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Main

Sadguru Sai

“There are innumerable saints in this world; but Our Father (*Guru*) is the Father (Real *Guru*). Others might say many good things; but we should never forget our *Guru*’s words.”

- Shirdi Sai Baba



One who was merely seeing Sai Baba and staying by Him for a while got *Shraddha* (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 this infused *Shraddha* faith. The solid benefit, temporal or spiritual reaped by devotee and his feeling that he is under the eye and power of his *Sadguru* Sai always, wherever he may be and whatever he may do, gave him an ineradicable basis for his further temporal and spiritual guidance.

For instance, Nanasaheb Chandorkar was one of Sai Baba’s most prominent devotees. Born of well respected parents in Kalyan, Maharashtra, he rose at a young age to the post of deputy collector.

Baba, once, said to Nanasaheb, “If you ask me to give you some temporal (worldly) possessions, then I will not be able to give them to you. You will get them as per the deeds committed by you in your previous births (*Poorva Karma*). However, if you want me to guide you on the path of *Parmartha*, I will do so.” With great joy, Nanasaheb agreed to this and he vowed to devote himself to *Parseva* (service of others) and through it achieved his self-progress. This is known as *Bhagvat Dharma* which was always propagated by Baba - the Great Sadguru.

From 1902, for some years, Nanasaheb was the *Mamledar* of Jamner *Taluka* of Khandesh province. It is during the year 1904 that Nanasaheb’s daughter Mainatai was in family way.

The doctors had predicted Mainatai's delivery date to be in the early months of 1905. Nanasaheb had, therefore, brought her to Jamner from Pune. Finally, the time for delivery of the child arrived.

Unfortunately, the posthumous child delivered by Mainatai did not live long. Mainatai had lost her husband just before the birth of the child due to the plague epidemics. The whole family was in gloom. In a disheartened mood, Nanasaheb went to Shirdi along with his wife. He sat at the feet of the *Sadguru* Sai in sullen silence. But, he realized that Baba is not paying His usual attention to him. Nanasaheb was restless on noticing that Baba had not even asked His question enquiring about his well-being. Ultimately, he could not hold back himself any longer and asked Baba, "We are always under the shelter of Your blessings. Even then, we are facing so many hardships and unfortunate calamities. What shall we do?"

Baba said, "Nana, if you were coming to me only to save the lives of your son-in-law and grandson, then it was your mistake. Don't come to me for such reasons; because I don't have control over birth and death. The birth of a child and the death of relatives are dependent on *Poorva Karma* (deeds of ones earlier births). Even the Almighty God, Who has created this world, does not interfere in such matters. Do you think He will ask the Sun or the Moon to change the times of their rising or setting? He cannot do it and He will not do it; because it will create a chaos in the universe."

Nana then asked, "If that is so, Baba! How is it that You tell some one, 'You will have a son' and he gets a son, and You tell another, 'You will get employment' and he gets it? Are these not miracles of Yours? Don't You predict, what is going to happen in future?" Baba gave clarification about the 'miracles' that He performed. He said, "Nana, I don't perform miracles. Only I am able to look into the future events and I narrate them to you. You feel that these are miracles. When I predict such events, you direct your devotion towards me. I redirect it to the Almighty and ensure your welfare."

When the *Bhakta* is *Param Yogya* (deserving), the Almighty *Sadguru* showers His blessings on him incessantly. The Almighty *Sadguru* Baba did everything for His '*Param Yogya Bhakta*' Nanasaheb, and showered His choicest blessings on him.

Sai Baba lived to awaken and lead mankind to the varieties of spiritual life. He set in motion a wave of spirituality, which is now spreading all over the globe. All His life's activities constituted the upliftment of mankind. By first conferring temporal benefits, He drew unto Himself countless souls caught up in ignorance (darkness) and opened their eyes to the true meaning of life. The miracles, which manifested through Sai Baba were just such as were needed to create *Shraddha* (faith) in people and to make His devotees ethically and spiritually better evolved. Baba did not purposefully perform miracles to show His powers. The very strength of His perfect realization, in its interaction with nature, caused the so-called 'miracle' to take place. Thus, He drew people from their deluded pursuits after earthly objects of a transitory nature and induced and inspired them to strive for self-realization. He continued this glorious work until the last moment of His human embodiment in Shirdi.

On another occasion, Nanasaheb Chandorkar went to Shirdi to have Baba's *Darshan*. He fell at Baba's feet and said, "O *Sadguru* Sai, I am sick and tired of this mundane life. According to the *Shastras*, this world is meaningless - a mere illusion. O *Sadguru*! Please help me, and break the fetters that bind me to this mundane life. The more one looks for happiness in this world, the less one finds it. Misery seems to be man's lot. Wretched hope that springs eternally in us sends us from place to place. I am sick and tired of it. I do not want to get involved in it."

A true *Sadguru* gives a divine vision to His *Shishya* (disciple) so that he can find his path by his own eyesight and inner voice. Then he can easily judge the difference between truth

and falsehood. As a result, the seeker is filled with awareness, alertness and bliss. A real wisdom starts radiating from within.

Baba laughed at this and said, “Where do you get these crazy ideas from, Nana ? You really are a simpleton. What you said about mundane life is true; but you cannot escape it as long as the body exists. Nobody can escape it, not even I.”

“Our mundane life affects the body in various ways,” continued the *Sadguru* Sai, “Desire, envy, avarice, pride, hatred and anger are part of our mundane life; so are the senses of sight, hearing and taste. So, indeed are our imagination and our bodily needs. They are all inextricably mixed. They are like a mixture of the component parts of which are inseparable, like a knot that nobody can untie. People say that one’s wife and progeny are also of one’s mundane life. You too believe so and find it difficult to get on with them. What with one’s wife and children and other relatives like brothers, nephews etc., life is full of problems; but you cannot get rid of these.”

Nana said, “My previous lives were evidently ordained by the Lord; but my concern is with my present one. I do not want any more of it bedevilled, as it is by too many problems, too many woes. Help me to rid myself of this.”

Sadguru Sai is One in Whose presence doubts dissolve, confusions become clear, wounds heal, mind finds peace and people find valid answers to life’s toughest questions.

Baba laughed at these words of Nanasaheb and conveyed the gist of the Bhagvad Gita to him thus : “You are responsible for this life as well. You are the one who caused it. Now, then, can you get rid of it ? This body of yours is the fruit of the accumulated *Karma* of the past. *Karma* is the root cause of all our miseries. All those that are born - whether men, birds or beasts - suffer from the upshots of their previous *Karma*.

Unless one bums down the effects of one’s previous *Karma*, one cannot get be rid of the body. All people, rich and poor, and married ones, *Sanyasis*, and *Vanaprasthas* exist because of the life force running through them; so do different kinds of animals like horses, bulls, jackals, tigers, rhinos, hyenas, dogs, pigs, scorpions, snakes, ants, fleas and kites.

The same life force runs through all of them. Why, then, do these entities look different ? Did you ever ponder this, Nana ? If you do, you will realize that the reason lies in their past *Karma*.

The animals are different because of their previous *Karma*, their innate characteristics depending on the species they belong to. Thus, tigers eat flesh and pigs eat excreta, while hyenas dig out buried bodies and devour them. Kites and vultures feed on rotten bodies, while swans eat the tender leaves of lotus plants.”

Nana folded his hands and said, “I understand that; but what puzzles me is this : why should there be pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow ? There cannot be these if one gets rid of worldly affairs.”

To this Baba said, “Pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow are illusions. They are not real, although people think them to be real. Thanks to his previous *Karma*, one man feeds on delicacies, another feeds on dry bread, a third gets only stale food or worthless left-over. Those who feed on stale food or worthless leftovers consider themselves unhappy, while those eating good food say that they have everything they need. The purpose of eating is to quench the fire in the stomach, no matter what one eats delicacies or leftover. Similarly, the purpose of covering one’s body, whether with delicate fabrics woven with gold thread or with rough garments made from the inner bark of trees, is to protect the body, nothing more. Thus, joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure are simply ways of looking at things. They are, as I said, illusions and you should not be deceived by them. Illusory as they are, these

feelings cannot exist without a cause, just as waves cannot exist without water or light without a lamp.”

Sai Baba imparted spiritual instructions to His devotees. His method was not veiled or secret; but quite open. The devotees who followed His instructions got their object. *Sadgurus* like Sai Baba open our (eyes of the) intellect and show us the divine beauties of the Self, and fulfil our tender longings of devotion. When this is done, our desire for sense-objects vanishes, twin fruits of *Viveka* (discrimination) and *Vairagya* (dispassion or non-attachment) come to our hands; and knowledge sprouts up even in our sleep.

There was an old woman by name Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh. She was the mother of one Khashaba Deshmukh. Hearing Baba's fame, she came to Shirdi with the people of Sangamner. She took Baba's *Darshan* and was much contented. She loved and adored Baba intimately and resolved in her mind, that she should accept Baba as her *Guru*, and take some *Upadesh* from Him. She knew nothing else. She determined to fast herself unto death, as long as Baba did not accept her, and give her any *Upadesh* or *Mantra*. She stayed in her lodging and left off taking any food or water for three days.

On seeing her determination, Baba sent for her, changed the turn of her mind by addressing her as follows : “To get the knowledge (realization) of the Self, *Dhyana* (meditation) is necessary. If you practice it continuously, the *Vruttis* (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 *Vruttis* will concentrate on one point and the distinction between the *Dhyata* (meditator), *Dhyana* (act of meditation), *Dhyeya* (this meditated upon) will be lost and the meditator will be one with the consciousness and be merged in the *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. Her mere glance gives them nutrition. The young ones of the tortoise 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.”

Tortoise traditionally is associated with the qualities of protection (mother tortoise protecting its children with its vision). In Sai Baba's own words - “I look after my devotees the way a tortoise looks after her young ones, never taking my eyes off them”.

That is why the central place on the floor of Dwarkamai, where Baba spent about 60 years of His life, is symbolically marked with the tortoise white marble tile.

Sai Baba had, once, said these words to Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh - “I resorted to my *Guru* for 12 years. He brought me up. There was no dearth of food and clothing. He was full of love, he was love incarnate. How can I describe it ? He loved me most. Rare is a *Guru* like him. When I looked at him, he seemed as if he was in deep meditation, and then we both were filled with bliss. Night and day, I gazed at him with no thought of hunger and thirst. Without him, I felt restless. I had no other object to meditate, nor any other thing than my *Guru* to attend to. He was my sole refuge. My mind was always fixed on him. My *Guru* never expected any other thing from Me. He never neglected me; but protected me at all times. I lived with him, and was sometimes away from him; still I never felt the want or absence of his love.”

Also, Baba had told Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh about His quest for His *Guru* with three others alike by wandering in deep dark forest. He reached His *Guru* by accepting warm welcome of poor *Vanjari* to eat food and rest for a while.

Instructed in this way, the old Mrs. Radhabai Deshmukh was convinced; she bowed to her *Sadguru* Baba and gave up her fast.

Mhalsapati was one of the earliest devotees of Sai Baba. Being on intimate terms, Baba sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, advised Mhalsapti to tread the path of spirituality. Towards the end of 18th century, Mhalsapati was deeply depressed over the loss of his only son, and lost interest in life. Now he was left with three unmarried daughters with a big responsibility on his shoulders. The land of seven acres, which he possessed, reproduced nothing due to its infertility and shortage of water and money. Nor did the profession of goldsmith fledge him enough money. Now only remedy left with him was to adhere to the orders of his Family Deity Lord Khandoba. Once, Lord Khandoba appeared in his dream and said, 'Take Lord Khandoba's idol from the temple to your home and worship Him there'.

In another dream Lord Khandoba appeared as an old man and said, 'Do you think that you will not get food, if you leave the profession of goldsmith ?' Mhalsapati replied in dream, 'I will leave this profession'. Again Lord Khandoba said, 'Touch my feet and hold them tightly.' This dream meant that Lord Khandoba wanted Mhalsapti to leave all burden of earning; the Lord would be taking care of these matters since then. Only one thing required from Mhalsapti was his undivided attention and refuge in Lord Khandoba's holy feet and not to accept for any financial support from profession of goldsmith.

Hereafter Mhalsapati left gold business and adopted life style of a *Sanyasi*. He begged alms and stopped sleeping at home leaving behind his wife and three daughters, because otherwise it increased his worldly attachments.

In fact Mhalsapti had only two works left - one to be with his *Sadguru* Sai Baba all the time and the other to sleep with Him. Mhalsapti received great pleasure in the company of Sai Baba. So he never left Baba, even while sleeping he was with Baba. Baba used to sleep alternatively in Dwarkamai and *Chavdi*. The same was followed by Mhalsapati. Before 1898, Mhalsapati accompanied Baba only in *Chavdi*; but after 1898, when Baba broke wooden plank, he started sleeping in Dwarkamai too.

In the year 1896, Baba said to him, "Oh *Bhagat*, listen to my *Fakir*-some words, they are always true. Why do you sleep with me ? Go and sleep at your home." Mhalsapati was not at all ready to leave Baba and sleep at home. But, his friend Kashiram Shimpi pressed him to go home and took Mhalsapati to his home. Now Mhalsapti started sleeping at home from *Janmashtami* 1896, and on next *Janmashtami* a son was born to him in 1897, and was named Martand.

One must surrender to *Sadguru* Sai with a clean slate, having no ideas of own, so that the *Sadguru* shall chalk out a plan and mould the being into a spiritual genius. The disciple must stand by the *Sadguru* always with *Shraddha* (faith and devotion) and carry out His instructions to the very word. When there is keen desire to surrender at His lotus feet, definitely the *Sadguru* comes forward with His practical instructions. The seed for the divine life is sown, and is watered it with nectarine stream of cosmic manifestation in the quest for liberation.

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Those, from whom instructions in *Vedas* is acquired, as also the knowledge of the six '*Shastras*', or those erudite ones who have explained the *Vedant* are not considered as *Sadgurus*, by the learned ones. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 3)

Those, who control the breath, or have '*Taptamudra*' (impressions made with a red hot stamping instrument, which may be of copper, on their flesh, as done by the followers of Vishnu), or entertain listeners with their eloquence on *Brahman*, are not considered as *Sadgurus* by the learned ones. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 4)

They give '*Mantras*' to their disciples conforming to the *Shastras* and also instruct them to do name chanting. But, no one can confidently say when these *Sadhanas* would bear fruit. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 5)

Their description of the principles of *Brahman* is very interesting; the worldly knowledge is specious; but there is a total lack of self-experience. But, that knowledge is hollow and only full of words. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 6)

When one clearly hears such explanations, one would loathe both, worldly and spiritual experiences. But, the taste of self-experience is explicit and only a self-realised person can give it to others. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 7)

How can he, who is himself devoid of self-realisation, give it to the disciple ? He does not deserve to be called a *Sadguru* who has no practical knowledge whatsoever. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 9)

He who has full of knowledge of the *Shastras*, is fully experienced, and can give practical knowledge, alone is qualified to instruct the disciple. Such a person is called a *Sadguru*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 8)

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GURU - SADGURU SAI

“There are two kinds of Gurus, *Niyat* and *Aniyat*. The latter through their advice, develop the good qualities in us, purify our hearts and set us on the path of salvation; but contact with the former, dispels our quality (sense of difference) and establishes us in unity by making us realise ‘Thou art that’. There are various Gurus imparting to us kinds of worldly knowledge; but He Who fixes us in our nature (self) and carries us beyond the ocean of worldly existence is the *Sadguru*. Sai Baba was such a *Sadguru*,” says Arthur Osborne.

Though Sai Baba acted out worldly like an ordinary man, His actions showed extraordinary intelligence and skill. Impressing the people around Him, with His learnedness, was never a motive. He had the person’s benefit at heart. For simple people, he would preach supreme principles in very simple words, by the way of example and parables, without confusing them by quoting the scriptures, like a school teacher moulding her teaching to suit the first standard students. Sai had to do it very often.

Many so called intelligent thinker wondered, if He knew more ! One had to dwell on those simple words to gauge the depth of knowledge and realisation behind them. His greatness was indescribable. He saw divinity in all beings and preached pure *Advaita*.

There is a beautiful anecdote in *Shri Sai Satcharita* about the necessity of a *Guru*. Kakasaheb Dixit, an advocate, has published his notes about his experiences. Kakasaheb once went to Baba and asked, whether he should leave Shirdi. Baba said, “Yes.” Then Someone asked, “Baba, where to go ?” Baba said, “High up.” “How is the way ?” asked the man.

Baba said, “There are many ways leading there; there is one way also from there (Shirdi). The way is difficult. There are tigers and wolves in the jungles on the way.” Kakasaheb asked, “Baba, Baba, what, if we take a guide with us ?” Baba answered, “Then there is no difficulty. The guide will take you straight to your destination, avoiding wolves, tigers and ditches on the way. If there is no guide, there is the danger of your being lost in the jungles or falling into ditches.” *Guru* is the only guide on that dreaded journey into the supreme endless unknown !

“Reaching God is the aim by crossing all oceans, worlds, and limitations,” was how He (Sai Baba) put *it-Allah milayala sapta samudra nyahal karava lagato*. Prof. Narke says; “He never (so far as I knew) spoke of *Maya* (or the theory that all existence in the sublunary sphere mere illusion). He took the common sense view that His world and the worlds beyond are real, and that we have to make the best of them, here and hereafter.”

Karma and reincarnation were frequently referred to by Him. “We must sow good results in this life and the next,” was the truth that underlay many of the stories He told. He frequently referred to “the past life of others and future life of some”.

“Taking on a *Shishya* is not an easy task,” Baba would say. That is, reaching God by crossing all oceans and worlds (*Beda paar karana*).

“The *Guru* has to follow His *Shishya*’s spiritual welfare through various births, look after him, guide him and see that finally the *Shishya* attains salvation. This is no easy task.”

Sai Baba never prescribed *Asan*, regulation of breathing or any rites to His *Bhaktas* (devotees), nor did He breathe any *Mantra* into their ears. He said that, “The help given by the *Guru* was invisible and secret, and not by oral instruction. I do not instruct through the ear. Our traditions are different (*Mee kanala dasnara Guru navhe, aamche gharane nirale aahe*).”

Bai Baba never lectured nor gave discourses as other saints. He gave very thoughtful hints. A word or a sentence at a time was all He cared to utter. But, from them, an observant devotee could build His system, lecture or philosophy.

Baba taught everyone according to their spiritual acumen and capacity of understanding. He preached *Dnyan Marga*, *Karma Marga*, as well as *Bhakti Marga*. He however did not recommend *Yoga Marga* as the ultimate. On the other hand, according to Prof. Narke, he said, “Those who proceed by the method of *Pranayama* must come to me ultimately for further progress.” Yoga, He thought was only a part; realisation meant further progress for which one needs a *Guru*. By *Karma Marga*, Baba set the example of living amidst society and labouring to produce results. He would not recommend an ascetic desertion of society.

Dhyan Marga, if confined to inquiry of the self and an effort to understand the *Upanishads* and *Brahmasutras* to receive enlightenment from that inquiry, was not Baba’s method and aim. By example, His devotees should infer that He wanted them to be like himself. His knowledge and experiences were, real and realistic... He was perfectly detached amidst numerous distractions. His life was, therefore, a real *Vairagya* and real *Nishkam Karma* which would lead one God.

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

It is said in the *Gita* - Whatever form a man worships, he really worships me.”

“As ritual worship with flowers and sandal paste is performed for an idol, so also it is for one who is felt to be more than a saint, one who has realised his identity with a Supreme Being, and is, therefore, a conscious manifestation of God,” says Arthur Osborne.

“An intelligent Hindu does not believe that an idol is a God any more than an intelligent Catholic believes that a holy picture or a statue of a saint is God. Few people are capable of conceiving the Formless Absolute, and the ordinary Hindu makes worship easier by concentrating on the manifestation of God in a certain picture and statue. He may be led thereby in due course to the realisation of the formless whether in this life or beyond it,” says Arthur Osborne.

Therefore, Sai Baba allowed His *Bhaktas* to worship Him, in His last few years, as He knew His time in human form was running short. And, whatever helped the cause of taking people’s minds to God, he was ready to submit to, because Sai Himself did not have any body consciousness. He took shape and form, lived a human life of self-denial only for people’s salvation. Allowing his own *Pooja*, for instance, was just another case of submitting Himself to His cause.

Sai strived for all. The learned and unlearned, the *Brahmins* and be non-*Brahmins* - caste, creed and religion we bar. Anyone could come, meet Sai Baba, talk to Him, be blessed by Him. Sai’s *Masjid* named by Him as *Dwarkamai* was open to all.

The *Skandha Puran* gives the meaning of 'Dwarka' as "*Chatoornamapi varganam yatra dwa.rani sarvatah*

Ato dwaravati-tyookta vidha-dhi.-stat vedibhihi"

This means it is a place whose doors are open for all people of *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra Varnas* for accomplishing the four *l'urusharthas*, namely *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksh*. Baba's *Masjid* in Shirdi was not only open to the four classes, but to the deprived and untouchables too.

Three times a day, in Dwarkamai, Sai Baba used to speak to the people and educate and guide them through stories and problems. *Aritaryami* as He was, He judged the questions and doubts in people's minds. He would very delicately answer questions, give solutions to their problems. He spoke very diplomatically, without referring to any names, so that even while speaking in public, the person's privacy would be maintained.

The more people were helped this way, more came to Dwarkamai to meet Baba. Some just to see this wonderful *Fakir*. A majority came with devotion, but interested mainly in material benefits. Sai Baba would, during His talks to them, very tactfully direct their thoughts to God, and infuse faith in them.

Being in Baba's presence meant a lot. He exuded a benevolent influence like an exotic perfume, instilling people with peace, devotion and tranquility. In His presence, people forgot all their worries and problems. Baba said, "A *Guru's* grace should be potent like a female tortoise. She does not tend her little ones all the time, but keeps them within her sight. Her looking at them even from a distance fosters them. So should be a *Guru's* grace. He need not teach them all the time. His presence should be enough to make His disciples feel secure and peaceful, and make their spiritual strength grow." Adorable Baba created confidence and a feeling of closeness to Him by assuring His devotees. Said Sai,

"Lok samajtaat kee aapan sarva neer-nirale aahot, pan lok chukeeche samajtat he.

Mee tumachyamadhe aahe; Tumhi mazyamadhe aahaat."

(People think they are all different from each other. But, they are wrong. I am one with you and you are with me.)

- From the book '**SAI'S STORY**'
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He believes that the disciple is 'Purna Brahma' and treats him as His own son. He does not expect anything from him for His livelihood. Such a *Sadguru* is the best in the world. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 12)

He, Who is the Abode of supreme peace, has no pride of learning, does not distinguish between the young and the old and the rich and the poor, is the embodiment of the *Sadguru*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 13)

Such are, generally, the characteristics of a *Sadguru*, which I have compiled and narrated briefly for the listeners who have completely surrendered. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 14)

In Sai's Proximity

– Mrs. Mugdha Divadkar



DASGANU MAHARAJ

(Contd. from last issue)

Ultimately, he had to accept his defeat

But, it was such happened that, after this period of time, Dasganu had to face a lot of difficult situations - like going to jail, getting involved in a defamation case, facing almost death. Baba saved him on each of the occasion. Thus, Dasganu began realizing that Baba is *Antardnyani* and ultimately, he was left with no other alternative, but to give up his job.

Once, while serving at a police station - Dasganu went on a pilgrimage without getting his leave approved from his seniors. He was scared that, on his return he would be punished for his indiscipline. Therefore, before resuming his duties, he took a bath in the holy river Godavari. He held some water in his palms and resolved that if Baba saves him from the punishment, he will give up his job. Before going to his police station, he caught a few dacoits along with the loot and took them to his superiors. Due to this, his superiors ignored the matter and did not take any action against Dasganu. Baba had once again saved him. However, Dasganu could not give up the temptation of financial security that the job offered.

Thereafter, another incident took place. Once, Dasganu had to travel to some place and his road was to go via Shirdi. He was wary that if goes to avail Baba's *Darshan* then He would again pester him about leaving his job. He, therefore, decided to pass through Shirdi without availing *Darshan*. However, exactly at that time, Baba happened to come on the road as He was on His way to the Lendibaug. Seeing Him, Dasganu got down from his horse and bowed down before Baba. He called him to the *Masjid*. On reaching there, Baba said, "Are Ganu, who was it who took a vow by holding water in his palms ?" Dasganu replied, "Baba, I am really

going to give up my job.” Baba said, “You will not do so easily; because everything is going fine in your life.”

Later on, one of the assistants of Dasganu collected a fine of Rs. 32 (a large sum in those days) from an accused and pocketed the amount. Dasganu neither had any hand in the crime nor was he even aware of it. However, Dasganu was a superior of the person who had committed the crime. Therefore, it was clear that both of them were likely to be blamed for it and punished with suspension from the services. Once again, Dasganu vowed to give up the job after being absolved from the blame.

In a way, Baba showered Dasganu with a series of mishaps and finally, after 10 long years, Dasganu accepted his defeat by giving up his job !

Commencement of writing books

Santkathamrut

While he was still in employment, with Baba’s blessings, sometime in 1903, he began writing ‘Santakathamrut’ - a book devoted to stories of various saints. While continuing in his job, Dasganu was trying to maintain - rather precariously - a balance between *Swartha* one hand and *Paramartha* on the other. After completing each chapter of the book, he used to place it in the hands of Shri Baba - Who used to remark “OK”.

Bhaktaleelamrut

In the year 1906, as desired by Baba, he began penning down the book.

While penning the books, he realized that his soul is getting increasingly purified while studying the lives of various saints. He came to know that *Bhakti* is omnipotent. Gradually, though his poems were being sung in the style of *Lavani*, their content was spiritual. He never had any interest in family life, but he also lost the attraction towards financial income and stability offered by a steady and secure government job.

Later on, he met the great historian V. K. Rajvade and as time progressed, they became friends. Shri Rajvade rendered a helping hand by carrying out proof-reading of the book and Chandorkar agreed to publish it.

Dasganu had an inborn talent for singing. Therefore, though not trained in music and also having a rather gruff voice, he began performing as a *Kirtankar* and began mesmerizing the listeners. Through his *Kirtans* and his books, he spread the fame, as well as message of Baba. This became the only aim of his life.

In this respect, Dasganu says :

“Baba did not give me any worldly wealth or money. He gave me more than that. He gave me the wealth of spirituality and that benefited me much more. He inculcated devotion in me and it stayed with me through out my life. He gave me beautiful experiences which I can never describe in words.”

In June 1936, he wrote a note from Pune in which he frankly admits that :

“Dasganu Maharaj alias Ganpatrao Dattatray Sahstrabuddhe, *Bramhin Kirtankar*, age around 68, resident of Nanded, Nizam State :

I wish to state as under -

“I know Shri Sai Baba for many years. I have narrated some incidents about Him in my books

- 1) Bhaktisaramrut (1925), chapters 26, 65, 66, 67
- 2) Bhaktaleelamrut (1906), chapters 31, 32, 33
- 3) Santakathamrut (1903), chapter 57

Chapter 33 of Bhaktaleelamrut and chapter 57 of Santakathamrut were published before Baba decided to leave His mortal body.

Some of the remembrances and incidents from Baba's life have been narrated by Baba Himself. But, these were by far very few. Again, I was very unfortunate to have spent very little time with Him. I could rarely meet Him. When I happened to be in Shirdi, Baba did not allow me to stay long in the *Masjid*. He used to tell me to go to Vitthal *Mandir*. I used to stay in the temple and write books, articles on topics such as biographies of various saints and similar subjects. I used to also recite Vishnu-Sahastra-Naam in the temple. Before penning the chapters, as mentioned above, I had made enquiries with Baba and He had explained several things to me..."

Agadh Shakti, Aghatit Leela (Amazing powers and miracles that have never happened in the past)

Once, while he was in Shirdi, Dasganu felt the urge to have a bath in the waters of the holy river Godavari. For the purpose, he desired to go to 'Singba', about three miles from Shirdi. Baba realized this and created the water at His feet.

Water started oozing from Baba's both big toes. For His favourite disciple, Baba had brought the river Godavari at His feet ! By this amazing marvel, Dasganu was moved to tears and he spontaneously uttered the words - which later on became famous "*Agadh Shakti, Aghatit Leela !*".

This is an incident, which took place in 1916 ! As per his annual practice, he wanted to go on the *Wari* (trip) to the pilgrimage town of Pandharpur. However, he coincidentally happened to meet Shri Chandorkar at Manmad, who took him directly to Shirdi. Baba directed him to recite *Naam* and perform *Kirtan* for a week. On Chandorkar's suggestion, Dasganu put on a beautiful dress - complete with an *Uparane* with golden embroidery and *Pagadi*. He then proceeded to take Baba's blessings. Baba saw the clothes and said, "You are dressed like a groom going for his wedding ! We do not need such extravagant paraphernalia. Leave these things here. Go dressed like Narad - the *Aadya Haridas*." Dasganu realized that by doing so he will be following the great tradition of Narad - the first *Kirtankar* ! He followed Baba's directions thereafter.

Bhaktisaramrut

In the year 1918 Dasganu started to write the book 'Bhaktisaramrut'. He placed the chapters, in which there were references to Shri Sai Baba, in His hands. Baba expressed His normal reaction "*Theek Aahe*" (OK) and blessed Dasganu. However, it was 1925 by the time the book was published.

About this book, its writer says :

"There is information and incidents about Baba in chapter 28. Some of it has been conveyed to me by Baba Himself and some has been gathered by me from the talk of people of village Selu. (Baba had told me that He has come from Selu.) I do not know, whether Baba could read or write or could put His signature."

He further adds :

"It is impossible to determine or guess Baba's age. It is also beyond anyone's capacity to also ascertain His caste or creed or to find out information about who were His mother and father.

About 40 years back, I had met Salubai Shelke - an old lady, aged about 60-70 years. She told me that 'I was married off when I was 7 or 8 years old. Even then, Baba looked same as He looks now.'

Baba rarely talked about His earlier life. On several occasions, He told me 'My *Guru* was Venkusa.' There was always a profound mystery surrounding Him. He sometimes administered a Muslim prayer of thanks called *Fatya* or recited lines from the holy Quran. I have heard Him say 'I am the Almighty.' or 'You are the Almighty.' "

Sai Baba's bond with other saints

In the later years, Dasganu almost settled down at Nanded. A mill-owner from the city - Shri Ratanji Shapoorji Wadia - invited him for tea. Just then, Maulibua of Nanded arrived there. Wadia had laid a lavish feast for his guests - complete with dry fruits. Shethji was a wealthy man, but had no child. On Dasganu's advice, Shethji went to Shirdi. Baba said, "You have already given me three rupees and twelve *annas* ! Now give me rest of the amount !"

Since this was his first visit to Shirdi, Shethji started wondering, when and how he could have given three rupees and twelve *annas*. Therefore, on returning to Nanded, he conveyed his confusion to Dasganu. He calculated the amount spent by Shethji on treating Mauli Saheb a few days back and it worked out exactly to three rupees and twelve *annas* ! Baba had acknowledged this amount. Later on, with Baba's blessings, Shethji's family creeper expanded rapidly and he had children.

There is another incident worth narrating here.

Once, Dasganu and some others had gone to the *Yatra* of Jagannathpuri. On his return journey, he went to the city of Rajmahendri and was fortunate to get the *Darshan* of famous *Antardnyani* and *Karmamargi* Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati. He was known for his intolerance of people who were not serious in their pursuit of knowledge and religion. He also adhered to strict codes of 'do's and 'don't's as laid down in the ancient scriptures. However, he was glad to welcome Dasganu. Both of them discussed various matters and Swamiji asked Dasganu, where he was going thereafter. He informed that he is going to Shirdi. Swamiji was overjoyed to hear that. With tears in his eyes, he placed a coconut in the hands of Dasganu and said, "Please give this coconut to Shri Sai Baba and give Him my regards and *Namaskar*."

Later on, Dasganu and others proceeded towards Shirdi. As there was still time for the train to arrive at Manmad station, they went to the banks of the river. Someone from the group opened the packet of *Chivda* and other snacks that they had carried with them. The *Chivda* was full of chillies and very hot. Therefore, a person from the group - a lawyer called Pundalikrao Nandedkar - suggested that they could break the coconut and mix its pieces with the *Chivda*. Then it will taste less pungent. The suggestion was implemented without any delay. During this time, Dasganu had gone out. Otherwise, he could have opposed the move. Unaware of what has happened to the coconut given by the Swami, Dasganu also ate the *Chivda* mixed with pieces of the coconut.

On reaching Shirdi, the group arrived at the *Masjid*. They were climbing the steps, but just then Baba shouted, "Shamya (Madhavrao Deshpande), this Ganu is a petty thief. He ate the snacks that my brother had sent through him."

Hearing these words, Dasganu was alarmed. He immediately rushed to his residence in the Vitthal *Mandir* and found that the coconut given to him by Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati was missing from his luggage. On enquiring about it, he understood the situation fully.

He returned to the *Masjid* and confessed the full story to Baba. He realized that Baba was omnipresent. He also realized that the two saints had a strong bond between them - though they were poles apart in some respects. Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati followed all the rules laid down in the ancient scriptures, while Baba adhered to no such rules. This was ample proof that 'all saints are one and the aim of all of them is welfare of the entire mankind'.

The readers will find the above story in the 51st chapter of Shri Sai Sat Charit. In that story, certain changes have been made as desired by Dasganu. There it has been stated that the coconut was given to 'Pundalikrao' by Tembe Swami. Actually it is a story of Dasganu himself.

(Contd.)



Because of the store of accumulation of merits of many past lives that we attained the Feet of this *Sadguru* Sai. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 16)

Even in the full bloom of youth, He had nothing of His own - no family, no wealth, no support, no home. He hoarded only tobacco and *Chillum* and had strong determination. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 17)

Even at the age of eighteen, He had complete control of His mind. He lived in solitude always and fearlessly, always abiding in the Self. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 18)

Seeing the pure attachment of His devotees, His creed was that He was at their service. To explicitly demonstrate His love for His group of devotees, He lived with them, with fond affection. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 19)

Hail, Eternal *Parabrahma* ! Hail, Helper of the destitute and blissful countenance ! Hail, Supreme Consciousness and One at the service of the devotees ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 20)

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Don't you have faith on my Udi...

June 4, 2007 is a date that will be etched in my memory for ever. It was a Monday; between 10 am to 10.30 am I took my son's admission in school for Std. 5 and headed for Pune. After completing all my tasks, I headed for Pune station with the intent of taking the 4.30 pm PMT bus to Rajgurnagar, where I was residing. At exactly 4.30 pm the bus as scheduled started for Rajgurnagar. Since, I had completed all the assigned tasks in Pune, I was absolutely relaxed. Our bus had crossed Wakdewadi and was speedily moving ahead. The bus was not crowded...

After we crossed Wakdewadi, I started sweating and my mouth went dry. I started looking for water and since I was regular commuter in the bus, I saw a few friends, one of them came and offered me water. I took 1-2 gulps of water and returned his bottle. As the bus started

moving ahead my health started worsening. My stomach started bloating. I anxiously started looking for when the bus is reaching Rajgurnagar. By this time my stomach had fully bloated, so I took off my pants buckle and was holding it with my hands. After all the passenger had alighted with great difficulty I got down. I took a rickshaw and showed him the direction with my finger. Since, the rickshaw driver was known to me, he knew where I stayed, so he took me there. Somehow I got off the rickshaw and made it to my door...

The moment I reached my door, my neighbour, Shri Jamdade' son, came with my keys and opened the lock. After I entered my house I thought that maybe my stomach has bloated because of flatulence (gas), so I went to the toilet. In spite of it, my condition was progressively deteriorating, I couldn't stand properly, nor was I able to articulate. I dialed Shri Jamdade's phone number, but couldn't utter a single word; hence, placed the phone on the receiver and returned to the hall, where I fainted...

When I regained my consciousness I found myself admitted in Chinchwad's Nirmaya Hospital's ICU. I underwent dialysis eight times. Both my kidney's has dried up literally completely. Doctors had tried different line of treatment, yet there was not much difference in them. So the doctor's pronounced that I will have to undergo dialysis every Tuesday and Saturday for the rest of my life. The relative of a patient in the neighbouring bed suggested that instead of allopathy I should try ayurveda...

I was discharged on June 18, 2007. Since my condition was delicate doctors counseled that I should not go back to my residence, but remain in Pune. So my relatives decided to take me to my in-laws place at Hadapsar. In the meanwhile I became fully aware of my condition I beseeched Sai Baba, 'Don't make me so handicapped. It is better if I don't live....'

On July 18, Sai Baba's palanquin was to leave Pune. On one hand I was praying to Sai Baba that I didn't want to lead such a handicapped life and on the other hand I was witnessing the procession of Sai Baba's palanquin. I reminisced how I had participated in the pilgrimage accompanied with the palanquin which traversed from Kasba Peth, Phadke Haudh, Pune and Shirdi for a decade...

I spoke to Baba and said, "Even though this year you are not taking me in along with your palanquin procession, make me well, so that in the next year's palanquin

procession I can run like a horse in front of your chariot! I will present you a silver horse.” This way I was trying to console myself. The relative, with whom I was returning home, left me to purchase some Ayurvedic medicine. I was doing Namasmarna in my heart....

When I was in the hospital many Sai devotees visited me and offered me udi, prasad and tirth. It was a Saturday night, I was sleepless, but after some time I fell asleep. ‘Don’t you have faith on my udi ?’... This query fell on my ears. I woke up in confusion. We were sleeping in the hall; I woke up my wife and asked her what time was it? She said that it was 3 am. Listening to our conversation, people around us, woke up and narrated to them what had transpired. Then again all of us went to sleep. I started hearing the Aarti as it takes place at Shirdi. When I looked at the clock it was 5.15 am in the morning. Where I was residing, there was a small Sai Baba’s temple, so I thought of going to the balcony and listening to the Aarti from there. I tried getting up, but could not. Because of the effort I was making to get up, the people around me woke up. I told them that Baba’s Aarti had started; I asked them to give me something to sit on in the balcony, so that I could listen to Baba’s Aarti. But my family did not understand what I was saying. They supported me and took me to the balcony, the moment the balcony’s door was opened the Aarti stopped, so they took me back to my bed

After 2-3 hours of this experience I started urinating; because of ill health I had not urinated for a fortnight. Sunday and Monday passed. Then as per doctor’s instruction on Tuesday the dialysis started at 8 am. Generally a dialysis takes four hours, but within three hours. I passed approximately one litre urine. The technician present there enquired about my health and I told her that I was urinating for two days, she informed the concerned doctor about my condition...

The first sample of my blood was showing 6.1 unit of the accumulated chemical. But when they noticed a change in my health condition, they tested my blood again and noticed that now the chemical was only 1 unit, seeing this they were amazed too...

I came home and rested for 2-3 days and I started feeling very happy. Sai Baba’s palanquin was to be taken out in procession in 14-15 days. I had decided to walk and participate in the procession. My family and friends were counseling that due to health reasons I should not walk upto Shirdi this year. But I did not budge, and along with my wife and a Sai devotee friend we started on our pilgrimage, and with Baba’s Grace we not only walked to Shirdi, but returned home safely. And till date I have not experienced any discomfort. This is all Baba’s udi’s miracle....

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Hail, hail to One Who is beyond duality ! Hail, hail to One Who is beyond attributes and with attributes ! One Who witnesses everything and is transcendental, One beyond the understanding of all who are not the devotees. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 21)

Hail, hail to the Remover of the distress of worldly existence ! Hail, hail to the Destroyer of difficulties of those who seek refuge and have come full of love, *Sadgururaya* ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48, Verse 22)

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