not lured by money and you will not find them fall prey to the pomp and show of mony." |171|| With all humility, Mhalsapati returned it and said : "Without Sai's permission, I cannot accept it." | | 169||

On Margashirsh Poornima day (thirty-two years before the Samadhi) Baba had an attack of asthma and He became very uneasy. In order to bear this bodily pain, Baba raised His prana high up and went into Samadhi. II64II Then looking at Mhalsapati, He point blank said to him: "Do not neglect Me for three days." II67II Then Mhalsapati remained alert day and night and took care of Sai. He sat wide awake near Him. II72II — C.

Il Novelty of Nine II

It was on the second of November 1909 that Dixit met Sai for the first time and had a meritorious and purifying *darshan*. II157II On the nineth of December, he took Baba's permission and considered that very day to be an auspicious one, for laying the foundation stone. II161II – C. 4

Even if he (i.e. *Bhajani*) had not been available, Kaka would have performed the *kirtan*, because he knew by heart the composition about *Ramnavami* composed by Das Ganu. II96II – C. 6

That old Haji stayed in the *Chavadi* facing the north. For the first nine months Baba was displeased with him and was not ready to meet him. II79II

- C

They met after nine years. Their joy knew no bounds. The doctor also went after him unconsciously, into the *Masjid*. II169II

- C. 12

Amir Shakkar lived at the *Chavadi* for nine months. Just as one climbed the steps into the *Chavadi*, right in front, he spread out his bedding in the middle of the room. II125II Amir was asked to live there for nine months and was prohibited from coming for *darshan* even in the *Masjid*. II127II

Immediately on reaching home, he took out and placed three more in his hand, totalling nine rupees. Yet the *fakir* was not satisfied. Il192Il As soon as the note came into his hands, he returned the change of nine rupees and the *fakir* left the same way he had come, walking with great speed. Il195Il Otherwise, why did the *fakir* who had nineteen rupees with him including the ten rupees note, give Appa nine rupees only? It was because of Appa's intense desire to give ten rupees, only. Il212Il – C. 33

Later, from 10th December 1909, Baba's worship in the *Chavadi*, *bhajan* etc. also began. II118II - C. 37

The interesting story related to the nine lights of the Rishabh lineage; that is, of Kavi, Hari, Antariksha and others (Prabudha, Pippalayan, Avirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhanjan). It was both instructive and pleasing. Il49II All the nine of them were God Incarnate. They were the embodiment of forgiveness and peace. When they expounded the glory of Bhagvat *Dharma* to King Janak, he was still and spell bound. Il50II – C. 45

The path of *Bhakti* is the thorny path, like the path through the prickly Babul forest. It is full of pits and potholes. One or two steps, in the right direction, takes you really close to God. II16II

You should avoid the thorns and step forward. You will reach the destination without fear. This is the only remedy, says the *Gurumayi* very clearly. II17II

- C. 6

– C.

]

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 March-April, 2004 issue)

74) BABA TURNED SHRI VIRENDRA P. PANDYA FROM A SCEPTIC INTO AN ASCETIC.....

Shri Virendra P. Pandya of Vaitarna, near Kalyan, was a university graduate and did not believe in God. Everyone in his family was educated and except for his parents, none of the family members believed in God.

In May, 1952, he accompanied his cousin brother to Shirdi on a casual visit. Sometime after he left Shirdi, his family was in great distress. He was at that time staying with his cousin at Vaitarna. His parents and other family members were living in Bihar. There was no possibility of their coming to solve the problem.

Shri Pandya suddenly remembered having brought a photo of Sri Sai Baba from Shirdi, which was lying in his trunk. He took it out, cleaned it and kept it on his table. He lit an agarbatti before the photo and prayed to Sri Sai Baba to help him solve the problem.

Two or three days passed; but the solution did not occur and he became worried and restless. He stood before the photo of Sri Sai Baba and said, "O Baba! You know that I have no strong belief in You. If You are really God as Your devotees call You, You know my family problem and how worried I am thinking over my matter. I pray to give me a proper solution by evening or else. I will keep Your photo back in the trunk once and for all."

By evening he felt calm as a solution to his problem occured to him. He immediately wrote a letter to his mother at Dharaiajoba (in Bihar) informing her of the solution and the way in which he got it. On the third day of his posting the letter, he got a letter from his mother informing him of the same solution which had occured on the same day and time. This incident brought him very close to believing in Sri Sai Baba.

He thought of devoting his whole life to Sri Sai Baba for ever, doing nothing but *Bhakti*. But, his mother refused permission and advised him to follow *Karmayoga*. He once again stood before Baba's photo and wrote on a piece of paper. "O Baba! You definitely know my dilemma. By Tuesday 5.8.1952 evening I must get an answer from You in writing as to which way of life I should follow." He then placed the paper under the photo and prayed to Baba.

By dusk on 5.8.1952 he waited impatiently for an answer. He then accidently came across the Gujarati book called 'Sri Sai Baba *Upasana'* published by Shri Bhavnagar Sai Baba *Bhakta* Mandali. The book had been sent to him by his mother two months ago; but he had not read it so far. Now, when he saw the book, he opened it at random and came upon the chapter 'Bhav Sudha'. After reading a few lines he became interested and soon finished reading the entire book. At the end of it he had got answers to his questions and that too in writing. In that book, Baba had advised a devotee to follow *Karmayoga* way of life. This incident brought him even more closer to the devotion of Sri Sai Baba.

Shri V. P. Pandya and his cousin were contractors doing work in connection with the Mumbai Water Supply Scheme and lived in Vaitarna, a place which was virtually a jungle.

One Wednesday (6.8.1952) he stood before Baba's photo and prayed, "Tomorrow is Thursday, i.e. Baba's day. Some sadhu, sanyasi or fakir should come to my door to have bhiksha between 12.30 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. the time I take my afternoon meal. He should bless my entire body by moving his right hand from head to foot."

After 12.15 p.m. on Thursday he went to take his lunch as no one had come to his door till then. Just as he was about to take his first morsel of food, he heard the voice of a fakir asking for alms. His cook, who never gave anything to any beggar gave a one anna coin to the fakir of his own accord. The fakir turned to leave. He then called the fakir back and gave him prasad, which he had kept before Baba's photo. The fakir went away. By then Shri Pandya too finished his meals. He thought of serving food to the fakir; but he had gone. He thought if the fakir somehow returned again, he would serve him food. He inquired with his cook, whether there was any extra food. The cook replied in the negative and said that the food was sufficient only for him.

To his utter astonishment, Shri Pandya saw the same *fakir* coming towards his door once again. He immediately offered *prasad* to the *fakir* and gave him Rs. 2/- requesting him to have food with the amount as he was unable to serve him food in his house. The *fakir* accepted the amount without saying anything and simply laughed meaningfully at him. And then, to his great joy, the *fakir* blessed him from head to toe with the peacock feathers he held in his right hand, just as he had wished. He fell at the feet of the *fakir* with inexplicable joy and again offered *pranams*. The *fakir* raised him up and said that He would meet again on the following Thursday, 14.8.1952.

When he told the *fakir* that it would not be possible as he was leaving for Shirdi in a couple of days, the *fakir* said, "Even then I will meet you" and went away.

Shri Pandya reached Shirdi on 13.8.1952. On Thursday, 14.8.1952, during noon *Aarati* at the *Samadhi Mandir*, while gazing at Sri Sai Baba's photo, it suddenly occured to him, what the *fakir* had said had turned out to be true. He was in front of Baba, performing *Aarati* and so Sri Sai Baba too was in front of him. Thus the *fakir* met him on Thursday, 14.8.1952.

Sri Sai Baba thus brought a faithless into His fold of staunch devotees even after His Mahasamadhi.

- Jyoti Ranjan



8th SEMINAR OF **OM** *KAR SADHANA, AARATI SADHANA*AND SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS AT SHIRDI

Shri Sai Baba, Sansthan, Shirdi in collaboration with Shri Sai Dnyanpeeth Trust, Mumbai, will convene this seminar from Wednesday, the 25th to Saturday, the 28th August, 2004.

The *Om kar Sadhana* was conceived by Dada Bhagwat (1921-91). To facilitate its performance in *swar-taal-laya*, Sharadchandra Bal of Shri Sai Dnyanpeeth Trust has produced video/audio CDs, in accordance with which, the training in its performance will be imparted. The constituents of *Sadhana* are - *Ishastavan*, Prayer, *Marutistotra*, *Omkar*, *5 Nyasas* (self healing), *Namasmaran* "*Aum Shri Sainathay Namah*", *Mahamantra* etc. The *Aarati Sadhana* comprises of devotional compositions of Sri Pant Maharaj, Balekundri and *Aaratis* from *Sagunopasana*, *Kakad Aaratis* etc. The elucidation of spiritual teachings is based on Dada's discources on the subject 'Janma - Utpatti - Mimansa'. The medium of instructions will be Marathi and English for *kar Sadhana* and predominantly Marathi for spiritual teachings. It is necessary to remain present during the entire duration of the training. On the last day, trained participants will offer *Sadhana Seva* in the *Samadhi Mandir*.

Venue : The programme will be conducted at Bhakta Nivas (500 rooms complex) 'A' wing, 3rd floor.

The expenses towards lodging, tea, coffee, break-fast, lunch, dinner, training and the training inputs will be only Rs. 600/- per participant. The lodging facility will be provided from 3.00 p.m. on Tuesday, the 24th till 3.00 p.m. on Sunday, the 29th August, 2004. The desirous participants should register their names and send the remittance of Rs. 600/- by Money Order or Bank Draft on or before 20th August, 2004 at the following address.

Shri Sai Dnyanpeeth Trust, 2, Pramanik Society, P. M. Road Extn.,

Vile Parle (East), Mumbai - 400 057.

The participants may also register their names for the seminar and pay charges of Rs. 600/-at the auditorium on the 3rd floor of Parleshwar Mandir, Vile Parle (East), Mumbai - 400 057 on Saturday, between 5.30 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.

For further information please contact on the following telephones (Mumbai) or by E-mail:-

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