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Main

‘How Marvellous and Wonderful are the Deeds of the Nathas ! Their Conduct is Inconceivable !’



The ‘*Navnath Sampradaya*’ or ‘*Navnath Parampara*’, is a Hindu *Sampradaya*, and a *Parampara*, tradition based upon the lineage of the *Navnaths*, from the *Nath Sampradaya* (lineage) of Hindu mythology.

This tradition, believes *Rishi Dattatreya*, an incarnation of the Hindu trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, to be its first teacher. In the day-to-day instructions to their devotees, however, the *Nath Gurus* seldom refer to the metaphysics discovered by the scholars in their teachings. In fact, their approach is totally non-metaphysical, simple and direct. While the chanting of sacred hymns and devotional songs, as well as the worship of the idols, is a traditional feature of the sect, its teaching emphasizes that the Supreme Reality can be realized only within the heart.

The *Sampradaya* came to be known as ‘*Navnath Sampradaya*’ when sometime in the remote past, the followers of the sect chose nine of their early *Gurus* as exemplars of their creed. But, there is no unanimity regarding the names of these nine Masters. The most widely accepted list however is as follows :-



* **Matsyendranath or Macchhindranath**

* **Gorakhnath or Gorakshnath**

* **Jalandharnath or Jalandernath also known as Jan Peer**

* **Kanifnath**

* **Gahininath also known as Gaibi Peer**

* **Bhartrinath or Bhartarinath or**

Raja Bhartari

* **Revananath**

* **Charpatnath**

* **Naganath or Nageshnath**

Nath Siddha Matsyendranath or the 'Fish Lord' is the first *Guru* of the nine Naths. Along with Gorakhnath, he is regarded as the founder of the Nath, Kaula and Kanphata traditions. According to legend, Matsyendranath was a fisherman from Kamarupa in Assam who hooked a giant fish and was swallowed alive by it. The fish came to rest on the ocean floor near a hidden place, which Lord Shiva had chosen to convey his most secret teaching to his consort Uma. From within the belly of the fish Matsyendranath overheard these secret teachings and received his *Mantra* directly from Lord Shiva, Who had no option, but to make Matsyendranath His disciple. Matsyendranath spent twelve years perfecting his *Sadhana* living in the belly of the fish. He was eventually disgorged onto dry land.



Matsyendranath initiated the practices of *Laya*, *Hatha* and *Raja Yogas*. The doctrine of *Yoga* was given to him by Lord Shiva, but in an unusual way. According to another legend, he was thrown into the sea by his parents; because he was born on an unlucky day and he was swallowed by a fish. His name was then Lokeshvara. By the sea Lord Shiva was teaching the secrets of *Yoga* to Parvati. She fell asleep; but Lokeshvara heard everything while hidden in the fish. In a carving of the legend at Shrishailam he is shown with his head out of the head of the fish listening to the secret doctrine. From then Lokeshvara was called Matsyendranath, 'Lord of the Fish.' But, he was discovered, and at Shrishailam an adjacent carving shows Lord Shiva pointing to a fish to show Parvati, where the eavesdropper is hidden. Parvati was angry and cursed Matsyendranath to forget all the *Yoga* in Kadali, the land of women, where girls attempted to distract him from his meditation. Gorakhnath disguised himself as a dancing girl and rescued

Matsyendranath from his enchantment through the words of his songs.

Matsyendranath had many disciples, the most prominent of which was Gorakhnath. Gorakhnath (often called Goraksha, Gorakshnath, or simply Gorakh) is traditionally said to be the originator of *Hatha Yoga*, the *Yogic* system of *Asanas* (physical postures) that are part of the *Tantric* alchemical process of physical perfection and energetic awak-ening. Gorakhnath was a great *Yogi* like *Sant* Dnyaneshwar of Alandi.

There is one among the many legends concerning his 'birth' which is particularly interesting. It is said that Matsyendranath who had achieved the deathless immortal state went to Lord Shiva and asked for a disciple, who would be greater than he. The blue-throated Lord of *Yoga* protested that it was not possible, as in all creation, there was none to surpass his state. However, Matsyendranath persisted, and Lord Shiva agreed, and decided that the only way to grant this boon to his favourite devotee was to incarnate a part of Himself, and assumed the spirit of Goraksha, awaiting the moment to manifest. Later, during his travels, Matsyendranath came to the Chandragiri village on the banks of the Godavari. There lived a

Brahmin named Suraj. His wife's name was Saraswati. They had no children. Matsyendranath went to their house for *Bhiksha*. Saraswati entertained the *Yogi* with *Shraddha*, and offered him sumptuous food. She wept before him for not having a child, and asked that she be graced with a child. Matsyendranath, in his compassion, gave her some *Vibhuti* or ash from his *Dhuni*, and instructed her to eat it. At that moment, the spirit of Goraksha entered the *Vibhuti*. Saraswati told her neighbour, who derided her naivete in believing such things. So Saraswati dumped the ash in the village's heap of cow-dung. Twelve years later, Matsyendranath returned and asked, how the child was doing. The woman confessed, what she had done with the ash. Undeterred, Matsyendranath went to the dung heap and prayed, calling to the boy... And, immediately a lustrous, golden 12-year youth appeared, for Goraksha was ready to help the earth and its inhabitants to cleanse away the dirt, that surrounds their souls and preventing the inflow and manifestation of their divinity, through the *Raja* and *Hatha Yogic* practices. Matsyendranath took the boy with him. That boy was Gorakhnath.

Gorakhnath in his 12th year went to Badrinarayan and performed *Tapa* for 12 long years, living on air alone. *Apsaras* and other *Devatas* came to bug him. But, he stood firm and tided over all temptations. He got tremendous *Siddhis*. Matsyendranath also imparted all his powers and *Vidyas* to his disciple, Gorakhnath.

Gorakhnath had tremendous *Yogic* powers. When his Guru Matsyendranath entered the dead body of a *Raja* (*Parakaya Pravesh*) to obey the orders of *Shri Hanuman* to produce an offspring for a certain *Rani*, Gorakhnath assumed the form of a lady through his *Yogic* powers and entered the inner apartments of the palace (*Kamarupa Siddhi*). At some other instance he made a toy child out of clay and gave this as a play-mate for the children of a certain village. He converted a portion of a mountain into gold and reconverted it to its former condition. He passed urine on a rock. It became gold. Once, in a *Kumbhamela* on the banks of the Godavari, he gave food to all by spreading only leaves; but offered different rich meals to the liking of everyone. In the same *Kumbhamela* he slowly reduced himself in bulk and assumed the form of a mosquito (*Anima Siddhi*). Through his own *Yogic* power he burnt himself to ashes and again assumed his original form. He did *Akashagamanam* (walking in the sky). In this way he performed many *Siddhi*. Raja Bhartrihari was his disciple.

The death-less Gorakhnath is known as the nameless one, or the lightning standing still. He is acknowledged as the inventor of the *Hatha Yoga* system and was the great driving force in popularizing the practice of *Yoga* to the common people by composing the first *Yogic* texts in Hindi, rather than Sanskrit. Many saints, including Kabir, were taught by him or his direct disciples. There is an inspiring tale of Gorakhnath's guidance to aspiring *Yogis*. Once, there was a famous *Yogi* who had practiced vigorously for his whole life, and yet had not attained to the final and highest *Nirvana Samadhi*. He became filled with rage and decided to end his life. On his way to die, Goraksha was sitting calmly under a tree and asked, "Where are you going, my son?" The frustrated *Yogi* responded, "To die!" To which Goraksha said, "Then die, if you must, but make sure the dying is complete. If you cannot die completely, then come to me and I will teach you to die so perfectly that you will never die again and become deathless." The *Yogi* sat down at Goraksha's feet, and in due time attained deathless *Nirvana Samadhi* under the loving eye of this *Guru*, Shiva-Gorakshanath.

In the light of the above, it would certainly be of great interest to all Sai devotees to have a reading of a portion of chapter 45 from *Shri Sai Satchaita*.

It is well-known, that Sai Baba had enjoined one of His ardent devotees Kakasaheb Dixit to read two works of saint Eknath Maharaj daily, viz., **Bhagawat** and **Bhavartha Ramayan**. Kakasaheb regularly and unfailingly complied with this command during Baba's lifetime, and followed this practice even after Baba's **Mahasamadhi**. One morning Kakasaheb Dixit was making a reading of the 2nd chapter, 11th *Skandha* of the **Eknathi Bhagawat** at Kaka Mahajani's house in *Chaupati*, Mumbai. Madhavarao Deshpande alias Shama and Kaka Mahajani were part of the audience, and listened attentively.

The reading described that the nine Nathas or *Siddhas* of the *Rishabha* family, viz., Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayan, Aavirhotra, Drumil, Chamas and Karabhajan expounded the principles of the *Bhagawat Dharma* to king Janak. The latter asked all the nine Nathas most important questions. Each Nath answered to the queries of the king quite satisfactorily. The first, i.e., Kavi explained what is *Bhagawat Dharma*; Hari, the characteristics of a *Bhakta* (devotee); Antariksha, what is *Maya*; Prabuddha, how to cross *Maya*; Pippalayan, what is *Para-Brahma*; Avirhotra, what is *Karma*; Drumil, the incarnations of God and their deeds; Chamas, how a non-devotee fares after death; Karabhajan, the different modes of worship of God in different ages. The substance of all the exposition was that in this *Kaliyug*, the only means of liberation was the remembrance of Hari's (Lord's) or *Guru*'s feet. After the reading was over, Kakasaheb Dixit said in a despondent tone to Madhavarao and others - "How wonderful is the discourse of the nine Nathas on *Bhakti* or devotion. But, at the same time, how difficult it is to put it into practice ! The Nathas were perfect; but is it possible for fools like us to attain the devotion as delineated by them ? We won't get it even after several births; then how are we to get salvation ? It seems that there is no hope for us." Madhavarao did not like this pessimistic attitude of Kakasaheb Dixit. He said - "It is a pity that one who by his good luck got such a jewel (*Guru*) as Baba, should cry out so disparagingly; if one has unwavering faith in Baba, why should one feel restless ? The *Bhakti* of the Nathas may be strong and wonderful, but is not ours' loving and affectionate ? And, has not Baba told us authoritatively that remembering and chanting Hari's and *Guru*'s name confers salvation ? Then, where is the cause for fear and anxiety ?"

“WHY FEAR WHEN I AM THERE”

**- Shirdi Sai Baba
– Dr. Subodh Agarwal**

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Sometimes He would wander about at His pleasure during the day, or in the afternoon or in the early evening, near Nimgaon, a mile or so away. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 5, Verse 75)

Although He was not in need of company, He was surrounded by devotees during the day. But, after sunset He would retire in the dilapidated *Masjid*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 5, Verse 85)

With *Chillum*, tobacco and a tumbler, He always kept a *Satka* near Him. He wore a *Kafni* reaching upto His ankles and a white piece of cloth round His head. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 5, Verse 86)

He would tie around His head a white cloth, which was washed, and artistically twisted behind His left ear, like matted locks of hair. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 5, Verse 87)

Taking the *Tumrel* (tin for collecting gravied food) in one hand and the *Jholi* (four cornered cloth used for collecting alms) in the other, He Himself moved from doorstep to doorstep of the particular houses every day. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 8, Verse 93)

In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar

NANASAHEB CHANDORKAR

(Contd. from last issue)

OMNIPRESENT NATURE OF SHRI SAI BABA

Sai Baba called Nanasaheb's wife as 'Aai' (mother). However, in 1906, when she visited Baba, He said, "Welcome *Aaji-bai* (granny) !" She was amused by the new name. On reaching home, she narrated the incident to Nanasaheb. He immediately realized the significance of this and said, "Then our daughter Dwarka must have delivered a baby !" Very next day, the couple received a letter conveying the same news ! In Shirdi Baba had referred Nanasaheb's wife as *Aaji-bai*, at the same time in Pandharpur, Nanasaheb's daughter Dwarka had delivered a child.



Once, Nanasaheb suffered a boil on his back-side. It was very painful and moreover, the place was very embarrassing and awkward. Nanasaheb consulted various doctors and *Vaidyas*; but to no avail. Ultimately, he was advised to get it removed through surgery at Mumbai.

Nanasaheb had firmly resolved in his mind – 'It is not proper on my part to pray Baba for every trivial matter. I must not become burdensome for Him. This time I must not bother Him.' Nanasaheb preferred to suffer from the pains created by the boil; but he did not pray to Baba to come to his rescue.

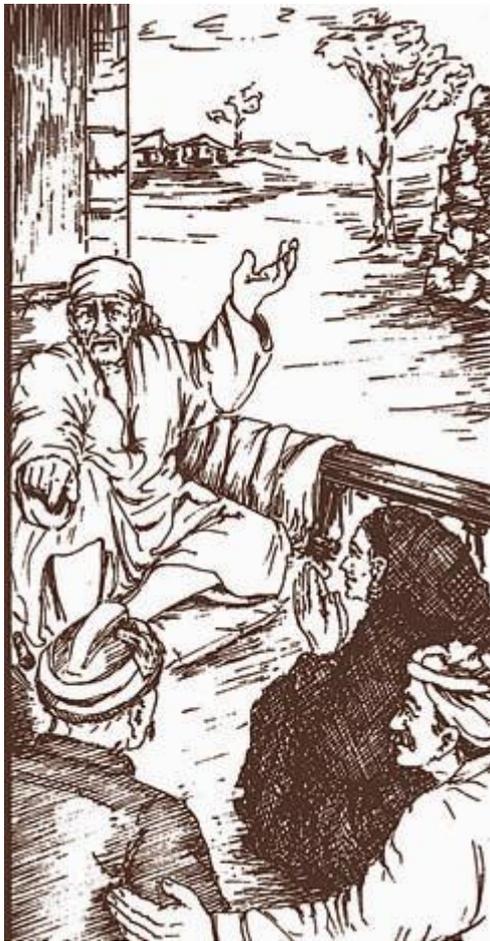
The date for the operation was fixed and on the appointed day he came to Mumbai. He was lying down on a cot. His sufferings began to increase. So much so that he felt that he will not come out alive from the ordeal. He kept Baba's photograph near his pillow and looked forward to the doctor's arrival.

Only 10-15 minutes were left for the surgeon to arrive. And, an unexpected event took place. As he was lying down with faced down, a small piece of tile from the roof fell down exactly on the boil and it burst open. Slowly the puss oozed and drained out of the boil and the pain started subsiding. When the surgeon arrived, he was also amazed at the turn of events. He declared that the operation was no longer necessary.

After a few days, Nanasaheb went to Shirdi. Baba said, "Even if one decides not to give me the trouble, ultimately I have to burst the boil with my own hands."

IMPORTANCE OF NAAM JAP

As advised by Nanasaheb, his wife used to do *Naam-jap* regularly. Once, when she was sitting near Baba, He said, "My mother, you grind a lot of grains, but the outcome is useless." She could not understand the meaning of this. On reaching their place of residence, she narrated the incident to Nanasaheb. He clarified "Baba is correct. You do a lot of *Jap*, but your attention moves to a hundred things. Along



with *Jap*, *Swarup-anusandhan* is also necessary. And this advice is not only for you but for all of us.”

NANA, WHERE AM I GOING ?

In 1912, Baba got seriously ill. At that time, Nanasaheb was nearby. He was worried about Baba's condition and about chances of His coming out safely from the ailment. He, therefore, sent messages to all prominent devotees and called them to Shirdi. They began various religious rites such as *Japa-japya*, *Anushthan*, *Ved-mantra-pathan*, *Laghu-rudra*, *Chandi-havan*.

In spite of all this, one day Baba's condition worsened. Every one thought that Baba is going to leave them. Devotees like Kakasaheb Dixit, Bapusaheb Jog, Balasaheb Bhate, Madhavrao Deshpande, Tatyapa Patil gathered together in Dixit *Wada*.

Some of them started discussing future course of action, in case something untoward happens. Some of them felt that they must take Baba's opinion about whether His body should be taken to *Darga* or *Wada*. They felt that in the absence of clear directions from Baba in this regard, there is a likelihood of a major dispute between Hindus and Muslims. But, who will ask such a question to Baba. Ultimately, this difficult task fell upon Nanasaheb. But, he also was reluctant to ask such a delicate and embarrassing question.

Just then, an amazing event took place. An unknown person came to Dixit *Wada* where these devotees had gathered together. He said, "Are you Nanasaheb ? Baba has sent a message. He said, 'Do not discuss the issue of my death so soon. I am not going to die just now. But, continue the religious rites that you have begun. Don't worry. Where am I going to go ?' "

Hearing these words, the devotees took pity on their own poor intelligence and limited wisdom. Tears of love and affection started flowing from their eyes.

CONTROL OVER DESIRES - NANASAHEB WAS A MERE NIMITTA (CAUSE)

Once, as usual, Mhalsapati, Nanasaheb and others were sitting in the *Masjid*. Just then, a rich man from Vaijapur arrived there with his family members to avail Baba's *Darshan*. To make place for them, Nanasaheb tried to get up. But, Baba stopped him and said, "They will come up and sit here. You need not get up." The family climbed the steps of the *Masjid* and came up. The *Burkha*-clad ladies amongst them removed their *Burkha* before bowing to Baba.

One of the ladies was truly beautiful. Many - including Nanasaheb - were momentarily mesmerized by her beauty. Nanasaheb was embarrassed. He was finding it difficult to move his eyes away from her. But, he was also conscious that the people surrounding him may notice this and above all, the presence of Baba was also a great deterrent.

In spite of all this, time and again, Nanasaheb's eyes strayed towards the beauty of the lady. Baba realized this and remarked, "Nana, why are you getting so flustered ? One should follow his natural instincts. God Brahma has created this universe. We

should not fail to appreciate His creation. If this can be done in a decent manner, why resort to superstitious ways? *Banata Banata Banel Na* (In due course, things will happen).”

How true and well-said ! Our natural senses keep on performing their duties. If one’s mind is pure, then there is no harm in allowing the senses to follow their instincts. By its own nature, the mind is very mercurial (*Chanchal*). It is in our hands to maintain command over it and keep it on the right path. One should keep his mind free of all cravings and then look at the creations of God. One achieves *Moksha* (ultimate freedom) after his body, senses and mind are devoid of all desires.

Therefore, it is very important to eradicate all desires. Even if one’s senses rebel, one should keep a control over his body and mind. This is achieved with a study and practice. This is the hidden meaning of Baba’s words ‘*Banata Banata Banel Na* (In due course, things will happen)’

Baba knew fully well, how pure and robust was Nanasaheb’s mind. Therefore, He had made Nanasaheb the sole witness of Bannumai’s *Darshan*. A person - whose mind is without any blemish - needs no advice. Therefore, using Nanasaheb only as a medium, Baba gave the message to all those who were present.

FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL (*LOK-KALYANARTH*)

Gopalrao Gund was the circle inspector of Kopergaon. He was blessed with a son and thought of celebrating the occasion by holding an annual *Uroos* in Shirdi. After obtaining Baba’s blessing, the idea came into reality.

Gopalrao also mooted an idea of restoration and reconstruction of the dilapidated *Masjid*. He even collected some construction material for the work. However, Baba entrusted the responsibility to Nanasaheb. Nanasaheb accomplished the task with the help of Mhalsapati and Nimonkar.

Before the construction of Sath *Wada*, there were only meager facilities for the devotees. With his own personal funds, Nanasaheb Chandorkar erected large tents and accommodated the visiting devotees. He even made arrangements for their food from his own pockets. To assist him in the matters, he arranged for a small house in Shirdi and a *Tonga* for his nephew. The nephew stayed there with his family and assisted Nanasaheb in managing the accommodation and food for the outstation devotees.

Balasaheb Deo notes -

“It is true that, in the later period, several *Wadas* got constructed and that helped in solving the problem of accommodation of the devotees. However, in the initial years, it was only Nanasaheb who was instrumental in providing the facility. Because of his these good deeds, he received blessings of thousands of devotees.”

Nanasaheb spread the devotion and message of Shri Sai Baba on a large scale to various areas - particularly in cities like Pune and Mumbai. Due to this, people belonging to different religions, castes and creeds came from all over India to attend Baba’s *Darbar*. These devotees experienced the divine powers of Baba. Many of these devotees found a life support in Him and they blessed Nanasaheb for introducing them to Baba.

In his article, Balasaheb Deo has repeatedly showered honours on Nanasaheb for the unique service he rendered to the devotees. He writes -

“Any one will agree that it was Narayan Govind alias Nanasaheb Chandorkar who first introduced and convinced the masses of Baba’s true worth, His supreme authority, His miraculous powers, His invaluable methods of teaching practices one should follow in their day-to-day lives and so on.”

Whenever Nanasaheb described the powers of his *Sadguru*, incessant flow of tears began from his eyes. He always felt that - like himself - others should also be able to enjoy the blessings of Baba.

It was Nanasaheb who brought several persons from different walks of life and various economic strata of society to the *Darbar* of Shri Sai Baba. Later on, they became ardent and prominent devotees. Well-known amongst these are - Radhakrishna Aai, Tatyasaheb Nulkar, Raobahaddur Moreshwar Vishwanath Pradhan, Balasaheb Deo, Kakasaheb Dixit, Annasaheb Dabholkar, Babasaheb Sahasrabuddhe, Dasganu Maharaj, Madhavrao Adkar, Vinayakrao Thakur, Kashibai Kanitkar, chancellor Chintamanrao Vaidya and countless others.

BABA OPENED HIS HEART TO NANA

Generally, amongst the people who came to Baba, there were only a few who were devoid of desires. On the contrary, the rest were unable to do so. In this context, Baba jokingly used to say to Nana - "Nana, amongst these people there is not even a single swan ? There are just crows !"

May be for testing His devotees, how far they are still tied down to their desires, Baba began the practice of asking for alms. There were times when Baba asked some devotee for *Dakshina* who did not have any money. On such occasions, Baba asked that devotee to go to Bhagchand Marwadi (who owned a provision store in Shirdi) and borrow that amount from him.

Once, a devotee came to Baba and asked Him, "Can You describe *Brahma* ?" As usual, without giving a direct reply, Baba told that person to Go to Bhagchand Marwadi and bring Rs. 100. The Marwadi - instead of giving the amount - said, "Convey my *Namaskar* to Baba !" Baba then directed that devotee to some other person to borrow the money. But, he once again came empty handed. Ultimately, Baba called for Nanasaheb Chandorkar and told him to fetch the amount from Bhagchand. Nanasaheb wrote a note to Bhagchand and he immediately sent the money. Baba remarked, "In this world, the things move in this manner !"

The devotee - who had asked the question about *Brahma* - could not understand the significance of this incident. He narrated the incident to Dasganu and asked him to explain the riddle. Dasganu replied, "See, some people did not get the money. But, Nanasaheb - without going for it personally - could get it by merely sending a written note. He had the capacity, capability and authority for getting it. You asked a question about *Brahma* just out of curiosity. How could you expect an answer just to satisfy your inquisitiveness ?"

There is another incident which illustrates that the *Pancha-Maha-Bhute* (five elements which make this universe) are at the command of *Sat Purush*. Baba has revealed this through several incidents.

Once, Baba suddenly said to Bhagchand, "Are, go quickly. A heap of grass in your field has caught fire !" Bhagchand ran; but even after best efforts, he was unable to extinguish the fire. Ultimately, Baba Himself went there. He moved His hands in the air and made some signs. Eventually, the fire died down.

In the evening, Nanasaheb and some other folks came for Baba's *Darshan*. When Nana bowed down before Baba, He started narrating the above incident. He said, "Nana, see how selfish some people are ! I cautioned Bhagchand about the fire. Not only that, I even extinguished the fire and minimized his loss. Even then he is crying incessantly about the loss of his grass. Why the people don't understand that loss - gain, birth and death are in the hands of the Almighty ? What is the point in

saying this is mine and that is mine ? Can one say that the grass belonged to Bhagchand ? It was born because of seeds. The seeds took in roots the ground. It got water from the clouds. And it grew into grass because of the sunshine. Thus, the earth, clouds and sunshine are its true owners. In spite of this, what kind of ownership is he talking about ? Nana, at least you try and put some sense in his head. He is unnecessarily feeling sad. He has been harassing me for a long time. The God gives by one hand and takes away by another. And because of this, we suffer. But, these people don't understand this. Is it not their lack of knowledge ?”

Then Baba turned to the Marwadi, blessed him and said, “*Shethji*, take *Udi*, go home and be at rest. You will benefit in some other business and your present loss will be recouped. Don't worry.”

(Contd.)

– Translated from original Marathi into English by **Sudhir**



Although He seemingly resided in Shirdi and had a body three and a half cubits (over six feet), He lived in every person's heart - *Maharaj* Who was the store of *Punya* (good or meritorious deeds). (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 10, Verse 23)

However, much anyone kept his thought hidden, Sai *Samartha* dwells within the hearts of everyone as the witness and He knows the innermost thoughts. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 57)

Thus nothing ever happened which was not seen by Sai. Everything everywhere was known to Him. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25, Verse 73)

Listen to Baba's words - “I do not need a door to enter. I have no form or dimension. I am always everywhere.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 28, Verse 199)

This Sai is the dweller in all hearts. Even though Hate was in Gwalior, knowing the desire in his heart, he sat minutely looking at it. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 29, Verse 169)